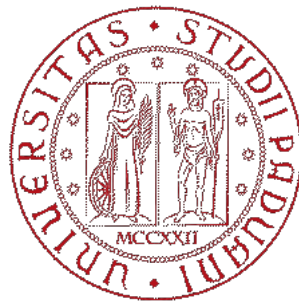


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LAW,
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance**



THE ROMA COMMUNITY IN SWEDEN:
AN ANALYSIS ON PERCEIVED STRUCTURAL
DISCRIMINATION AND MULTILEVEL POLICIES

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A.Y. 2021 / 2022

Abstract

For generations, the Roma community in Sweden has faced structural discrimination. This thesis is a qualitative study that analyzes the perception of discrimination through a Critical Race Theory lens. Anti-Roma racism is widespread throughout Europe and Sweden and is ingrained everywhere. Sweden has implemented multiple measures and frameworks to combat discrimination, and the historical implications the community has had to endure, following decisions made primarily during the 20th century. The study shows the lived experiences and perceived discrimination by the Roma community based on current policies and how they have changed over the 20th and 21st centuries.

Throughout August and November 2021, 26 individuals took part in the study sharing their inner thoughts and own personal experiences. The study's main findings demonstrate that all but one participant have experienced discrimination in some way and that while Sweden does have multiple important legislations and frameworks in place, they do not work well in practice. There are many different factors to be considered when analyzing various forms of discrimination and the background to these discriminatory actions. The participants mention numerous incidents that have impacted their everyday lives in relation Critical Race Theory and the notion of storytelling and counter-storytelling.

Keywords: *Roma rights, anti-Roma racism, discrimination, Critical Race Theory, Sweden.*

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Abbreviations:

CRT – Critical Race Theory

CLS – Critical Legal Studies

CoE – Council of Europe

CERD – The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

CEDAW – The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC – The Convention on the Rights of the Child

DN – Dagens Nyheter

DO – Diskrimineringsombudsmannen (Equality Ombudsman)

EU – European Union

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

FCNM – Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights

ISOF – Institutet för Språk och Folkminnen

OECD – The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SOU – Statens Offentliga Utredningar (Official Reports of the Swedish Government)

SIRB – The State Institute for Racial Biology

SEK – Swedish Krona (currency)

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

UNICEF – United Nations

UDHR – Universal Declaration for Human Rights

UNGA – United Nations General Assembly

UN – United Nations

UPR – Universal Periodic Review

Introduction

There is an unwillingness to understand the severity of the widespread racism in Sweden among the public and the government. The Roma community is the most vulnerable and exposed group targeted by discrimination in Sweden and all over Europe (SOU 2010:55, pp. 32). They face structural discrimination every day, both in the private and public sphere. Europe is home to approximately ten to 12 million Roma and are therefore the biggest ethnic minority in Europe.

This thesis sets out to demonstrate the perceived structural discrimination the Roma community in Sweden face today. To analyze this, Critical Race Theory (CRT) will be applied to the thesis to strengthen and provides dimensional perspectives to the arguments and analysis. The theory has its roots in the United States but will be applied in a Swedish context to comprehend the severity of this historical structural discrimination. Although the findings of the study focus on the present-day perception, the historical background is important to understand the reality today. Therefore, a section on this thesis will focus on the historical background, both at a micro and a macro level. Combined with this, it will overlook the existing international and regional policies implemented by Sweden today combatting discrimination and ensuring better rights. It is known that international and regional policies offer good practices implemented by Sweden. However, this thesis will examine if these frameworks and policies work in practice, based on the testimonies by the community.

1. Research problem

"Discrimination is rampant. Attitudes towards Roma are more negative than towards any other group. They remain the most clearly discriminated group on the labour market at all stages: when they seek a job, during the interview, and in case they did get the job they risk losing it if their ethnicity becomes known" (SOU 2010:55, pp. 36). Widespread discrimination in the housing market, labor market, private and public sector and education based on ethnicity is an everyday struggle for the Roma community.

Hate crimes are common in everyday life, at all ages. These structural issues date back to when the Roma community first arrived in Sweden in the 1500s, then known as today's equivalent of 'Travellers'. Plenty has happened since the 1500s and the situation is improving every year, at least theoretically. Roma in Sweden live under worse circumstances than the average non-Roma individual, simply because they are born Roma. Historically they have not always had political and civic rights, it is only for a few decades that the community has been allowed to vote and participate in political activities and sphere, as well as go to school with those who are non-Roma (SOU 2010:55, pp. 19). During 40 years, Sweden had its borders closed for all Roma individuals, these years include those during World War II, meaning that the community could not seek refuge from the persecutions and hate during the war in Europe. Along with this, forced abductions and sterilization of Roma women was common, as well as refusing Roma families to settle in a place for more than a few weeks at a time or access to a formal education (SOU 2010:55, pp. 47).

Direct and indirect discrimination currently and historically at all levels amplifies the lack of trust in the major society, authorities, and governmental bodies in Sweden. It is not only an issue for those who have lived through a time where the Roma had no rights, but rather a generational one. So far, only one generation has lived to see the day where the Roma and their language are officially recognized as a national minority in Sweden. In 1952, the Roma community were officially recognized as Swedish Citizens by the minister of social affairs (Nordin, 2016). In 2000, Sweden ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on National Minorities, as well as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, making the oldest person to experience it only 22 years old today. The appointed Roma delegation in Sweden discovered early in their work against Roma discrimination that there is a strong correlation between the mutual distrust by the major parts of Roma society and the structural discrimination violating their human rights. This lack of trust is deeply rooted in widespread, generally accepted anti-Roma racism that is usually based in lack of knowledge and prejudice from the public (SOU 2010:55, pp. 20).

As of October 2021, Sweden still had not officially apologized for the widespread hate, monitoring, record-keeping, or discrimination towards the community. In a Motion

(2021/22:2604) sent in by members of the Left Party¹, “the Commission recommends, among other things, that the Prime Minister make an official apology for the abuses suffered by Roma throughout history. The apology should be made at an official ceremony as part of the process of redressing Roma rights and countering contemporary violations of Roma human rights”² (Mölleby et al., 2021, pp.6).

Moreover, former research and publications made about the situation of the Roma community in Sweden, whether it be in a historical context or a current one, is for the most part written and studied by non-Roma individuals. This furthers a difficulty in recognizing the relation between the lack of trust the community has for the authorities and the historical context for it.

2. Aim and Research Question

The aim of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation in Sweden regarding discrimination against the Roma community by analyzing and discussing national, regional, and international policies and frameworks as well as taking statements from the community into account. Further, this thesis will also look at the issue from a historical perspective considering the consequences and impacts the systematic discrimination has had on the Roma community. The research sets out to answer the following research question, allowing the participants to define what discrimination means to them.

'How does the Roma in Sweden experience and/or perceive discrimination and prejudice in their everyday lives based on existing policies?'

To answer this question several interviews have been conducted via various means, as well as an online qualitative questionnaire. The responses were combined to get a broader picture of the issue while also looking at empirical evidence from multiple levels of

¹ Known as *Vänsterpartiet* in Sweden.

² Translated from the original text in Swedish “*Kommissionen rekommenderar bl.a. att statsministern framför en officiell ursäkt för de övergrepp som romer har drabbats av genom historien. Ursäkten bör framföras vid en officiell ceremoni som ett led i att ge romer upprättelse och motverka nutida kränkningar av romers mänskliga rättigheter*”.

governance, in Sweden the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN). This policy analysis gave an insight to how the legal and political context has impacted and keeps impacting the lives of the Roma community in Sweden.

My hypothesis for this thesis is that the predominant cause of continued discrimination against the Roma community is not based on lack of policy or frameworks, but rather on ingrained practical and structural deficiencies within broader civil society. In other words, the Swedish people does not possess sufficient knowledge about the everyday struggles faced by the Roma community, nor the historical reasons for these difficulties. This is largely due to a lack of awareness among the older generations within Sweden, who have not been subject to the same levels of diversity education and/or exposure as the younger demographic, and who may therefore hold onto ingrained and ongoing misconceptions about the Roma community. Therefore, I believe that a combination of ignorance, willful ignorance, and insufficient efforts in actively improving the situation led by the Government and municipalities, are severe in relation to discrimination and hate crimes. They are likely to continue into future generations if the situation is not addressed at a systemic level.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

To comprehend the complexity and larger structural issue of discrimination and stigmatization towards the Roma community in Sweden, this is an in-depth single case study using a qualitative method. The reason for focusing on experiences rather than numbers is to get an extensive understanding of the issues faced by the Roma community in their everyday lives. It is important to highlight that the answers from the participants are individual and unique for this study. They cannot be generalized to cover that of the Roma community. Each experience is different, which will be showcased by the analysis of this study.

3.2 The research

The research was conducted between August and November 2021, with follow-ups in December 2021. The participants are from all over Sweden, and they come from a variety of backgrounds. The people that have participated in the study all self-identify as part of the Roma community. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between Roma and Travellers.

Some of the participants call themselves 'gypsies'³, not Roma, and will be cited accordingly. The interviews and surveys allowed for self-identification to not force the participants into categories or treat them as a homogenous group.

The qualitative interviews combined with an online questionnaire was used to analyze the ongoing structural discrimination in Sweden towards the Roma community. These interviews were based on background information about the structural issues, combined with historical perspectives and prejudice by non-Roma people.

While using a qualitative research method, this study used semi-structured interviews as well as a questionnaire to collect data. The study resulted in ten in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants ranging from the ages of 18 to 68. The interviews were conducted via video calls on Zoom, over the phone and in person. I gave the participants the freedom to decide how they wanted to pursue the interview, for them to feel as comfortable as possible. Additionally, 17 people answered the questionnaire.

The reason there is this division between ages is to get a broader perspective of how each age group perceives the policies. On one hand, the group between 60 to 80 lived before many policies were put in place and at a time when the Roma were not even considered 'Swedish'. For example, this age group were alive to experience the allowance in Swedish schools. The age group between 40 to 60 have been alive to experience the change and possible affect from the legislations in the mid 1900s. Moreover, the age group between 18 to 40 have similarities with the second group, however, this is the only group including participants that has always been considered an official minority, since birth. Further policies from 2000 including the Roma community, their culture, language, and flag officially making them a Swedish minority. Does being born into a society where you are

³ Swedish for 'zigenare', Instead of Roma or Romani.

considered an official minority change the perception in any way in terms of policies and how they have been historically discriminated against?

When analyzing I will look at how the discrimination is perceived by each age group as well as between men and women to see what the differences are, if any. The research is not to generalize all Roma but to have a full and broad understanding of the issues surrounding the perception of how Roma experiences discrimination and stigmatization and each personal answer is unique for this study.

3.3 Sampling

Before starting the interviews, I emailed over one hundred organizations and private people to find participants for this study. By using a snowball method, I contacted people to interview that fit the purpose of the study and that identify themselves as part of the Roma community. Snowball sampling is simply a method where participants recruit others for, in this case, interviews. For someone belonging to a group facing constant discrimination this thesis deals with a sensitive topic, and it is very understandable if people do not feel safe or comfortable speaking about it. That is why the trust of a fellow Roma is a good way of finding people for the study.

Sweden has ‘Roma reading ambassadors’ through numerous libraries. The purpose of the Roma reading ambassadors is to encourage the public libraries to improve their work related to Sweden’s national minorities and in this case, to ensure the voices of the Roma community are heard, seen and perceive the libraries as a safe space (Kulturrådet, 2021). To encounter people associated with this, I emailed all libraries asking them to forward my information to anyone they thought would be suitable and interested in the study. By the help of *gadje*⁴ and individuals from the Roma community, I was able to reach out to people from different backgrounds, age groups and gender identities. When reaching out to individuals not part of an organization or the library network, I approached people through specific Roma⁵ groups on social media. There I described the aim and purpose of my research, asking the Roma community or individual to participate in the study by

⁴ The term used for non-Roma people by the Roma population in Romani Chib.

⁵ Groups for Roma in Sweden on Facebook and Instagram.

answering a qualitative questionnaire. Along with the spread of the questionnaire in these groups and with the help of family members part of the Roma community, I found all participants of this study.

3.4 Interviews

The most suitable way of conducting this research was through interviews as well as a questionnaire. The interviews were semi-structured because I wanted the chance to interact with the participants and have the possibility to ask the interviewee to elaborate further on some questions. I also allowed space for extra comments and answers if they thought something was missing or if they had anything extra to add. To get in contact with people I emailed every person that agreed to do an interview. The form of communication differed from person to person, while some preferred a more formal setting, others were more comfortable in an informal setting. A few of the participants emailed me their phone numbers and asked for me to phone them. I called and introduced myself and we had an informal conversation deciding when would be best suitable for the interview. With the rest a mutual agreement over date and time was communicated via email. The downside of using emails as a communications method is that it sometimes takes a longer time to hear back from people, and I got responses weeks later stating that my email was found in the junk mail.

When starting this study, the idea was to conduct all interviews face-to-face but due to the still ongoing outbreak of COVID-19⁶, not all participants felt comfortable with meeting in person. Due to limitations of traveling and a pandemic, half of the interviews were conducted either via video calls⁷ or as phone interviews.

Four interviews were conducted via phone calls. The ones conducted over the phone were not recorded and instead I took notes while listening. At the end of each call, I asked the participants if they were comfortable with follow-up questions or clarifications, to which all said yes. If any questions were raised while analyzing the data, I contacted the participant again and asked for clarifications.

⁶ A pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan; China was first reported to the WHO Country Office in China on 31 December 2019 (WHO, 2020).

⁷ Microsoft Teams, FaceTime (Apple) and Zoom.

Before starting the interviews conducted over video call, I asked the participants permission to record the interview, including video and sound. Both participants agreed. The interviews conducted face-to-face were all voice recorded after asking for consent from each participant.

All interviews but one⁸, were conducted in Swedish, and later translated to English by the author of this thesis during the analysis process. During the translation process, the interviews were translated to suit the English language as it is not always suitable to translate Swedish to English word by word.

3.5 Questionnaire

The online questionnaire was created using Google Forms and sent out by link for participants to freely share the link with the people they found suitable and willing to participate in the study. For participants to feel a greater sense of anonymity the qualitative questionnaire was a good supplement to the interviews. It allowed for the participants that were not comfortable speaking about their experiences to write them down in words. Additionally, it allowed for participants to answer the questionnaire on their own terms as it is a self-administrative system. Initially this study was meant to only be conducted via interviews, but the questionnaire was added later for this purpose.

During the interviews I asked for the participants' specific age, and later grouped them together based on their age span. However, in the qualitative questionnaire I had the participants themselves select what age group they belonged to⁹. The questionnaire asked the same questions as were presented during the interviews. The questions were structured but gave room for open ended answers as well as the option to add any extra comment they found suitable. The participants were asked to answer each question as elaborately as possible, giving me enough material to expand the result of the study. The questions were free to answer, and the participants could answer as much or little as they wanted.

⁸ Which was conducted in English at the request of the participant themselves.

⁹ The options presented in the qualitative questionnaire were 18-40, 41-60, 61-80 and 80+.

3.6 Data analysis

Like many other qualitative studies, the analysis did not follow a linear path. The analysis contained countless alterations in attention, going back and forth between theories, empirical material, and the data analysis.

The interviews conducted in person and via zoom were transcribed between November 2021 and January 2022. The information acquired through the interviews was combined with the data from the qualitative questionnaires. Based on the data collected and the volume of data, I used the Miles and Huberman framework to analyze the data. The framework allows for data reduction, coding and, drawing and verifying conclusions to analyze all data collected.

The data reduction and coding of the framework were used in combination with each other. The first step of the analysis process included simplifying the data collected while simultaneously coding the data into categories suitable for the answer. While coding the data I searched for patterns corresponding to the CRT, the answers from the qualitative questionnaire did not need to be simplified to the same extent as those from the interviews.

Throughout the analytical process, I cross-checked the verdicts with other answers from respondents to validate my finding. Since the theoretical understandings are based on how the interviewees understand and feel in the society, the analysis followed an abductive reasoning.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The consent of the participants for this study was acquired in two different ways, verbal and written. The participants answering the qualitative questionnaire were provided with the purpose and intended use of the research in writing before answering any questions. The text explained their right to confidentiality and assurance of anonymity. It also described the right to withdraw at any time, without further explanation. The expected duration of answering the questionnaire was not presented as it differs depending on the participant and how much or little they would like to answer. The participants were told they could freely skip any questions and were encouraged to add anything they felt

necessary. I voiced that if any questions were raised to please contact me via email. I concluded the information stating that the summary of findings would be available to all those who would like to maintain the study once concluded.

The interviewees all received the same information verbally. I informed the interviewees to stop me at any time if clarification was needed, and if they wanted to add further information before starting the interviews.

To maintain anonymity, the names of participants are not mentioned in the analysis. Instead, it states their age, gender identity and if relevant, the Roma group they belong to in order to analyze and compare the findings.

3.8 Positionality in the study

My positionality in this study was evidently central to the social context and while conducting the research via interviews. I am part Swedish Roma; however, I predominantly identify as Swedish. I have grown up with several aspects of the Roma culture, and while I do not speak Romani, my family members do. Various positions take place by not speaking the language and not fully identifying as one ethnicity, therefore being an outsider, insider or neither and both, is an interesting but also challenging positionality to present myself in. It all reflects and depends on the situations I am in, who I am talking to, and the language that is being used.

By identifying as part Roma, and as someone 'in-between', it eased the dynamics and tensions during the interviewing segments and during the process of finding interviewees. The initial assessment of my positionality helped foster a mutual interest during the interview process. The interviewees were interested in my personal aspects while I was interested in hearing their stories. My positionality as an insider in this study has been to my advantage regarding getting access to the Roma community and finding individuals to interview. However, my positionality as an outsider or an 'in-between' made it challenging finding trust and individuals to interview that I had otherwise found while being an insider. It was challenging finding my place in the field when having to uphold a certain expectation as the daughter of a Swedish Roma.

3.9 Limitations

The principal external limitation that needs to be addressed is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations I contacted informed me they usually have meetings and mingles that I would be able to attend in order to meet people from the Roma community. Due to the pandemic this was, unfortunately, not a possibility. Both conducting interviews and sending questionnaires through various methods/channels allowed for more people to be reached than a single method alone. These dual sources of information gave me the possibility of a more in-depth view on the issue. However, pauses and non-verbal expressions are very important in qualitative research, which were not possible due to the inability to meet people face-to-face. To overcome this, I set up video and/or phone interviews.

3.10 Structure

Chapter one sets out to explain the theoretical framework used for this study, Critical Race Theory. The theory has its roots in the United States during the segregation when multiple professors, activists and civil society came together fighting racism between minority groups in the country. The theory will be applied to a Swedish context, focusing on the Roma situation and the notion of race, and how this interrelates with the issues of racism in the United States. The chapter is meant to provide an understanding of what the history of the theory is, its main thinkers and messages. It is set up by multiple tenants, and ideas coming after it was first introduced, which are all going to be incorporated together.

Chapter two will then provide important definitions to understand the essence of this thesis as well as the struggles of the community and who the Roma are, and where they are from. There are various Roma groups living in Sweden and each one has their own customs. It will provide an overview of the historical background leading up to the structural discriminatory issues the Roma community still face today. Further, it will specifically focus on the 1900s and forward, by demonstrating structural discrimination by Swedish authorities, such as forced sterilization, housing issues, voting rights, the right to an education etc., and the 2013 Roma police register.

Chapter three focuses on current policies, conventions, and frameworks at an international, national, and regional level. Sweden has ratified multiple international instruments that has shaped minority and discrimination policies and politics in Sweden. Roma rights became an important focus for Swedish authorities in the early 21st century. Since then, various reports have been published by the Government of Sweden as well as multiple Swedish authorities highlighting anti-Roma racism. This chapter also focuses on recommendations made by other states to Sweden in how the state handles Roma issues and discrimination against the community. Further, it analyzes Sweden's answers to these recommendations and how it needs to develop effective measures and respond through a cooperative and collaborative approach. This review reveals the main challenges for Swedish authorities historically and how they are tackling it today. his chapter also sets out to outline the important actors, conventions and frameworks working for Roma rights in Sweden and internationally.

The final chapter showcases the findings of the study. The findings have been analyzed using a CRT lens, combined with taking several international instruments into consideration, that Sweden has ratified and implemented. The answers are going to be presented following the various tenants and their message about what race and racism is. By applying these to a Swedish context and understanding the experiences of the Roma community in Sweden, various tenants will be interlinked because one type of discrimination usually affected another.

The concluding remarks will also provide ideas for future research and critical ideas from the author of this thesis.

Chapter I

The notion of Race, in relation to discrimination against the Roma community in Sweden

1. Introduction – Critical Race Theory

Derrick A. Bell (1976) is a pioneering CRT scholar, often referred to as the “founding father”, because of his foundational texts (Crenshaw et al., 1995, pp. 19). Bell denoted the “notion that black interest will only be achieved when the interest of black and whites converges” (Memetovic, 2021, pp. 8). While the analysis of this study does not focus on the black/white binary rooted in CRT, the overall message remains, and will be applied in a Swedish context. CRT started as a movement on the study and possible transformation between the intersections of our identities¹⁰ and racism, race, and power. What started in the 1970s with Bell’s textbook ‘*Race, Racism and America Law*’ became a movement of lawyers, activists and legal scholars all working simultaneously for the same goal. At the time of publication, Bell’s book was highly overlooked, but became a foundational text to the theory (Cobb, 2021). The scholars and students had realized that civil rights progress had stalled and was possibly even moving backwards. The theory is not just to understand the bond between law and race, but to change it (Crenshaw et al., 1995, pp. xiii)

During the 1980s, Kimberlé Crenshaw together with Mari Matsuda¹¹ organized an alternative course based on Bell’s (1970) textbook ‘*Race, Racism and America Law*’. The course was called ‘Racism and American Law’ that spanned for 14 weeks during the spring of 1983. In 1989, a workshop was put together by previously mentioned scholars and students in the field of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), followed by several CLS conferences, creating what is today known as CRT (Crenshaw et al., 1995). CRT emerged

¹⁰ Such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and national origin

¹¹ “Mari J. Matsuda is a lawyer, activist, law professor, and founding practitioner of Critical Race Theory” (Future Hindsight, 2021).

as a frustration to the legal system in the United States, and the founders used their work as a way of activism. The main idea behind CRT was to change the structures of law, education, and culture. The theory places the conventional civil rights and ethnic studies in a broader perspective including various areas of life¹². Although the idea was born in the field of law it has had breakthroughs in the disciplines of social sciences and humanities (De la Garza and Ono, 2016; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 3)

The purpose of applying CRT to this study is to strengthen the arguments presented in the following chapter, arguing that this theory contains an activist dimension. This layer is crucial to the field of discrimination and racism to understand the social situations and be able to change the discourse for the better (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 3). Society is built on hierarchies and from this stems racism, which is what CRT is attempting to tackle. Structural powers of society need to be demolished for the situation to improve. Further, it is important to highlight the concept of intersectionality within CRT since discrimination is never just one aspect or one perspective. It exposes how an individual gets affected by discrimination on various levels, and by several and simultaneous factors. Such factors can include but are not limited to being Roma and a woman, for example (Baciu, 2020, pp. 85). Moreover, CRT questions the concept of colorblindness. The theory argues that colorblindness can lead to hiding structural inequalities in social institutions, instead of eliminating them completely. A colorblind ideology includes hiding and protecting white privilege (Carlson, 2011). While this demonstrates an interplay between power and race, it is also important to see the correlation between power and ethnicity, rather than race in Sweden, which has been mentioned earlier in this thesis. Moreover, CRT recognizes that racial powers are generated through and experienced within numerous aspects of social life.

1.1 Derrick Bell: The founding father of CRT

Derrick Bell's (1976) main idea from his early texts focuses on antidiscrimination laws in the United States where he studied the integration of the black community from a race-consciousness perspective (Crenshaw et al., 1995 pp. 36). The legal case that started the discussion on what is now CRT was the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision - *Brown*

¹² Economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious.

VS the Board of Education which ended state-mandated racial segregation of public schools during the first era of antidiscrimination laws. The law discussed equal educational opportunities by desegregating schools in the United States creating a racial balance (Bell, 1976, pp. 5, 20). However, the issue with desegregation and a racial balance where black children attend white schools is the lack of previous and existing knowledge. It fails to uphold and realize that the level of black children is not nearly the same as those who are white when integration takes place, so before starting, there is an imbalance already. The case does not stand for desegregation of schools, but rather equal opportunity for an education (Bell, 1976, pp. 7-8). In fact, according to Bell, one of the biggest challenges of this case was effective representation of black parents and their children, since they were excluded from partaking in policy making processes at the white schools, making it at least as damaging and discriminating as segregated schools (Bell, 1976, pp. 18). Bell further developed his theories and stated that equal opportunity is a symbol for racial balance, employment, in housing and “other fields” where discrimination is still present today (Bell, 1976, pp. 10).

1.2 Victim vs. perpetrator perspectives

Along with Bell, Alan David Freeman was one of the founding thinkers of CRT and a founding member to the conferences on CLS. In 1978, Freeman wrote an article called *‘Legitimizing racial discrimination through antidiscrimination law’* analyzing discrimination from the perspectives of the victims¹³ and perpetrators¹⁴. It focused on the developments of the antidiscrimination law from 1954, until the time of the publication of the article. Regarding the different perspectives, the victim's perspective includes conditions of life and “consciousness [associated] with those objective conditions” while the perpetrator’s perspective is meant to be seen as neutralizing the inappropriate behavior, not considering the conditions for the victim, as it occurs in the antidiscrimination law (Freeman, 1978, pp. 1053). Moving to a different concept, according to Freeman (1978), legal doctrine must be understood as part of an ideological

¹³ [Victim] “Racial discrimination describes those conditions of actual social existence as a member of a perpetual underclass” (Freeman, 1978, pp. 1052).

¹⁴ [Perpetrator] “Racial discrimination not as conditions but as actions, or series of actions, inflicted on the victim by the perpetrator. The focus is more on what the particular perpetrator have done or are doing to some victims than on the overall life situation of the victim class” (Freeman, 1978, pp. 1053).

narrative about race, a story that can legitimize racial authority by portraying it as impartial and objective. In antidiscrimination law, the perspective of the perpetrator has been and continues to be the sole official idea of a violation. Conveniently, the perpetrator position avoids any discussion of social reality or systemic racial damage. Its sole mission is to find and apprehend solitary individuals who purposely and knowingly cause harm. As a result, the emphasis is placed on establishing fault rather than on the results and identifying the root cause for what is racial discrimination. A historical understanding is very important to grasp the severity of the victim's current perspective and how it is tied to someone who has been "historically victimized by actual perpetrators or a class of perpetrators" (Freeman, 1978, pp. 1053). The "why" to the development of this perspective, Freeman describes, cannot be explained through legal doctrine (Freeman, 1978, pp. 1119). According to the author, the "perpetrator view" restrictedly understood racism as a purposeful, if illogical, divergence by a conscious offender from otherwise neutral, reasonable, and just means of allocating employment, power, prestige, and income (Crenshaw et al., 1995, xiv).

1.2.1 "Reverse discrimination"

Freeman writes about "reversed discrimination" in his article. It is what the white population endure, as do blacks, but where whites are treated differently than blacks are in everyday life. The difference is that it is called "reversed discrimination" or "reversed racism", an example of this is Allan Bakke. Bakke was a white student who applied to University of California (U.C) at Davis medical school but was rejected twice¹⁵. He sued the University on the grounds of racism, because he had not been admitted due to the school having to fill a certain quota or "set-aside" admissions for those students who were not white. The case was brought to the California Supreme Court where it was ruled that race was allowed to be considered during admission, among other factors. Under the United States Constitution diversifying admissions were permissible and a compelling interest, however, the specific system U.C used did not fall under that category. Therefore, Bakke was admitted to U.C Davis. According to Robert L. Allen (1977) reverse racism "is simply a crude attempt to portray the victims of racism as the

¹⁵ It is important to mention that Bakke had also been rejected by ten other universities (Allen, 1977, pp. 10).

perpetrators of racism” and no such thing as “reverse discrimination” or “reverse racism” exists (Allen, 1977, pp. 12). To understand this, is to understand the social structures and structural racism the Roma have been facing for decades. In the context of Sweden, there needs to be a broad understanding of white supremacy and subjugation of Roma individuals that was established and still exists today.

1.3 Equal personhood

The third scholar to be introduced is Richard Delgado. In 1984, Delgado wrote an article titled “*The Imperial Scholar: Reflections on a Review of Civil Rights Literature*” arguing for the importance of racial representation to perspectives of legal studies and ideology (Crenshaw et al., 1995, pp. 37). In Delgado’s article, he mentions that legal literature until that point was “giants in the field” (white scholars) citing one another, without various perspectives, even when writing about those who were not considered ‘white’ (Delgado, 1978, pp. 563). People of color were excluded from the close circle of the same scholars citing each other's papers even if the papers in question were about topics relating to people of color. This removed the perspectives and ideas of those living what the ‘white’ scholars were writing about. Further, Delgado argued that laws need to be written from the perspective of those who live and experience them firsthand (Crenshaw et al., 1995, pp. 46-47).

Delgado defines what he calls “equal personhood’s “the notion, implicit in several constitutional provisions and much case law, that each human being, regardless of race, creed, or color, is entitled to be treated with equal respect” (1978, pp. 564). Racial discrimination or any “othering” of another person or community therefore violates this principle. He argues that there is a conscious choice to cite minority scholars, and there needs to be encouragement from those who are not part of a minority, in this case ‘white’, for the minority to take place (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 48, 53).

1.4 Intersectionality and the road from CLS to CRT

The fourth and final key scholar on CRT is Kimberlé Crenshaw who is responsible for coining the term CRT from CLS. Crenshaw played a crucial role in the previously mentioned conference on CLS, and her activism is what brought everyone together

creating what came to be known as CRT. In 1995, Crenshaw's ideas along with various key scholars were gathered in the book "*Critical Race Theory: the key writings that formed the movement*". The book discusses the emergence of CRT, the importance of legal studies then, and now as well as the different perspectives leading up to what came to be CRT. These laws further produced racial powers and race relations socially, not through ant discriminatory measures or rules against discrimination at all, but through policy making and legal rules concerning housing, education systems, voting rights and body autonomy (Crenshaw et al, 1995).

It was thought to be an intersectionality between critical theory, race, racism, and the law. From this, stemmed '*racialism*'. According to Crenshaw, racialism is the "theoretical accounts of racial power that explain plain legal and political decisions which are averse to people of color as mere reflections of underlying white interest" (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. xxiv). While Bell and Delgado focused on the term 'colorblindness', Crenshaw preferred to use the term 'color-consciousness'. The idea of CRT is to deconstruct colorblindness, and the idea that removing race decreases discrimination. The deconstruction of colorblindness according to Crenshaw, shows that courts today show "hostility towards race-consciousness but must be deemed a form of race-consciousness in and of itself" (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. xxviii).

Crenshaw's main ideas come from her 1988 article titled "*Race, reform and retrenchment: transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law*". She mentions Bell's idea about the civil rights movement always being a slow, uphill pull, while more current thinkers such as Thomas Sowell believes that the civil rights movement's objective of granting formal equality to all, regardless of race, has already been accomplished (Crenshaw, 1988, pp. 1334). However, formal equality is not the end goal. Societal equality plays a large role in equality in the social sphere. Crenshaw quotes Sowell in her book stating that "equal treatment does not mean equal results" (1995, pp. 105).

While Crenshaw is more optimistic towards society, in her article she celebrates the progress towards racial inequality so far but urges society to continue their commitment for 'more' equality (Crenshaw, 1988, pp. 1333). In the 1980s, there was a colorblind approach to civil rights in the United States, similar to the one Sweden has implemented

in 2014 with the removal of ‘race’ from any legislation or policy. The belief in a colorblind society, according to Crenshaw, makes no sense. By applying a colorblind approach to a population or community that has faced historical and systematic discrimination and have been treated differently, especially if this difference in treatment is still present today even if the legislations and policies are ‘better’¹⁶. From a Swedish perspective, society still differentiates among those who are Roma, and those who are not. In this case, colorblindness somehow removes the responsibilities of the state to acknowledge the historical sufferings of the Roma community. Furthermore, as Freeman mentions the perpetrator, colorblindness removes the perpetrator in the equation (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 110). Therefore, this can be seen as a tension between “equality as a process and equality as a result” (Crenshaw, 1988, 1344).

While equality is the end goal, the tension between equality as a result and equality as a process is always present throughout antidiscrimination law. The process to reach equality for the Roma community has had great improvements the past 30 years. However, the cultural disadvantages can be seen as an aftermath of historical systematic discrimination (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 106). Correlating with this are two inferiorities the Roma face: ‘*material subordination*’ and, ‘*symbolic subordination*’. The first kind of subordination refers to “discrimination and exclusion economically subordinated the life chances on almost every level” – being the reason why the Roma today are still falling behind in many areas of life. The second one, deals with “formal denial of social and political equality to all, regardless of their accomplishments” - meaning that the Roma community is inferior to those who are non-Roma. By fostering race-consciousness in everything, symbolic subordination frequently generates tangible disadvantages, limiting various life qualities that should be enjoyed by the Roma community (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 114). Colorblindness is an expression of color-consciousness and is also the result of intensely political decisions.

1.4.1 “Othering”

¹⁶ Definitional question or up for interpretation if it is or is not.

The use of “othering” creates a mindset where society associates the stereotypes of Roma as logical and natural (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 112). Othering can be explained as when people or groups are identified as not fitting into a social group's ‘standards’ and are branded as such. It's a psychological phenomenon that affects how individuals see and treat those who are considered members of the in-group against those who are considered members of the out-group (Cherry, 2020). Examples of this might be the Roma community being labeled as ‘thieves’, ‘stealing babies’, ‘unreliable’ etc. The long-term impacts of this approach, and the stereotypes are often overlooked and are still very present today. It creates an illusion that non-Roma were, and still are superior and one that “cuts across ethnic, gender, and class lines” (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 112). “Otherism” helps create a common identity and a bond between those who have been “othered”. In this sense, racism helps create an illusion of unity when the complete opposite is actually happening.

1.5 Six tenets of CRT

According to Delgado and Stefancic, CRT is built on six tenets. These six major components clarify the notion of CRT which are (1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational; (2) the idea of an interest convergence; (3) the social construction of race; (4) differential racialization (5) Intersectionality and anti-essentialism and (6) unique voice of color (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 6). Nicholas Daniel Hartlep (2009) further develops the idea of Delgado and Stefancic and adds the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling (Hartlep, 2009, pp. 6).

1.5.1 First tenet: Racism is ordinary

According to Hartlep (2009), colorblindness “allow whites to feel consciously irresponsible for the hardships people of color face and encounter daily and, secondly, they also maintain whites’ power and strongholds within society” (Hartlep, 2009, pp. 4). CRT focuses on radical institutional changes, rather than reformist ones, which is why it might be seen as impractical in terms of eliminating structural racism and cultural ethnocentrism. But, CRT in combination with the idea of colorblindness, and the notion that racism and ethnicity have different meanings and intertwine with one another.

CRT emphasizes the issue of differentiating race, and the importance of understanding the “real-world effects on race and racism”. While CRT and colorblindness both set out to confront a racist discourse, it also stresses the effects race and racism have on people that do not fall into the category ‘white’. CRT is an important aspect to the analysis of this thesis in understanding that the basis of discrimination does not lie at an individual level but beyond that. To eliminate racism and discrimination at an individual level, people must first comprehend the severity of racism at institutional, social, economic, political, and historical levels in everyday life (De La Garza, 2015). As opposed to the individuals being theoretical subjects, CRT sees the individuals as the subject of the theory (Carlson, 2011).

Before analyzing the answers from the interviewees, it is crucial to understand the perceived weakness of CRT and the notion of objectivity. Discrimination and racial microaggressions¹⁷ might be widespread but racism is normally complicated to identify objectively. Racial bias originates in various factors and will always exist, whether people like it or not. By taking note of this criticism, it is also important to know that CRT scholars do not agree with these critiques. They claim that racism is a scenario that is "historically utilized to justify inequality and defect racial critique," (Cobb, 2021), rather than a challenging situation to examine through a non-objectifying lens. By making society ‘colorblind’ it erases the historical struggles the Roma have had to face for generations. By using affirmative action, limiting, and rewording policies there might be an increase for rights and inclusivity, rather than the opposite because racism has been treated as something ‘ordinary’. The judgment, according to Bell, demonstrates that the United States Supreme Court values a form of default color blindness, such as the removal of race, rather than a conscious understanding of the term and the need to correct historical wrongs (Cobb, 2021).

1.5.2 Second tenet: Interest convergence

¹⁷ “Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.” (Derald Wing et al., 2007, pp. 1)

Interest convergence, also known as material determinism, “is the notion that whites will allow and support racial justice/progress to the extent that there is something positive in it for them, or a “convergence” between the interests of whites and non-whites” (Hartlep, 2009, pp. 4). *Brown vs. the Board of Education* is a clear example of interest convergence. Bell believed that the United States Supreme Court’s decision was due to interest convergence between whites and blacks. Historical research proves this to be right. The US Department of Justice received messages from the US State Department about siding with desegregation advocates in order to improve the international image of the United States (Duignan, 2021). This also comes to show that the decision was based on self-interest to help the white elite, rather than standing up for the equality of blacks. The second tenet adds another dimension to CRT as it benefits both the interests of the white elite (materially) and the white working class (physically) (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 7).

1.5.3 Third tenet: Race as a social construct

CRT acknowledges that race is a social construct. SIRB contributed immensely to the idea of race, and how in this regard, Roma individuals can be categorized into one. Sweden’s approach during the second half of the 20th century shifted and instead, race is now seen as something taboo and not to be mentioned. While the division of race had been present around the world before SIRB was established, it aggravated the idea of the Swedish minorities belonging to a non-white race. Sweden’s dark history of race biology and the widening of the gap of a racial society is partly the reason why the Roma still suffer from institutional systematic discrimination (Carlson, 2011).

Crenshaw argues that while race is a social construct, for those living it, it is very real. Race was produced by law and is still sustained by both laws and various social customs. It was created by categorizing human beings, which were thought to be either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ characteristics. These ‘good’ vs ‘bad’ categories are arranged in a hierarchical way and are what creates stereotypes and widens the inequality gap. These racial hierarchies cannot be improved by applying a colorblind, race-neutral approach in law, policies, or legislations (Crenshaw et al, 1995, pp. 114 - 115).

1.5.4 Forth tenet: Differential racialization

Differential racialization is a rather newly developed idea on the notion of CRT, it discusses the many consequences of differential racialization. Both legal and social science scholars have highlighted the shifting racialization in regard to various minority groups. The shift is done in the labor market at different times and dependent on the dominant society. At times a specific minority group might be beneficial for the greater public in the agricultural or entertainment industry. The idea of which minority group that is being racialized by the dominant society lies in stereotypes and popular images which change over time. At one point in time, there might be a positive and happy outlook on Roma, in relation to entertainment, movies etc.; While on the other hand, the conditions change and they are instead shown and seen as something scary, out of control, not reliable. This brings it back to the 'good' and 'bad' social construct of race. It changes with the wind, and both media and society play a very large role in maintaining a positive or negative view of the Roma community (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 8). In fact, the legislations during the 20th century benefited non-white persons and it wasn't until the FCNM in 2000 that the minority population were officially included.

1.5.5 Fifth tenet: Intersectionality and anti-essentialism

Intersectionality, as previously mentioned, is the notion that no one has an easily stated identity, everyone has overlapping conflicting identities and loyalties. A Roma woman might be Muslim, or Catholic, high-income, or a single mother. It is the idea that many different factors need to be considered, whether it be sex, age, gender identity, political stance, attained educational level, background, ethnicity, race, nationality, and so on (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 9).

1.5.6 Sixth Tenet: Unique voice of color

The sixth tenet is closely related to Delgado's earlier idea of highlighting the voice of minorities. Time and time again, white scholars cite one another and the same goes for research concerning minority groups. The voice of minorities, those who have lived the experiences, hold that because of their different histories and oppressions by society and the state. Scholars and writers who are not members of those communities are unlikely to be aware of the problems and may not completely comprehend the larger picture. Without

mention, it is implied that those belonging to a minority have interpretive authority to speak about race, discrimination, and racism (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp. 10) ‘Legal storytelling’ is used as a method in CRT to understand racism from the individual's point of view, and one’s own experience with it. While this study is a qualitative one, this important aspect of the CRT is strengthened in understanding the complexity of racism (Memetovic, 2021, pp. 9).

1.5.7 Hartlep: Storytelling and counter-storytelling

Hartlep’s idea of storytelling, comes from its potential to unlearn frequently held views thought to be true, through persuasive, explanatory, and powerful abilities. These views derive from school being a neutral space, treating everyone justly and equality. However, research shows that graduation rates state the opposite. While school is meant to be neutral and have neutral teaching methods, this thesis has previously mentioned the lack of knowledge and information on the Swedish national minorities, including Roma. This ignorance further widens both the knowledge gap, and inequality. The curriculum in Swedish schools is decided by the State, and even so, the levels of education differ in various parts of the country, and according to CRT it was “structured around mainstream white, middle-class values” (Hartlep, 2009, pp. 10-11). Given the disparity in the educational system, CRT's counter-storytelling is a crucial tool. The genuine stories would never be publicly announced without CRT's counter-storytelling principle, and the world may learn to believe and perceive that everything was well.

1.6 Swedish Context

“The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race” (Carlson, 2011 pp. 32)

Sweden adopted many of its earlier anti-discrimination legislations for many of the same reasons as the United States supreme court “accepted” Brown vs. Board of Education; because of international pressure and to protect its reputation as being ‘good’, and lead by example. Another angle to the drafting and ratifications of legal instruments is distancing itself from the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology (SIRB) as much as possible, and any connection regarding eugenics (Carlson, 2011, pp. 42). According to

the author, Sweden has what is called a ‘false universalism’ meaning a belief that every person is equal, when they are not.

In fact, Sweden has adopted a colorblind ideology which was first used to hide and protect white privilege but has been also used to ‘remove’ race from the vocabulary contributing to even more racism in some ways. Without acknowledging the race, it also removes the historical struggles and violations caused by the government and various authorities along with the Swedish people. By eliminating race in Sweden, racial profiling is rarely talked about, and as clearly stated earlier, is still happening to this day. According to Carlson (2011, pp. 27), previously conducted studies demonstrate that individuals make decisions based on race, which has been proven altogether in example regarding education, the labor market and housing.

1.7 Colorblindness in Swedish legislation

Swedes have a commonly shared and accepted idea about colorblindness. Even so, the Roma (among other groups) are frequently being discriminated against based on their ethnicity, which contradicts racial colorblindness’ main idea. As will be mentioned in chapter II, the absence of the term ‘race’ in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567), is due to a change in political discourse. As written by Sayaka Osanami Törngren¹⁸ (2015) in her article *‘Does Race matter in Sweden? Challenging colorblindness in Sweden’*, in 2001 the Swedish Parliament proposed to eliminate the word race, which is why it was removed as a basis of discrimination from the afore mentioned act in 2009. Moreover, in 2014, the Government not only decided to completely erase the word from all current legislations but also to reinstall a new one in order to enhance the idea of Sweden as a colorblind State. However, there is still no word equivalent to race, at least in an official context. To further this notion, colorblindness is not just incorporated into legislations, but also minority policy focusing on ethnicity (Osanami Törngren, 2015, pp. 127). In 2022, Osanami Törngren along with Karen L. Suyemoto wrote another article on the notion of ‘race’ and moving ‘beyond race’. The article discusses the idea that Swedish society often refer to how “racism is everywhere” yet state that race does not matter. The way these arguments contradict each other is something these authors highlight in their

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2022 commentary piece. These phrases not only minimize the struggles of those exposed to racism but also act as a “refusal to undo the effects of privilege and oppression” (Osanami Törngren and Suyemoto, 2022).

One of Sweden’s leading scholars in the field of colorblindness is Tobias Hübinett, who describes colorblindness in within Swedish society as it being “difficult to utter the word race in everyday speech, and it is equally uncomfortable to talk about white and non-white Swedes” (Hübinett and Hylten-Cavallius, 2014, pp. 30). Similarly, Osanami Törngren (2015) argues that discrimination and racism is still widely spread because of the reluctance Swedes have in admitting that the idea of race still exists (pp. 127). This has two possible explanations, one being that the Swedish Government decided to ‘eliminate’ the word from legislations and policies, and the second one related to SIRB. Remembering that Sweden was the leading State in eugenics¹⁹ less than a century ago, it is clear to see that the effects race and racism had on multiple generations is still present. Some of which were alive when SIRB was fully operating. In fact, the Roma were once labeled as a ‘race’, which is clear when looking back at the eugenics and SIRB in Sweden from a historical perspective. By explicitly trying to demonstrate that race and ethnicity are synonymous with each other when they are not.

Combining this with the idea of colorblindness, it is important to accentuate that since Sweden does not label individuals into races, but ethnicities, the overall structural discrimination towards Roma originates from the idea of them being of another race. Unlike conducting quantitative research, qualitative research with a CRT lens provides the possibility to validate the lived experiences of the Roma community by amplifying their voices (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

By removing the term race from Swedish legislation, the government is in some way removing the struggles that go with the term. Sweden had a SIRB for a very long time, and by not acknowledging that or the historical discrimination faced by the community, based on race, not ethnicity, it removes the severity of the issue. It is done for the good, and not ‘seeing race’, arguing that we are all one ‘race’. But the government seems to

¹⁹ Another word describing racial biology. The idea was ‘bettering’ and eugenicists across the world believed that via genetics and inheritance, they could perfect humans and eradicate so-called societal evils.

forget that they were the ones who started racial biology and openly categorized people based on race.

2. Conclusion

CRT started as a movement focusing on racism, race, and power. Its key thinkers were influential professors, civil society, and students. It began with the struggles black people in the United States were facing on an everyday basis, and evolved into a theory embracing all minorities, in the United States and internationally. It can easily be applicable to the Swedish context considering the Roma have been historically discriminated based on their race and ethnicity. CRT revolves around six tenets, the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational; the idea of an interest convergence; the social construction of race; differential racialization Intersectionality and anti-essentialism, and unique voice of color. These are further strengthened by the notion of storytelling and counter storytelling. All tenets somewhat overlap with one another and explains the issue of discrimination on a deeper level to understand the various levels to racism and discrimination.

Chapter II

The Roma: anti-Roma racism, who they are and where they are from

1. Introduction:

Chapter two of this thesis aims to describe various definitions, historical contexts and comprehend the implications of historical discrimination to understand the current situation. First, the chapter sets out to distinguish between the definitions of ‘discrimination’ in Sweden, revealing the definitions associated with this research and arguing for why to proceed or start using the term ‘anti-Roma racism’ instead of the more commonly used terms, such as Antiziganism or antigypsyism. Second, it aims at describing where the Roma originate from, and who they are looking at it from both a macro and micro level, explaining the differences between the Roma groups in Sweden and why they are categorized differently. Third, to explain the influx and differences of Roma in Sweden, this chapter sets out to briefly describe Roma migration historically and recently as well as the Roma ban from 1914. Further, the chapter includes the portrayal of Roma in mainstream media due to the heavy influence it has nowadays and how that could potentially shape the direction of prejudice against the community both locally, and internationally. Lastly, the end of the chapter focuses on the historical structural discrimination by Swedish authorities that has been ongoing for decades. This part is important to understand the underlying issues today, and as an overview to the preventative frameworks that has followed due to this discrimination. It is important to mention that the government published a white paper in 2014, which is going to be briefly examined in this part, while looking at the specifics and possible changes by looking at the findings.

The discrimination against the community isn't a recent one, but rather one that has been ongoing for generations. A recent study by YouGov²⁰ from 2015, concluded that 45 percent of the Swedish population have a negative perception of Roma, compared to 36 percent against Muslims in Sweden, and between six and eight percent against black, people identifying as homosexual and Jews (Dahlgreen, 2015). Due to ethnocentrism²¹ and long widespread misconception and stereotyping of the community, there is a lack of understanding and knowledge of the Roma, their culture, and their language in Sweden.

“The purpose of this Act is to combat discrimination and in other ways promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age” (SFS 2008:567).

2. Various variants of Discrimination

The Roma population in Sweden has experienced systematic discrimination for generations. They have not been able to partake in political activities, enjoy formal education alongside their Swedish peers, have no issues finding housing or work. Besides all these essentials, the community has faced further violations of their human rights. In 2013, Dagens Nyheter (DN), one of Sweden's biggest newspapers reported on yet another illegal list tracking individuals from the Roma community. The history of keeping records of the Roma community is what made it near impossible for families to find and sustain housing, which is still an issue today that will be further discussed in the final chapter of this thesis. Moreover, long before that, the women of the Roma community in Sweden were also exposed to forced sterilization along with Roma women all over Europe. For this reason, this chapter will highlight the lists, records and how the Swedish police and authorities have answered to these illegal activities including the measures taken on how to tackle the discrimination against the Roma community.

Before outlining the different definitions and explanations to who the Roma are, this section will underline the difference between direct and indirect discrimination as written

²⁰ YouGov is a global public opinion and data company based in the United Kingdom.

²¹ Ethnocentrism means that individuals or societies see their own culture as the 'correct' way of living.

in section 4 of the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567). It criminalizes six forms of discrimination: (1) Direct discrimination, (2) Indirect discrimination, (3) Inadequate accessibility²², (4) Harassment, (5) Sexual harassment²³, and (6) Instructions to discriminate²⁴ (SFS 2008:567, pp. 3(27)). This thesis mainly focuses on direct and indirect discrimination, as well as harassment (DO, 2022). It is important to highlight three things. First, the definition of ethnicity within the Discrimination Act (2008:567) that is stated under section 5.3 depends on their “national or ethnic origin, skin colour or other similar circumstance”. Second, it is important to highlight the absence of the term ‘race’ in the Discrimination Act, which was briefly mentioned in chapter I and will be mentioned further in this section (SFS 2008:567, pp. 3(27)). Lastly, Act 2008:567 protects individuals, not organizations or companies.

1. Direct discrimination: that someone is disadvantaged by being treated less favorably than someone else is treated, has been treated or would have been treated in a comparable situation, if this disadvantaging is associated with sex, transgender identity or expression, *ethnicity*, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

2. Indirect discrimination: that someone is disadvantaged by the application of a provision, a criterion or a procedure that appears neutral but that may put people of a certain sex, a certain transgender identity or expression, *a certain ethnicity*, a certain religion or other belief, a certain disability, a certain sexual orientation or a certain age at a particular disadvantage, unless the provision, criterion or procedure has a legitimate purpose and the means that are used are appropriate and necessary to achieve that purpose.

²² 3. Inadequate accessibility: that a person with disability is disadvantaged through a failure to take measures for accessibility to enable the person to come into a situation comparable with that of persons without this disability where such measures are reasonable on the basis of accessibility requirements in laws and other statutes, and with consideration to:

- the financial and practical conditions,
- the duration and nature of the relationship or contact between the operator and the individual, and
- other circumstances of relevance.

²³ 5. Sexual harassment: conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone’s dignity.

²⁴ 6. Instructions to discriminate: orders or instructions to discriminate against someone in a manner referred to in points 1–4 that are given to someone who is in a subordinate or dependent position relative to the person who gives the orders or instructions or to someone who has committed herself or himself to performing an assignment for that person.

4. Harassment: conduct that violates a person's dignity and that is associated with one of the grounds of discrimination sex, transgender identity or expression, *ethnicity*, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

Further, it is important to understand the difference between harassment and discrimination in relation to this thesis and the answers submitted by the interviewees. Harassment is always discrimination, but discrimination does not always have to be harassment. Discrimination has a power dynamic element; the more powerful members of society can discriminate against someone but not the other way around.

Meanwhile, harassment occurs when there is no power balance between the individuals involved. Everything that does not fall under one of the categories for the grounds of discrimination²⁵ is instead classified as a violation or abusive treatment. Like harassment and discrimination, feeling violated can be direct or indirect, however, violating someone is an assault, where a group or an individual violates the dignity of another person. Unlike the grounds of discrimination, the person who violates another can do so without meaning any harm. Therefore, it is enough for the victim to feel threatened or uncomfortable to be considered a violation, but not enough to be considered illegal (SFS 2008:567; DO, 2022).

When the Swedish constitution or Swedish Instruments of Government were adopted in 1809, they did not include individual rights upon drafting. They have since been updated in 1974. The second draft involved individual rights after involvement from the public. The act was redrafted in 2011, when the word race was eliminated from the Swedish constitution.

“No act of law or other provision may imply the unfavourable treatment of anyone because they belong to a minority group by reason of ethnic origin, colour, or other similar circumstances or on account of their sexual orientation”²⁶ (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015).

In 1986, Sweden's first discrimination Act was established (SFS 1986:442). It was in 1986 DO was first established (then under a different name), and the DO known today

²⁵ Sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

²⁶ Article 12; The protection against discrimination.

has been operating since its reform in 2009 when race was removed from all legislation. The second Act was drafted in 1994 (SFS 1994:134) to be in line with EU law which prohibited direct and indirect discrimination. It was first after 1999 with the implementation of following EU guidelines that ethnic discrimination was brought to Swedish court as the 1986 Act had no sanctions. The 1999 Act was replaced with a new one in 2008 (SFS 2008:567), which came into effect in 2009 and is the one currently enforced today. In 2008, race had been removed from the newly written Act due to the legislative bill. The evolution of the Act and removal of race completely from all Swedish legislation demonstrated that a biological concept of race simply was no longer accepted. Application by Swedish courts of anti-discrimination law related to ethnic discrimination has been very restrictive (Carlson, 2011, pp. 42).

3. Antiziganism, ‘Zigenare’ and ‘Gypsy’

The phrase to describe discrimination against Roma individuals has various names. It can either be called Antiziganism, antigypsyism or anti-Romaism/anti-Roma racism. “Antiziganism,” “antigypsyism,” “anti-Romaism”... these are names given in many European countries to the processes/phenomena of discrimination, racism, ignorance, neglect and marginalisation against the “conceptual Gypsy.” - (Selling et al. 2015, pp. xi)

“Antiziganism is an enduring latent structure of perceptions hostile to the Roma as a collective, which are manifested on the individual level as attitudes and in culture as myths, ideology, popular traditions and imagery, and in actions - social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Roma, and collective or state violence - which results in and / or aims to alienate, drive away or annihilate Roma precisely because they are Roma” (SOU 2010:55, pp. 166). Parallel to anti-Roma racism there is what is called ‘filoziganism’, which can be described as a form of “positive discrimination”. Filoziganism uses mystification, culturalization and stereotyping to portray the Roma community without negative connotations (Pollack & Roosvall, 2015).

Antiziganism and antigypsyism originate from derogatory terms referring to Roma as ‘zigenare’²⁷ and ‘gypsy’. The word ‘zigenare’ derives from Greece, when the Roma

²⁷ Swedish term for ‘gypsy’

population were mistaken for another ethnic group called *Astiganoi*, giving them the Slavic name *Cigani*, also known as ‘zigenare’ in Swedish. The English term ‘gypsy’ developed from the word ‘Egyptian’, thinking that the Roma were in fact, Egyptians (Regeringskansliet, 2010). In 2010, the Roma delegation considered Antiziganism an acceptable term for the discrimination against the Roma community, parallel to Helen Fein’s²⁸ definition of discrimination against the Jewish population, antisemitism (Selling, 2014, pp. 13).

The term ‘gypsy’ or ‘zigenare’ is not one commonly used by the Roma community themselves since most of the Roma population consider this a derogatory term. While some choose to distance themselves from it, others still use it in their daily language to refer to themselves (Amnesty International, 2015). In 2013, a famous Swedish activist stated that “the most vulnerable people are we, the gypsies. And I want to be called a gypsy, not a Roma”²⁹ (Ur Samtiden, 2013). Some members of the community use it as a way to reclaim the word and remove the power of the slur. The term Roma comes from the Roma language itself, Romani Chib³⁰. Although Romani Chib has different dialects, the word Roma originates from the Romani language itself meaning *man, human or define national affiliation* (ISOF, 2021). According to the Swedish Academy’s glossary³¹, the official definition of a Roma is “a male member of a people that is considered to originate from Northern India and has been scattered i.a. across Europe (often exposed for discrimination)”³² (SAOL, 2015).

Due to the derogatory associations with the terms originating in Antiziganism and antigypsyism, as well as the terms not being created by the community themselves. I have chosen to use the term anti-Roma racism when referring to discrimination against the Roma community to respect the wishes of those identifying as part of the Roma community.

²⁸ Professor specialized in human rights, genocide, collective violence etc. Also works as a historical Sociologist.

²⁹ Translated from “*Det mest utsatta folket, det är vi zigenare. Och jag vill kallas zigenare, inte rom*”.

³⁰ Romani Chib is a collective name for the many Romani dialects spoken across the world. Those currently spoken in Sweden include: Lovari, Arli, Kalderash, Gurbeti, Polish Romani, Bugurdzi, Kale and Swedish Romani (ISOF, 2021).

³¹ In Swedish the official name is SAOL, short for Svenska Akademiens Ordlista

³² Translated from the original in Swedish “*manlig medlem av ett folk som an-ses här-stamma från norra Indien och som spritts bl.a. över Europa (och ofta ut-satts för diskriminering)*”

“My preferred term [...] is anti-Roma racism because it’s straight to the point and doesn’t obscure the actual problem” - Romaniuprising³³

4. Where do the Roma originate from?

The Roma community have their roots in Northern India and immigrated during the 11th century to ‘the west’, to what is today known as Europe. The Roma in Sweden date back to the 16th century, when the first Roma settled and became known as Travellers³⁴. Since then, many different groups have settled in Sweden over time. The Swedish Roma immigrated to Sweden in the later part of the 19th century, they did so until the Roma ban³⁵ in 1914. The ban was lifted in 1954, that is when the remaining Roma groups immigrated to Sweden mainly from Eastern Europe. According to Jan Selling, a Swedish professor of Roma Studies, there is a difference between ‘gypsies’ and Roma. To define ‘gypsies’ Selling states that: “preliminarily, my answer is that it is about ideas, fantasies, and prejudices about Roma. The term has often been used to denote Roma. Sometimes it has been used for people who are not Roma, but who match fantasies and prejudices of Roma.” (Selling, 2014, pp. 11).

According to the first state report from Sweden on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in 2001, the Roma have filed many complaints to the Equality Ombudsman (DO) on the basis of being “treated less favorably than the majority population in various ways” (Council of Europe, 2001. pp. 47). DO works to combat ethnic discrimination (among others) in Sweden and to promote equal rights and opportunities. It monitors compliance with the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and works on behalf of the Swedish Parliament.

Considering the history of discrimination against the Roma community from government agencies, authorities, and the common people it is not difficult to see the lack of trust in different governmental agencies and authorities. This study along with a report the EU

³³ Romaniuprising is an Instagram page run by a Roma activist from Sweden. Her name is Juni and she frequently posts about the issues that Roma face on a daily basis.

³⁴ Resandefolket

³⁵ The ban will be further explained in this chapter when explaining the migration of Roma.

Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) did in 2020 showcases that the majority of the Roma community does not report discrimination to DO or the police.

5. Roma in Europe

Europe is home to the largest population of Roma, they are the most populated ethnic minority with 10 to 12 million people all over the continent, with most of them living in Central and Eastern Europe and six million being EU citizens. There is no reliable number of the estimates of the population of the Roma community because some do not have proper documentation, some live in isolated slums and for countries like Sweden where the person themselves define if they are Roma or not also makes the estimates difficult. Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Germany, and the United Kingdom recognize the Roma as a *national* minority, while Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Poland recognize the Roma as an *ethnic* minority. The countries around Europe that do not provide the Roma with the status of an ethnic minority, deprive the community of their full access to their rights. Specifically, actions and policies to fight discrimination (Crowley et al., 2013, pp. 16).

Many Roma around Europe still face daily discrimination, segregation, and exclusion from society (Amnesty, 2015). The previously mentioned study by YouGov demonstrates the intolerance and negative impressions that Denmark, Finland, France, Britain, Germany, Norway, and Sweden have. Comparing the numbers between different minority groups around Europe, there is a clear indication on how the Roma community suffer from the most negative impressions (*see figure 1*).

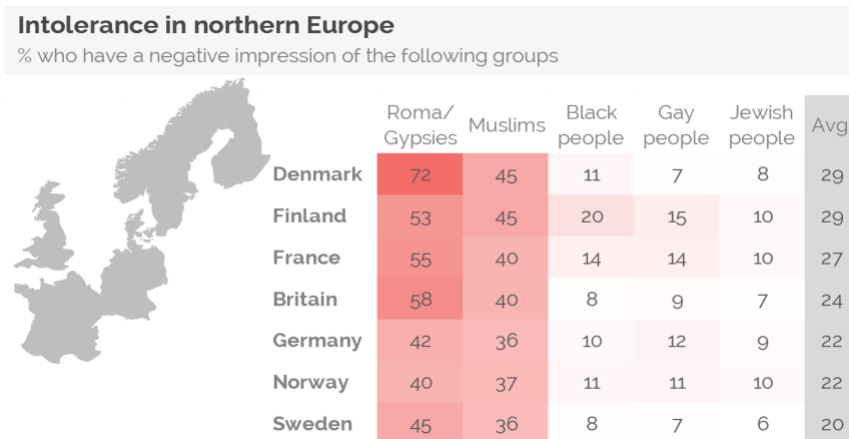


Figure 1: Intolerance in northern Europe (Dahlgreen, 2015)

Figure 2 clearly demonstrates in the bar chart that 50 percent of Roma and Travellers³⁶ in Sweden have experienced some form of discrimination in the past year. Seen below are the results from a 2020 survey the FRA answering the question “Discrimination in the past 12 months in 10 areas of life”. The ten areas of life include “when looking for work; at work; in education; when in contact with school personnel as a parent or a guardian; in access to healthcare; in housing; when using public transport; at administrative offices; when entering a nightclub, restaurant or hotel; and when entering a shop” (FRA (a), 2020).

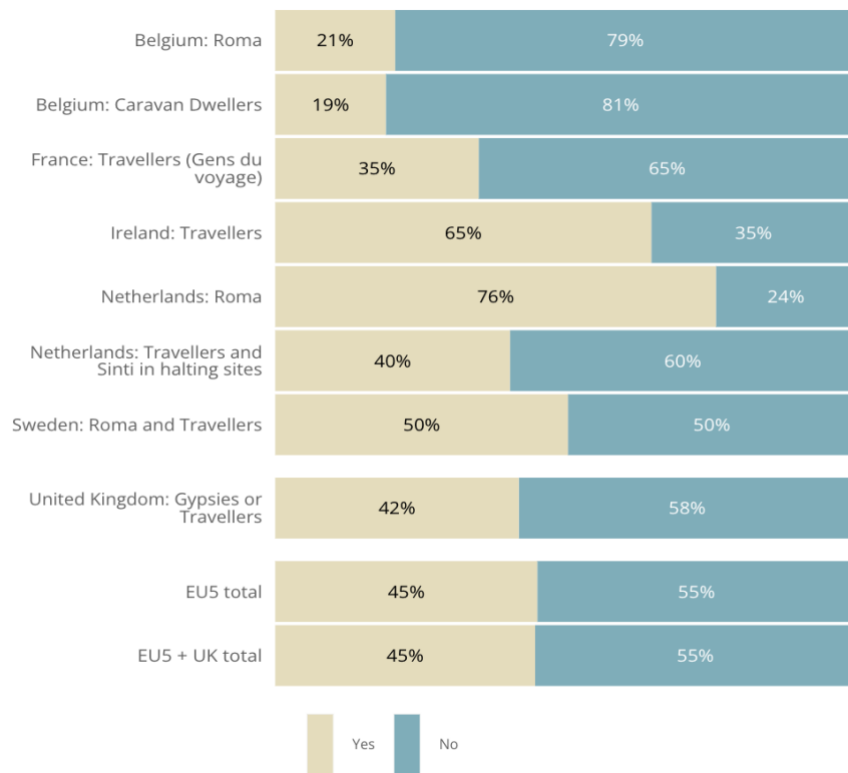


Figure 2: (HI_1_ANTGY), (FRA (a), 2020).

6. Who are the Roma in Sweden?

³⁶ Resandefolket

Since 2000, the Roma community in Sweden have been recognized as one of the five official national minorities³⁷. Even though they are officially recognized as one, many *gadje* are not aware of this, they are not aware of Romani Chib, and the fact that it is a minority language. The estimated Roma population varies from source to source; the official website for all Swedish minorities, *minoritet.se*, estimates it to be 50 to 100.000 people, while the Council of Europe estimated there are approximately 42.500. There is no record on exactly how many people belong to any minority in Sweden due to not supporting such statistics for historical reasons of keeping illegal records of various minority groups. It also has to do with self-determination and self-identification of belonging to a national minority. Since Sweden has this system in place, the authorities cannot demand people to prove their affiliation with one or more national minorities (Regeringskansliet, 2020).

Various Swedish municipalities have stated that they would like to see intersectional perspectives within different Roma communities. The Roma are not a homogenous group, but consist of groups with various origins, with different cultures and languages. According to the delegation of Roma issues, grouping the Roma as a homogenous group is a major factor to why there has been a large misconception of who the Roma are, their culture and their various languages, and “ [the] traditions of the Roma have not always been accepted by the surrounding society, which has meant that many Roma felt that they are discriminated against” (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 47; Government Communication, 2012, pp. 10-11).

In Sweden, the Roma are divided into five recognized official minority subgroups; *Travellers*³⁸, *Swedish Roma*³⁹, *Finish Roma (Kalé)*⁴⁰, *Non-Nordic Roma*⁴¹ and ‘*Recently-arrived-Roma*’⁴² (Selling (a), 2013). Within these groups there are various sub-groups. This thesis will focus on the five groups and not go into specifics on sub-groups within the major groups.

³⁷ The five groups are: Roma, Finish Roma, Sami, Tornedals and Jews.

³⁸ Resandefolket

³⁹ Svenska romer

⁴⁰ Finska romer

⁴¹ Utomnordiska romer

⁴² Nyanlända romer

7. Five Roma sub-groups

Defining the five different groups is challenging, because the Roma are not a homogenous group, neither are any of the subgroups. Within each sub-group, there are various sub-groups that might identify with one or more. The intersectionality between the groups, gender and age is difficult to establish. In this section of the chapter, there will be a brief explanation for each group, however, it is important to understand that the groups are much more complex than what is described below.

7.1 Travellers

Travellers are the biggest group in Sweden. They arrived in the 16th century, and according to the official website for minorities in Sweden, they make up half the Roma population. In contrast to the other sub-groups, it is not uncommon for a Roma to marry a *gadje*. While in the other groups this might be seen as going against the cultural norms and values. Travellers often do not assimilate themselves with the word Roma, but instead want to be associated with the word Romano. They are usually referred to as Travellers in the international arena (Pettersson, 2021).

7.2 Swedish Roma

The Swedish Roma can somehow be seen as a problematic term to some Roma groups because it takes away the focus of other groups as to think they are not 'Swedish'. Both Kalé and Travellers are part of The Roma communities living in Sweden since the 16th and 17th century. The so-called Swedish Roma have been in Sweden since the 19th century and are most known as the Kalderash families, but include many more (Pettersson, 2021). They immigrated from what is today known as Russia, and France (Köljing and Hultqvist, 2013).

7.3 Finnish Roma

Finish Roma, also known as Kalé were once part of the Swedish Roma, but during the Finnish war the Kalé were considered Finish Roma as a result of the region now being part of an autonomous region known as the Grand Duchy Finland, still part of the Russian Empire (Zetterberg, 2017). In the mid 20th century, there was a greater influx of Kalé

into Sweden. The Kalé are often recognized based on their typical clothing that many people within the community still wear. Kalé often refer to themselves as *Kaale* (the black) or *kaalengo tšimb* (the black's language), the latter one is the Kalé way of referring to it (Pettersson, 2021).

7.4 Non-Nordic Roma

Non-Nordic Roma have their roots in eastern Europe and started immigrating to Sweden in the 1960s, with a bigger influx in the 1970s and 1980s (Pettersson, 2021).

7.5 'Recently-arrived Roma'

Lastly, what is called the 'Recently-arrived Roma' are Roma that primarily sought refuge from the Balkan war in the 1990s. With more countries joining the EU, more Roma have been entering Sweden. One of these countries is Romania, home to the largest Roma population in Europe. They became members of the EU in 2007, and Roma from Romania have since moved to Sweden. Although they move to Sweden, they often live outside of society and are battling poverty and homelessness. For many, it is difficult to find housing as well as being integrated into the labor market (Melin, 2017; Köljning and Hultqvist, 2013).

8. Romani Chib

Romani Chib⁴³ is the collective name for the language spoken by the various Roma sub-groups. All sub-groups have their own dialects and variants of the language. Furthermore, the Roma have a wide range of languages. with about 20 different variants of the language, as well as most European languages (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 200). Swedish Romani, Finish Romani (Kalé), Lovari, Kalderash and Arli are the five official variants of the language. This is based on official information from authorities being translated into these five dialects (Carling et al., 2016, pp. 11).

⁴³ Also known as: Romska, romanès, romani, romani chib, čhib eller šib depending on the dialect spoken (Minoritet, 2020).

In 2009, the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (SFS 2009:724) was implemented, as well as the Language Act (SFS 2009:600). Section 7 of the Language Act, under ‘The national minority languages’ in the Language Act (SFS 2009:600) states that Romani Chib is one of the five official minority languages. Article 4 § under General Provisions in the Language Act (SFS 2009:600) states that the Act’s responsibility is to protect and promote the national minority languages. Romani Chib is not considered a territorially attached language, therefore there are no administrative offices operating on this, compared to minority languages such as Sami in the north of Sweden that do. Even so, the Government of Sweden argues that it is important to continuously take steps to strengthen all minority languages. Since 2019, when the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (SFS 2009:724) was strengthened, the Roma community has had the right to be provided with elderly care in Romani Chib. However, this is only applicable when the municipalities have access to personnel that master the language, which is something all municipalities should strive for but do not have the workforce to currently achieve (Regeringskansliet, 2020).

Further, under the strengthened Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (SFS 2009:724), national minorities shall be given the possibility to acquire, cultivate and develop their mother tongue as well as their cultural identity and heritage. They shall have the possibility to pass down the language and culture to each sequential generation. There also has to be the possibility of reviving the language for those who have forgotten it, those who have never known the language, or those who only heard it as children (Regeringskansliet, 2020).

9. Migration

There have been multiple waves of Roma migration since they first stepped foot in Sweden in 1512. This section is going to focus on three specific times of migration; 1914 to 1954, during the Roma ban in Sweden, the time post the Roma ban when all groups except the Travellers and Swedish Roma migrated to Sweden, mainly from Eastern Europe, and 2007 when Romania and Bulgaria both joined the EU.

The Roma ban was in force between 1914 and 1954, covering a period of time that includes both world wars. The ban ‘Ban on Certain Foreigners Residing in the Country’ was implemented as a starting point of the eugenics taking place in Sweden during the early 20th century to fight ‘undesired migration’ (2014:8, pp. 141, 143). The Roma were collectively considered a danger to society for 40 years, and therefore needed to be rejected from entering Sweden (DS 2014:8, pp. 145). The first paragraph of the Act (SFS 1914:196) states that “Foreign gypsies, also being foreigners, who clearly have the intention of seeking to support themselves through begging or who, during their travels from place to place, make their living by the performance of music, exhibition of animals or some other similar employment, shall, upon their arrival in the country or immediately thereafter, be refused entry by the police authority.” (DS 2014:8, pp. 146). In 1927, the act was revised and replaced with the Right to Reside in the Country Act (SFS 1927:333). The first paragraph in the fourth chapter highlights provision of Roma migration. The concept of the Act was seen as necessary to Swedish politics and was established to protect the Swedish labor market from foreign workers, and to protect the “Swedish race”, hence, not mixing ‘races’. In 1937, additional adjustments were made to the Right to Reside in the Country Act (SFS 1927:333), which was in place until 1954 when it was abolished (DS 2014:8, pp. 147 – 148).

The problem with the Act (SFS 1927:333) was not only forbidding people from migrating to Sweden, but for those Roma who lived in Sweden to leave and re-enter when leaving the country. Many Roma that had migrated at the end of the 19th century still had family in countries they immigrated from, that they never saw again. This ties back to Roma not being able to legally register with the church or municipality, and therefore were not registered as Swedes, and not officially being recognized as Swedish citizens until 1952, leaving many Roma stateless (DS 2014:8, pp. 148).

The Act (SFS 1927:333) was in place during World War II, when Roma was one of the targeted groups subject to persecution. Although the holocaust is well mentioned in Swedish history books, the fate of Roma is rarely mentioned in relation to holocaust (DS 2014:8, pp. 149). The estimated death toll of Roma during the holocaust differs, while most research states that approximately 500.000 people were victims to the genocide, recent research by Ian Hancock states that the number is closer to 1.5 to 2 million Roma.

Hancock also states that Roma survivors exceed the numbers previously known, strengthening the argument to the much higher death toll than formerly thought (Hancock, 2004). Roma sought refuge in Sweden but were rejected at the border (DS 2014:8, pp. 152).

In 1954, when the Act (1927:333) was abolished, many Roma started migrating to Sweden once again, mainly from eastern Europe. The community was described as having adaptation issues, whether they had recently arrived in Sweden or lived there for decades. It was this perception of Roma that gave idea to the adult school previously mentioned (DS 2014:8, pp. 157).

In 2007, the EU decided to accept Bulgaria and Romania into the union. Since then, many Roma have migrated to Sweden, which has had an increase on discrimination towards this specific Roma group. They are often referred to as “EU Roma”. The media portrayal of these “new” migrants are mostly surrounding the idea that they beg, and do not want to work, strengthening the prejudice that all Roma are poor, need help and beg for money. In 2017, discussion to criminalize begging in Sweden began, which Martin Valfridsson, Sweden's former national coordinator for vulnerable EU citizens, attested. He has previously been against this notion but argued that the criminalization was for the protection of the Roma in particular. This was met with backlash from multiple politicians in Sweden, and ones representing Sweden in the EU. The EU parliamentarian Soraya Post, representing the Swedish party Feminist Initiative, and Irka Cederberg, journalist for SVT⁴⁴ stated that criminalizing begging would only contribute to worsening their situation by removing their secure form of income. Moreover, begging would be criminalized, and the EU Roma would be sent away from their settlements without any options considering their housing situation (Post and Cederberg, 2017).

There was and still is a clear distinction between the political right and political left concerning the Roma beggars in Sweden. The far right wants begging to become illegal and follow a Norwegian and Danish model, while the far left argues that it is inhumane to remove the one source of income that the EU Roma survive on. Not only do they use this money to live, but they also send it back to their families Romania and Bulgaria to

⁴⁴ Known as *Sveriges Television* in Sweden.

ensure the access to health care, medicines and an education for the children left behind. Many of the UPR recommendations and international actors urges Sweden to better care for their EU Roma citizens that have migrated from Bulgaria and Romania.

10. Roma in mainstream media

Media is a very powerful tool in shaping our thoughts and ideas. It is usually our first source of information, and it is where we turn to learn about society around us. The power of mainstream media comes with a great responsibility, which the media often fails to uphold. The lack of responsibility contributes to an extension of social exclusion, hate speech and harassment faced by the community. Further, it decreases their progress in enjoyment of their human rights (Hammarberg, 2011).

According to Robert Brisenstam “the Romani individual is a human being, a real person, but the ‘gypsy’ is more of a concept, an idea far from reality, especially the Romani reality” (2011). This can clearly be seen in mainstream media today. The Council of Europe (CoE) along the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have both commented on the issue and stereotypes about the Roma community continue to be spread and perpetuated in mainstream media across Europe. According to the CoE, journalists and broadcasted media have contributed to more prejudice among the public because of negative portrayal of the community along with xenophobic biased reporting. A major issue with prejudice and discrimination against the community derives from lack of knowledge by the public and is strengthened when there is little to no positive representation of Roma in mainstream media. Since being the largest ethnic minority group in Europe, there needs to be more cultural awareness and acknowledgement of the everyday struggles the Roma face daily. According to the CoE, the mainstream media contributes to this “dangerous trend” and the consequences are not always discrimination and prejudice but can be more fatal and usually originates from hate (Hammarberg, 2011).

Even if the community has little to no representation nor mention in the media, the media that do report on topics related to the Roma community, often have negative implications. It is not always direct hate speech but rather about reporting on situations where the Roma are involved in crimes, about social problems, or showing a representation of the Roma community living outside the law or surviving by begging. Furthermore, describing Roma

as lazy or responsible for their own exclusion because they have chosen not to work or attend formal education (Hammarberg, 2011).

The representation of Roma in the media is very country specific. In Sweden the Roma have their own newspaper and radio channel⁴⁵, all in Romani Chib while in Bulgaria articles comparing the community to animals⁴⁶ are not uncommon. Another example is Italy where the Roma community is very vulnerable, and this has been furthered by negative stereotypes in media and hate speech and negative talks about the community being normalized and accepted in society (Hammarberg, 2011). In 2020, a Portuguese newspaper⁴⁷ released an article interviewing young women about their choice to attend university, describing the traditions of the Roma population in the country while showing a positive image of the Roma community. However, in Portugal the word '*cigano*'⁴⁸ is still widely accepted and used, even in the biggest mainstream media outlets (Neves, 2020).

A study made in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic the representation of Roma in the Romanian media concluded that in the early months of the pandemic, those articles mentioning Roma had fabricated, distorted and stereotypical ways of describing the community and relating the articles to violence and criminality. Furthermore, the study also found that the description of Roma in media is often connected to criminality as a community value. Essentially furthering the widespread stereotypical idea that all individuals identifying as Roma are criminals or partake in criminal activities. Along with the analysis of Romania, Slovenia and Czechia showed similar results with articles presenting the community through stereotypical frameworks (Chiruta, 2021).

In 2015, a study was conducted by the Institute for Media studies⁴⁹ in Sweden. The study analyzes 500 articles from two of the biggest newspapers during a 20-year period by using search optimization tools to look for relevant articles, such as 'Roma' and '*zigenare*'. Following the admittance of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU, the newspapers saw an

⁴⁵ **Newspaper:** Dikko; **Radio station:** Radio Romano by Sveriges Radio (Sweden's Radio broadcaster)

⁴⁶ Such as 'sheep', 'wolves' and 'cattle'.

⁴⁷ The newspaper is called Diário de Notícias.

⁴⁸ Translated to 'gypsy' in English.

⁴⁹ Institutet för mediestudier in Swedish.

increase in written articles between the years 2010 - 2015. The material shows that there are changes during the time frame of the articles chosen, such as changing the use of 'zigenare' to 'Roma', and while many articles describe crimes that Roma partake in, but surprisingly focuses on crimes committed against the Roma community from Romania and Bulgaria. According to this study, Sweden is home to one out of two editorial offices with Roma individuals that speak Romani (the previously mentioned Radio Romano) (Pollack & Roosvall, 2015).

11. The difference between *race* and *ethnicity*

The application through the dimension and framework of CRT to analyze this thesis, is important to understand the complexity of the difference between race and ethnicity and how it has affected the Roma community. In the second half of the 20th century, Sweden made a political shift affecting the use of the term race. Sweden now considers themselves to be a so-called colorblind state, and therefore race was replaced with 'ethnicity' in all legislation and policies. The Roma community are described as an ethnic minority, with no emphasis on race. Although race was replaced with ethnicity, it is important to understand that they are not synonyms to one another. There are various explanations differentiating the two, but according to the National Geographic "“race” is usually associated with biology and linked with physical characteristics such as skin color or hair texture. “Ethnicity” is linked with cultural expression and identification. However, both are social constructs used to categorize and characterize seemingly distinct populations” (Blakemore, 2019).

12. Systematic discrimination by Swedish authorities

“Antiziganist legislation and state action led to among other things a closing of the border for Roma [in Sweden] between 1914–1954, [...] forced abductions of children and forced sterilizations especially hitting Roma Travellers, refusal for Roma families to settle in a municipality more than a few weeks at a time leading to Roma being denied the right to send children to school, denial of child allowances and denial of being registered to vote just to mention a few of the human rights violations of Roma during the past century” (SOU 2010:55, pp. 47).

12.1 White Paper

“The purpose of the White Paper is to acknowledge the victims and their families and to create an understanding of the Roma minority’s situation today by in a historical context highlighting the abuses suffered by Roma and how stereotypes and prejudices have developed and been passed down from generation to generation, and how these have formed the basis of the state policy”⁵⁰ (DS 2014:8, pp. 12).

In 2014, the Government of Sweden published the ‘White Paper’ (DS 2014:8) to highlight and make the public aware of the historical treatment that the Roma community suffered throughout the 20th century. The White Paper brings up various examples of historical violations, however, this thesis will only focus on select violations due to the relevancy of the study and demonstrate a short summary of forced sterilization, the housing crisis, the lack of education, and the absence of political participation.

12.1.1 Forced sterilization and access to healthcare

In 1909 discussions about the desire to establish an institute for race biology emerged. The Swedish Society for Eugenics lobbied for a research center focusing on perspectives on eugenics to understand the development of society (Living History Forum, 2022). In 1921, Sweden was the first country in the world to establish a national institute for race biology called ‘The Swedish State Institute for Race Biology’ (*hereinafter SIRB*) led by Herman Lundborg, a psychiatrist and geneticist, who was appointed director by the Swedish Parliament with the support of all major political parties. The target population of the SIRB was mainly the Swedish indigenous community, Sami but it also examined individuals from the Roma community very closely. Race biology was thought to provide answers to social problems such as, but not limited to, pauperization, alcoholism, and psychiatric diseases, and believed to be connected to industrialism and urbanization. SIRB contributed to the idea of preserving the Swedish race and became a very important institution for racial science in Sweden. In 1959, the institution changed its name to the

⁵⁰ Translated from the original in Swedish “*Syftet med vitboken är att ge ett erkännande åt offren och deras anhöriga och att skapa förståelse för den romska minoritetens situation i dag genom att i ett historiskt sammanhang belysa de övergrepp romer blivit utsatta för och hur stereotyper och fördomar vuxit fram och levt vidare från generation till generation samt hur dessa har fått ligga till grund för den statliga politiken*” (DS 2014:8, pp. 12).

‘Institution of Medical Genetics at Uppsala University’ and became part of the university (Ericsson, 2021; O’Mahony, 2007).

According to the White Paper, 66 people were examined at the SIRB. Among these people were prisoners and alcoholics that had been labeled ‘*gypsies*’⁵¹ by the establishments. At the time, the origin of someone's race established their level of ‘Swedishness’ and the possibilities for the race to assimilate and integrate into the Swedish ‘way of living’ culture and society. The government argued that the origin of one's biology (race) was politically bound and their expected adaptation to society was all in relation to their ‘race’. However, Ericsson (2021) argues that there was no racist or divisional agenda behind the SIRB, the White Paper demonstrates differently. The Swedish Board of Social Affairs⁵² (*Hereinafter the Board*) was aware of the issues of origin. This was the reason why the SIRB was mandated to ‘discover’ whether or not ‘*gypsies*’ *actually* have a similar character and characteristics to those of ‘Swedes’ (DS 2014:8, pp 54). Ericsson (2021), also argues that to recognize racial science, people have to study ‘racialization’ which is the process “by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons that reproduces itself biologically” (Ericsson, 2021). Eugenics was the beginning of the idea behind the Sterilization Act (SOU 1929:14) and the start of racial profiling in Sweden (UCL, 2021).

Sweden drafted a proposal to implement a Sterilization Act in 1929 (SOU 1929:14). The proposal stated that only those giving consent would be sterilized. The purpose of the Act was to “prevent mentally ill and physically defective individuals from having children that they were unable to take care of or who were at risk of inheriting their parents’ risky characteristics” Five years later, in 1934, the Act was adopted and implemented. Between the years of 1934 and 1974, sterilization happened frequently, sterilizing approximately 63.000 women in Sweden. According to the Sterilization Act, only those who were considered to have a mental illness were sterilized without consent, but multiple studies show that consent was sometimes coerced and persuaded by authorities. Furthermore, these studies demonstrate that there was a desire to ‘fix’ the ‘*gypsy*’ problem with

⁵¹ Translated from the original in Swedish “*Tattare*”

⁵² *Socialstyrelsen*

eugenics. Even those women that had already birthed children, or who were pregnant were coerced into sterilization. In 1934, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal published a book called '*Crisis in the Population Question*', explaining how sterilization contributed to one of many methods in establishing a better society and "today it can be said that no other book is as much a manifesto of the Swedish Welfare State" (Ekerwald, 2001, pp. 542).

In 1997, journalist Maciej Zaremba wrote an article for DN revealing that the Swedish social democratic parties were involved in the sterilization process and policies that followed, while in Germany at the height of World War II, it was the Nazis. The Nazis would lecture at SIRB and be called upon as experts. In 1942, the Board in Stockholm orders to "carry out an inventory of *tattare* and '*Gypsies*' in the kingdom"⁵³. The order was agreed upon and signed at a cabinet meeting by the Secretary of State and sent to the SIRB. In 1943, Professor Nils Von Hofsten became the dean of Uppsala university, which is when forced sterilizations began. Von Hofsten wrote the Swedish Parliament arguing that "the so called '*tattare*' at a relatively large extent exhibit mental deformity and thus fall under the sterilization law and can be sterilized without their consent"⁵⁴. It was not the Roma individuals that were the issue, but rather their way of living because they did not fit into the norm of Swedish society. Eugenics discovered in 1945 that the Roma were "unfortunately ethnically Swedish", but the Government refused to acknowledge this until the 1950's and refers to the community as having 'gypsy blood' and 'mixed' in their registers. Zaremba further highlights that sterilization could potentially decrease the number of grantees (Zaremba, 1997). There are no accurate figures of how many Roma were sterilized. The estimated number is 400 to 600 people, at a time when the Roma population was approximately 7000 people (Nylander, 2015; MotAntiziganism, 2022).

During the 1960s and 1970s in Sweden, new perspectives were introduced on research concerning Roma. A Doctor of Social Studies wrote about the ill health of Roma and how it was the responsibility of the state in "The Gypsies in Sweden: a socio-medical study". He argued that the bad health was related to poor housing and poverty. Roma individuals

⁵³ Translated from the original in Swedish "*verkställa inventering av de tattare och zigenare, som finnas inom riket*"

⁵⁴ Translated from the original in Swedish "*de så kallade tatterna i relativt stor utsträckning förete psykisk undermålighet och därigenom falla under steriliseringslagen och kunna steriliseras utan sitt samtycke*"

were not eligible for health insurance, maternity benefits, or labor-injury insurance due to the lack of residency with the church, and later the municipalities. For example, a story from the white paper (DS 2014:8) tells that “When my mother was giving birth, she went to the hospital. But she was not allowed to give birth there. “We do not accept ‘gypsy women’⁵⁵, they said. Therefore, she had to go back to the camp and give birth in a tent. Later, they [the babies] froze to death”⁵⁶ (DS 2014:8, pp. 192)

12.1.2 Formal education without housing

In 1842, compulsory school attendance was implemented for children across Sweden, but Roma children were not included under the law and therefore not allowed in schools, partly due to the lack of residency. The Roma experienced a twofold discrimination because formal education and residency were and are still mutually reinforced, and yet Roma families did not have proper housing or access to a formal education in Swedish schools until the 1960s.

In the 1930s, discussions began on access to schools with suggestions to the King of Sweden, addressing and emphasizing on difficulties regarding educational opportunities for Roma children. The first person to raise questions on this issue, and send these proposals was a Roma activist called Johan Dimitri Taikon. In the beginning of the 1940s, a nation-wide poll on education concluded that 85 to 90% of Roma were illiterate, it was first after this discovery that action was taken to better the Roma children’s level of literacy and education. It was during the same time that the Foundation of Swedish Gypsy Mission⁵⁷, a voluntary church organization, arranged temporary summer school for the children living in camps. The summer schools were abolished in the 1950s, after orders from the authorities (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 199).

12.1.3 Zigenarfrågan

In 1954, two years after the community members were recognized as Swedish citizens, the first immigrant and integration investigation was started to ensure Roma children

⁵⁵ Derogatory term for a Roma woman is ‘zigenarkärring’.

⁵⁶ Translated from the original in Swedish “När min mamma skulle föda, åkte hon in till lasarettet. Men hon fick inte föda där. ”vi tar inte emot zigenarkärringar” sa de. Hon fick därför åka tillbaka till lägret och föda i tält. Senare frös de ihjäl.”

⁵⁷ Known as the *Stiftelsen Svensk Zigenarmission* in Swedish

would attend the same schools as those who were non-Roma. The ministry of social affairs appointed three investigators to study measures for the adaptation of the Roma to Swedish society. In 1956, the investigation was submitted to the ministry. The official Government's report on the investigation, '*Zigenarfrågan*' (SOU 1956:43), aimed to find solutions for the situation of the "unsustainable" mobile Roma to leave their mobile lifestyle behind them, and to integrate Roma children in Swedish schools. The investigators stated that to integrate and adapt to most of the society, the Roma cannot adhere to their traditions (including the mobile lifestyle) (SOU 1956:43, pp. 7).

The investigation (SOU 1956:43) suggested all Roma, although no formal address of registration within the municipality or church, to be integrated in the enrollment of formal education in the Swedish school system. Before the 1940s to 1950s, Roma families, including their children, were not seen as adaptable, assimilated, or able to integrate with non-Roma children. Until this point, Roma children that attend school did so in special classes designed specifically for Roma children, such as the temporary summer schools. The lack of residency with the church was part of why the Roma children had not previously been enrolled in Swedish schools, and instead relied on temporary measures resulting in illiteracy and an overall formally uneducated population (Nordin, 2016).

The school districts were not obliged to accommodate those Roma children not registered within the registered church district the school belonged to. While some schools did, the majority did not. The investigation (SOU 1956:43) states that both mobile Roma children, and those residing in formal housing should have the same access to education. Therefore, the investigators suggested a universal obligation that should be imposed on school districts to receive those mobile Roma children who are not registered with the church where they live. To incentivize the schools to educate Roma children, the schools would receive "reimbursement from state funds of the costs associated with the fulfillment of this obligation"⁵⁸ (SOU 1956:43, pp. 57-60).

The investigation (SOU 1956:43), categorized Roma in need of accommodation into three groups: (1) resident Roma, (2) mobile Roma who seek to live permanently, and (3) mobile Roma who do not intend to settle permanently. The category of Roma who want

⁵⁸ Translated from the original in Swedish "*gottgörelse av statsmedel för de kostnader, som är förenade med fullgörandet av denna skyldighet*"

permanent housing all year round also included those Roma who desired permanent shelter only during the winter. By establishing housing for the majority of Roma that desired a permanent residence, the investigators stated that the minority of Roma that wished to continue living their mobile lifestyle would hopefully change (SOU 1956:43, pp 17-19).

The housing situation was a key matter for the sustainable development of Roma children's integration in Swedish schools (SOU 1956:43, pp. 55, 65). In the 1950s, various types of schools were abolished and combined into one obligatory school (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 202). As of 1960, there was the possibility to claim grants from the government purposely for 'special education' for Roma children (Nordin, 2016).

In the 1960s the Roma community were allowed, for the first time, to reside in one place and did not have to move. The investigation by the government (SOU 1956:43) states that the unsustainable housing situation for the Roma is not exclusively due to the lack of proper establishments but also because of their "practical and psychological reasons"⁵⁹ and needs to be solved by controlling the 'issue' of the Roma culture and their mobile lifestyle (SOU 1956:43, pp. 65 - 66). Although housing was made available for the Roma community, they were not welcome by landlords and neighbors. The housing available came with conditions, some of which Roma were not able to uphold due to previous discrimination and segregation from the state.

12.1.4 Housing

Many Roma were denied registration within the municipality in Sweden, this not only had economic consequences in the form of not receiving child benefit or national pension, but it also affected various other socio-political and democratic conditions. By not being included in the church registrations, the Roma were not allowed to get baptized, married or buried by the church, instead they got married in relation to Roma culture and traditions. This further made Roma parents considered to have their children out of wedlock, something that excluded the Roma from society more than they already were excluded. Children out of wedlock would also only be able to inherit from their mother and were appointed a child welfare officer. The officer was meant to work to better the

⁵⁹ Translated from the original in Swedish "*praktiska och psykologiska skäl*"

situation for the mother and help in case a father was absent. Families were only able to receive child welfare benefits if the child was registered with the church. There was help from the state available, such as social welfare and loans for housing, but with the conditions, such as residency in place, the Roma were not eligible for any of it. On paper, there were no obstacles for mobile Roma to obtain these grants and loans when wanting to become residents. However, the rules were designed so that the applicant had to be known for their good conduct, financial prudence, and willingness to save money in order to be considered for a grant. Another reason the Roma had difficulty being granted housing was the idea of Roma's lifestyle differing too much from that of a Swede (DS 2014:8, pp. 183 - 185).

The white book states that the local tax agency at the time meant that municipalities were aware of and deliberately ensured that Roma did not stay a long time in one place and were sent off so that the municipalities would not be forced to register them in the parish (DS 2014:8, pp. 188). In the 1990s, 13-year-old Thereza Ericsson was living in a house when her grandfather, who owned the house, died. Her and her family had to move into a mobile home taking away the possibility of attending school due to the lack of residency. Although Sweden had had compulsory school attendance for the last 30 years, she was not offered or allowed schooling in seventh and eighth grade (DS 2014:8, pp. 194).

The ability to have residency, along with the universal obligation for schools to accept Roma children without a registration within their church district, contributed to Roma children being able to enroll in formal education alongside their non-Roma peers, access to grants and health insurance. The Swedish education policy's central starting point focused on ensuring equal conditions for all children living in Sweden, which was possible after the primary school reform⁶⁰ was introduced in 1962, with free education for all between seven and 16, followed by the implementation of unified schools throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Even so, the mentality and prejudice of the public did not change. Teachers would not shake the hands of their Roma students; they would punish them and segregate them into separate Roma classes. While they were allowed in

⁶⁰ Known as *Grundskolereformen* in Swedish

the institutions, many schools segregated Roma children from the non-Roma children (DS 2014:8, pp. 203).

12.1.5 Education

Research on Roma in the educational sector was very limited until the 1960s and 1970s. The Roma situation was then highlighted in the media, contributing to a change in discourse and curiosity about their educational and socioeconomic situation increased. This further resulted in various thesis and reports on these issues opening the doors to the reforms that followed (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 205)

The years between implementation of unified schools and the adoption of the FCNM in 2000 recognizing the Roma as a national minority brought certain expectations on the Roma children attending school. The public, and authorities had the idea that school engagement and school attendance would increase, which it did not. Roma children did not feel welcome, or at home in school. The children did not adapt to the norms of going to school, or the new environment they were in after being denied it for so long. The expectations from the public were not met, and absenteeism from school remained high (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 204). Many Roma parents saw formal education as a threat and as an institution that contributed to the Roma's cultural decline. The Roma community understood the school's idealistic and structural power relationships and its role as a tool to promote the values and norms of mainstream societies. Further, discrimination experienced in school is the reason why many children would not attend school. Instead of acknowledging the discrimination the children were subject to, the schools frequently had a loss of perspective in the understanding of Roma families and their culture. The responsibility for education was shifted from the school, and Roma parents were blamed for the absence of children in school (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 206).

One of Sweden's biggest Roma rights activists, Singoalla Millon was 35 years old when she was taught how to read and write. During her childhood, her parents tried getting access to a formal education, but it was not possible, she says "we were not welcome"⁶¹. When she was 14 she got the opportunity to attend primary school and was placed in first class along students that were half her age. Because of this, the situation according to

⁶¹ Translated from the original in Swedish "*vi var inte välkomna*".

Millon was impossible due to the imbalance in knowledge and therefore she did not learn to read and write until her mid 30s (DS 2014:8, pp. 206). Another early Swedish Roma activist, Rosa Taikon, states that she attended Swedish school at eight years old, when her father found work and they were offered housing for six months. When they were required to move again, she had to terminate her time at school. Every new place that they moved after that, she was not allowed to attend school (DS 2018:8, pp. 192).

In 2011, the education of national minorities became more inclusive. The curriculum today acknowledges the importance of incorporating the background, civics, and history of the Swedish national minorities. The changes made in the curriculum when the minorities were recognized in 2000, had very little impact on teacher education and school content which is why the new curriculum had further requirements (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 203).

The Swedish educational system is inclusive and profitable to the community, on paper. However, as seen both historically until today, it does not benefit Roma students in practice. In fact, there is clearly a mismatch between policy texts and application of those policies (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 204)

The issue of not being allowed to register in the church, and later not register for residency had long-term effects in the form of loss of voting rights, general subsidies such as grants, loans, and pension, which contributed to a worsening of livelihoods. The lack of a formal education further contributed to this, raising a population and generations of people that were illiterate. Those that were not wed with a marriage license through the Swedish church were unable to receive a “widow pension” when their partner died (DS 2014:8, pp. 190).

12.1.6 Adult schooling and access to the labor market

By not allowing Roma access to the formal labor market in the first half of the 20th century, many Roma did not have a reliable income. Instead, they worked as craftsmen and became known for their handmade work. This work is also a contributing factor to the necessity to move from place to place, in order to find sufficient labor, trading and money to survive.

Due to the lack of access to schooling, many Roma were illiterate, further making it difficult to attend professional training and enter the labor market. It was all a vicious cycle. To have an education, the Roma needed to have a registered address. To find labor, they needed to be literate and have somewhat of an education, which was not possible due to not being able to register with the church, and later the municipality. During the mid 1960s, more efforts were made to a variety of areas of society (DS 2014:8, pp. 266). According to the National Board of Health and Welfare, the goal of state assistance to Roma should have "changed from only settlement to include the provision of such of school knowledge, so that the adult gypsies in cultural to adapt to the environment and to assimilate the retraining or vocational training required in each particular case deemed appropriate." (DS 2014:8, pp. 267).

Adult Roma were offered schooling in fundamental subjects such as reading, writing and simple math, to improve the illiteracy situation. The first semester, the school was not yet done and the Roma themselves had to build and repair the material and rooms. The idea of adult schooling was good, but not well thought out and was not thought to be implemented over a long period of time⁶². The material the adult community was provided with was meant for students between eight and nine years old. The teachers appointed to the adult school did not have any experience or knowledge on how to educate adults, instead of children (DS 2014:8, 268-270).

During the late 60s, the General Director (GD) of education in Sweden, decided that every person had the right to work, therefore the reforms had to change, and the Roma were to be included with other "disabled communities". This right was only to be made a reality if the community were provided with an adequate primary school education. The purpose of adult education the second time around was not to learn how to read books, but rather how to read newspapers, important information and business documents. Therefore, the teaching methods were more individualized and contributed to more learning (DS 2014:8, pp. 270-271). The professional training specially formed for Roma were focused on areas

⁶² There are no available governing documents for teaching, no instructions as to which elements or subject areas that should have been included, no instructions on teaching materials and no didactic advice on how to teach the community (DS 2014:8, pp. 268).

of work traditional to the community⁶³. The knowledge building was not only focused on theoretical work, but also practical labor and “social adaptations”. They labeled these adult schools as “rehabilitating” the adult Roma population. There was a belief that the adult school would contribute to ‘bettering’ the Roma, but that they were not able to establish that on their own, hence the “rehabilitation” (DS 2014:8, 271-272). An important aspect to consider is that immigrants immigrating to Sweden during this time were allowed to maintain their traditions, language and various cultural expressions associated with their origin. None of which the Roma were. It was not desirable to allow the Roma the freedom to their language, and develop as a minority group, instead they were to be integrated and adapted into Swedish society. The educational board believed this is what the Roma wanted (DS 2014:8, pp. 276).

In the late 1970s, the adult Roma school was reformed. Research from the early 1970s showed that almost half of the students had attended the basic level of education during the past ten semesters⁶⁴ Even though more Roma had an education and knowledge, fewer were employed and finished their professional training. Only 2.5 % of the community that had finished adult school had continued onto professional training, and only a few of those that had attended professional training managed to enter the labor market. The adult school had been intended for people with mental and physical disabilities. In 1986, adult Roma school was abolished and replaced with adult school for the general population that the municipalities were responsible for. The municipalities in charge did not understand the Roma’s situation, their abilities and conditions contributing to negative consequences in an idea of “positive discrimination”⁶⁵ (DS 2014:8, pp. 277, 281).

Regulations, conventions, and attitudes from the general public, limited the Roma's ability to sustain themselves. This brought repercussions not just in the workplace but also in the Roma's whole living status. The individuals in power at the time were aware of the situation and deliberately phrased the provisions to make it more difficult, or impossible, for the Roma to find ways to sustain themselves. The purpose was to push them further

⁶³ Such as, but not limited to; glasswork, repairing and maintaining furniture, clothing and metal (DS 2014:8, pp. 271).

⁶⁴ Roughly five years in the Swedish school system.

⁶⁵ “Positive discrimination is sometimes used in different meanings. In general, these are measures that entail preference, benefits or advantages for disadvantaged or under-represented groups, in order to achieve equality or equality for people in that group in practice” (DO, 2021).

away from society, like various regulations already mentioned in this thesis (DS 2014:8, 283-284).

12.1.7 Political participation

Universal suffrage was implemented in Sweden for men and women in 1921. However, universal suffrage was not made a reality in Sweden until much later. Travellers were included and allowed to vote in 1921, but the Swedish Roma were not. The Travellers had been in Sweden much longer than the Swedish Roma; therefore, they were allowed to settle and apply for residency with the church, and later, the municipality. There is a difficulty in establishing exactly when the Roma as a group were included in the universal suffrage, because the Roma as a group is commonly under one umbrella concept (Björkman, 2019; Hedström Lundqvist, 2019).

In 1952, the Roma became Swedish citizens, but they did not obtain the right to vote. There has never been a law in Sweden stating explicitly that the Roma did not have the right to vote. Still, the impossibility of registering with the church contributed to the lack of voting rights. However, it is difficult to establish which Roma were citizens and which were not. Everyone born in Sweden after the early 20th century were automatically Swedish citizens. The two main groups living in Sweden at the time were the Travellers and the Swedish Roma, due to the legislation making it illegal for Roma to enter Sweden until 1954. The reason 1959 might be used⁶⁶ as a milestone for Roma voting rights is because of the new policies being established after activist Katarina Taikon, among others, pushed for improvements for the Swedish Roma in the 1950s and the 1960s. In the late 1950s, the state took economic responsibility to assist the municipalities in the new inclusion politics. In 1959, the municipalities received grants from the Government for their work on integrating Roma, which resulted in the Roma being able to register with the municipality, followed by the children being able to attend formal education and adults having the right to vote, including many more (Björkman, 2019; Hedström Lundqvist, 2019).

⁶⁶ There needs to be further research done on Roma/Travellers voting rights to surely establish why 1959 is used as a year as there has been very little research on this topic.

12.2 The Police Register

In 2013, DN reported that 4029⁶⁷ Roma are part of a police register in the south of Sweden with Roma from all parts of the country. The majority of the people had never been part of criminal activity and one fourth are children as young as two years old at the time of the article being published, they are in the register simply because they are born Roma or married to one. Many people within the police force had access to the information, the police considered the register valuable, and the register has been used in official police work. The register was solely based on Roma individuals or those who have a close relationship⁶⁸ to a Roma person, violating their human rights. (Orrenius, 2013).

According to the register, it was created in 2012, but the information has been collected for decades. The oldest person in the register, born in the 19th century is not alive anymore. According to Swedish law it is illegal to establish ethnically based registers. The Swedish police also violated several laws among which are the Police Data Act (SFS 2010:361)⁶⁹ and the Act on the Police's general intelligence register (SFS 2010:362)⁷⁰. The latter Act (SFS 2010:362) establishes in 26§ that the people part of the registry has the right to indemnity. Furthermore, the registration of personal information, home addresses and family ties violate article 8⁷¹ and 14⁷² of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (hereinafter European Convention) (CoE, 1950).

⁶⁷ According to the CRD lawsuit there were 4673 individual Social Security Numbers (Civil Rights Defenders (a), 2015).

⁶⁸ Such as but not limited to marriage and co-habitants.

⁶⁹ Previously called *polisdatlagen* (1998:622) in Swedish. Replaced by (2010:361) in 2012.

⁷⁰ Act (SFS 2010:362) entered into force in 2012, applicable until 2017.

⁷¹ Right to respect for private and family life

- 1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
- 2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others (CoE, 1950).

⁷² Prohibition of discrimination

- "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status".

Researcher Matthew Kott states in his book *structural Antiziganism* (2014) that these types of registers are not a ‘one-time thing’ but rather an outcome of institutionalized anti-Roma racism. This does not connect back to specific individuals, but rather focuses on the police authority as an institution. Registering people based on their ethnicity is not something new, there have been previous registers of the Roma community, which this thesis will get back to, but these registers have *de facto* been viewed as something to maintain law and order, instead of being seen as something violating the rights of the Roma community (Pollack and Rooscall, 2015, pp. 12-13).

These lists and the historical treatment by the police can clearly be seen in the most recent survey made by the FRA about the treatment and trust in the police. *Figure 3* demonstrates that 72 percent of people identifying as Roma and/or Travellers have been stopped by the police during the past 12 months based on ethnicity. Therefore, like mentioned earlier, the issue is not an individual one but rather a structural one. According to a young online Roma activist, a question was raised in school to a Swedish police officer once asking, “what would you say is the biggest threat today”⁷³?, the answer was “well, it is all the immigrants and the gypsies coming here to beg”⁷⁴. Authorities are there to protect the people, instead they see them as criminals.

Following the release of the Roman Register in 2013 by DN, Roma human rights activist Hans Caldaras was invited by one of Sweden’s biggest TV channels to partake in a feature discussing the register. He was brought to the state archives in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, where he for the first time saw that he was part of a Roma register since being a teenager. He has a number, similar to those at the concentration camps during World War two, only he did not know about it until 2013.

⁷³ Translated from the original in Swedish “*Vad skulle du säga största hotet är idag*”?

⁷⁴ Translated from the original in Swedish “*Ja, det är nog invandrare och alla zigenare som kommer och tigger*”.

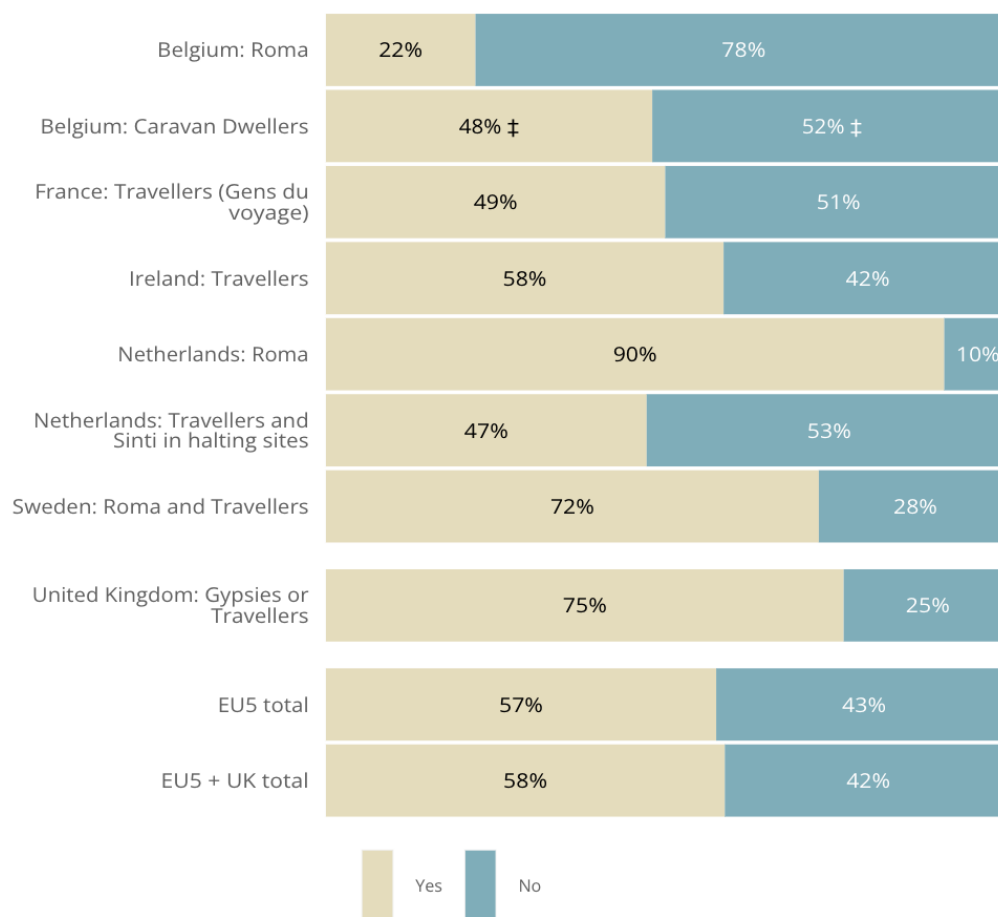


Figure 3: Police stop because of ethnic or immigrant background in the past 12 months (FRA (a), 2020).

12.2.1 Lawsuit

After violating the human rights of the Roma community and breaking numerous laws, eleven individuals from the Roma community filed a lawsuit in 2015 with the help of the Civil Rights Defenders (CRD). The eleven individuals sued the State of Sweden. The CRD stated in their lawsuit that “it is for us a clear case of ethnic discrimination and a violation of human rights”⁷⁵ (Civil Rights Defender (b), 2015). The chancellors of justice decided that each individual part of the register has the right to 5000 SEK, but that was not sufficient according to many of those registered (Delin, 2015). Indemnity to the victims’ part of the registry was reimbursed, they got an additional 30.000 SEK each⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Translated from the original in Swedish “Det är för oss ett solklart fall av etnisk diskriminering och en kränkning av mänskliga rättigheter”

⁷⁶ SEK means *Swedish Krona*, and is the national currency of Sweden.

after the settlement of the lawsuit. A very important issue to highlight in this section, is that many Roma individuals still do not know if they are in the register or not, and it is something that everyone individually needs to manually investigate to receive the full payout of 35.000 SEK. However, the problem is that not everyone has the knowledge, or resources to do so and therefore do not receive their fair share of the indemnity.

13. Conclusion

Discrimination is an umbrella term including direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment. While the Roma experience all of these it is also important to understand the difference between them and understanding the legislations protecting these. Anti-Roma racism can be either one of these, and the Roma are often referred to by derogatory terms such as '*zigenare*' in Swedish and '*gyppy*' in English. Discrimination faced by Roma is often called antigypsyism, but the negative connotation with this is not suitable for this topic. Along with this, it is important to understand and differentiate between race, which is based on biology, and ethnicity based on culture and identify.

Roma have been in Europe and in Sweden for more than 500 years, they traveled from India and eventually found their way to Sweden in the 16th century. It is the biggest ethnic minority in Europe, and although it is difficult to distinguish how many Roma live in Sweden due to self-determination; the community is very big. There are five main Roma groups in Sweden, consisting of many more sub-groups with different variants of Romani Chib. The Roma and their language is protected by a number of legislations, Romani Chib is protected by two very important Acts (2009:724) and (2009:600). The acts are important to ensure the community preserves their language for both their culture, and their heritage.

Swedish authorities have been structurally discriminating the community for a long time, which was acknowledged by the release of the white paper. They were not allowed to reside in one place, their children could not go to Swedish schools, and they had trouble entering the labor market, all of which are still present today. The children are allowed in schools, but the environment is not always very welcoming or friendly. Although the community has been in Sweden for centuries, in the beginning of the 20th century there was a Roma ban in place. Roma living in Sweden could not leave and come back, and no

Roma were allowed to migrate. Since they lifted the ban in the mid 1950s, many Roma have migrated to Sweden. Mainstream media does not always have a fair representation of the community and is for the most part very negative. Especially towards Roma that migrated in the early 2000s.

Chapter III

Policy Review – national and international instruments protecting Roma in Sweden

1. Introduction

This section will predominantly be a descriptive policy review, analyzing current national and international policies in terms of how they emerged, and how they are implemented today. A more critical perspective of these policies will be included in the findings. For example, on paper, Sweden contributes well to the promotion and protection of Roma rights, and the implementation of various instruments to highlight this. Therefore, this chapter serves to describe the links between the current policies, frameworks, and conventions and discrimination still being an issue. Similarly, this chapter explains all the preventative measures that have been recently put in place, in order to fully comprehend the analysis of the findings at the end of this thesis.

This chapter is divided in four parts. The first part will evaluate the policies, conventions and frameworks from a macro level focusing on the EU and the UN. International mechanisms have influenced the Swedish national framework and legislations to follow, which will be further explained. The second part sets out to explain the frameworks, conventions, and policies from a micro level. The process of convention implementation in Sweden and the 1999 Minority Act will be explained to understand the laws that followed and shaped minority politics to come. The third part will analyze the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and their relevance to both the current struggles of Roma and the findings of this study, looking at the links between the SDGs, application to Roma struggles and various frameworks both at a macro, and a micro level. Lastly, the fourth part will briefly explain the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) sessions and recommendations from various states regarding the Roma situation in Sweden. It will also examine how Sweden has responded to these recommendations.

It is important to mention that to fully comprehend the severity of the issue and the importance of these instruments being developed and implemented, the final part of the chapter will also focus on a report by the DO from 2012, and a survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released in 2020, comparing discrimination towards the Roma community in six different countries around Europe, mainly focusing on all parts referring to Sweden. The findings from the FRA study are going to be summarized and presented as fit to this thesis, to back up the interviews conducted for this study.

2. Signed, ratified, and implemented measures by Sweden

Sweden has signed and ratified most human rights instruments, starting with its foundational document, the Universal Declaration on Human rights (UDHR) in 1948. Following the UDHR, multiple conventions, treaties, declarations, and frameworks followed. This section is briefly going to mention most relevant instruments to the context and findings of this thesis starting at a macro level with the EU and the UN, down to national level on Swedish legislation. The UDHR implemented the principle of non-discrimination, for everyone to have the same fundamental rights, regardless of their legal status. Relevant articles from the UDHR are right to life (article 3), physical integrity (article 5), right to health and an adequate standard of living (article 25), and the right to freedom of movement and the right to return to one's own country (article 13 in the UDHR, and article 12 in the ICCPR).

2.1 European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter

European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as The European Convention on Human Rights (*ECHR*) was ratified by Sweden in 1952, and incorporated into Swedish law in 1995, when Sweden became a member state of the EU (ECHR, 2022). Article 14 (Prohibition of Discrimination) of the ECHR states that:

“The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status” (Council of Europe, 1950).

In 1962, Sweden ratified the European Social Charter (*hereinafter the Charter*) and accepted 62 out of its 72 paragraphs. In 1998, Sweden ratified the revised Charter, and accepted 83 out of its 98 paragraphs. However, Sweden has yet to issue a statement allowing national NGOs to file complaints (Council of Europe (b), 2022).

The ECHR and the Charter are closely interlinked. Article 14 of the ECHR and article E of the Charter are very much alike, apart from some minor changes. The original Charter (1961) and the Revision (1998) provides anti-discrimination protection in subject to; property status (article 13), disability (article 15), nationality (article 19), sex and age (article 1 of the Charter (1961) and Article 20 of the Revised Charter (1998)), as well as family status (article 27 of the Revised Charter (1998)). The specifics on prohibition against discrimination is added to the Revised Charter but was not in the original document. Part V, Article E on non-discrimination states that:

“The enjoyment of the rights set forth in this Charter shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national extraction or social origin, health, association with a national minority, birth or other status” (Council of Europe (a), 1998).

Sweden had reservations for the revision of the charter stating that “Sweden considers that Preferential treatment shall not be considered as incompatible with article E of the Charter” (Council of Europe (b), 1998).

2.2 The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

In 1971, Sweden ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (*ICCPR*), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (*ICESCR*), and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (*CERD*). Article 27 of the ICCPR related to non-discrimination states that:

“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language” (United Nations (a), 1966).

2.3 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In General Comment no° 20, the committee states that equality and non-discrimination are fundamental components of the covenant, while not mentioning it throughout, to all international human rights law (UN Committee on CESCR, 2009). Article 2, paragraph 2 of the ICESCR obliges states to:

“[G]uarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations (b), 1966).

2.4 Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

The CERD was signed by Sweden in 1966 and ratified in 1971. This Convention is crucial to the substance and findings of this study. First, the issue with the wording of the convention is the premise of ‘racial discrimination’. Although Sweden did include the term ‘race’ at the time of ratification, as mentioned earlier, it does not include it in legislations and policy today. According to the 2017 State Party Report sent in by Sweden, the second most common ground for discrimination is on ethnicity⁷⁷ at work (United Nations, 2017).

Article 2.1, Paragraph 25, in the State Report (2017) highlights the removal of ‘race’ from the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567) in 2009 and removing it completely from all legislation in 2014, Sweden still argues that ‘race’ is incorporated into the Act (SFS 2008:567), by stating that:

“[E]thnicity is one of the grounds for discrimination in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567) and refers to a person’s national or ethnic origin, skin colour or other

⁷⁷ Disability is the first one.

similar circumstance. If discrimination occurs with reference to someone's "race" or any other derogatory term referring to people with a foreign or Swedish background, this falls within the remit of what is meant by "*other similar circumstance*". The Discrimination Act assumes that all people belong to the same race: the human race. The legislator judged that use of the word "race" might legitimise racist assumptions and confirm race as an existing category. The actual protection against discrimination has not been watered down by the fact that the Discrimination Act does not use the word "race". This particularly applies in the light of the fact that the definition of the ground for discrimination of ethnicity not only includes "national or ethnic origin" and "skin colour", but also "other similar circumstance". It should be understood that this includes matters such as unfounded assumptions on "race", attitudes based on sweeping references to perceptions of the characteristics, appearance or background of "immigrants" being used to justify an approach, or where someone in general justifies discriminatory action with derogatory terms about people with a foreign or Swedish background" (United Nations, 2017).

However, as mentioned before, the notion of 'people belonging to the same race' or colorblindness removes the structural discriminatory struggles the community has faced, which had been backed up by CRT and recently by Osanami Törngren and Suyemoto (2022) where they dive deep into the meaning of 'race' and moving 'beyond race'. They argue that the Government and society need to first understand and acknowledge the context of the term 'race' and addressing it as an analytical category before moving 'beyond race' (Osanami Törngren and Suyemoto, 2022).

2.5 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) also known as the International Bill of Rights for Women, was signed, and ratified by Sweden in 1980. Different from the other international instruments, this Convention is strictly enforced by states to women. Article 1 of the CEDAW defines discrimination against women:

“Shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (United Nations Women, 1979).

While this Convention does not focus on the notion of race, or ethnicity for the basis of discrimination, it is important to understand the focal point of women from an intersectional point of view. As Roma women were the ones to suffer the procedure and consequences of sterilization in Sweden, it is crucial to understand what Roma women specifically have had to go through.

2.6 The Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation or Discrimination

The Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and occupation or Discrimination (ILO:111) by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was adopted in Geneva in 1958, but only signed by Sweden in 1984. One of the major areas of concern regarding discrimination against the Roma community in Sweden is the labor market. The White Paper by the Government highlights this as an issue, and even though Sweden ratified ILO 111 nearly 40 years ago, the community is still being directly and indirectly discriminated against in the labor market. ILO 111 describes discrimination in relation to the convention as including:

“(a) any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation;

“(b) such other distinction, exclusion or preference which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers' and workers' organisations, where such exist, and with other appropriate bodies” (ILO, 1958).

2.7 Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1989, Sweden played a leading role in the drafting process for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and became one of the first countries to ratify the Convention in 1990. By ratifying the convention, Sweden vowed to follow it. Although the CRC is legally binding upon ratification, it does not apply as a Swedish law. Instead, Sweden decided to transform current laws to comply with the CRC (UNICEF, 2022).

In June 2018, the Swedish Parliament published a statement on their website, declaring that the CRC adopted a national bill making it a direct law in Sweden entering into force on January first, 2020. By incorporating the CRC into Swedish law, the requirements of the Convention became clearer on a national level. This implied that the CRC did not have the same legal status as national legislations and was not cited by Swedish courts or authorities. As a result, the ultimate duty for implementing the Convention rested with the government and parliament. Post 2020, the CRC will have the same legal standing as other national laws, and it will be able to serve as the only basis for judgments made by Swedish courts and authorities without regard for other laws. The rights of the child are all interlinked and should form a comprehensive framework for action (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018; UNICEF, 2022). Article 30 of the CRC states that:

“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language” (United Nations, 1989).

2.8 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Finally, the last international measurement worth mentioning is The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (*ECRML*), which was adopted as a Convention by the Council of Europe in 1992 but did not enter into force until 1998. Sweden signed and ratified the ECRML in 2000, along with the signing and ratification of the FCNM. The purpose of ECRML is to “protect and promote historical regional and minority languages

in Europe”. The charter is unlike the rest mentioned, translated into Romani Chib, and various other minority languages. Alike the ICECSR, the ECRML also works on the presumption of equality and non-discrimination. Article two of ECRML obliges states to:

“[E]liminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages“ (Council of Europe, 1992).

In Sweden, the Charter is applied to the educational system for Roma children. This includes translation for children from Swedish to Romani, as well as having access to books in their language, something that is further strengthened by the Minority Languages Act (SFS 2009:724) in Sweden. Romani Chib is to be regarded as non-territorial minority languages in Sweden when the Charter is applied (Council of Europe, 1992).

3. The working bodies protecting discrimination and equality in Sweden

Sweden has multiple governing bodies, NGOs and organizations working for the protection of discrimination, anti-Roma racism and equality for all. These include, but are not limited to: The Equality Ombudsman, The National Integration Office, Council for Ethnic Equality and Integration, Stockholm International Forum against Intolerance, Minoritet.se, and The Living History Forum⁷⁸.

4. International mechanisms:

To understand the severity of anti-Roma racism and how it is found throughout Europe, focusing on the EU and the UN, this section will highlight important international and

⁷⁸ The Living History forum is a public agency operating under the Ministry of Culture.

local strategies, Conventions, surveys, and Frameworks. While the conditions differ between countries, discrimination is always present. The goals set by the EU frameworks and various policies, are targeted towards all EU member states. Sweden might have reached or is a step closer to reaching these goals which are going to be outlined and further explained. Various countries are going to be presented in this section to understand the conditions throughout Europe, to highlight a historical connection and the systematic discrimination rooted in society.

4.1 EU 2020 Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (2011 - 2020)

The European Commission (*hereinafter the Commission*) developed an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies in 2011, with the goal of closing the gap between the Roma community and non-Roma persons in four major areas: education, employment, healthcare, and housing. To encourage Roma inclusion, legal, policy, and budgetary tools at the EU level have been organized. Anti-Roma discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime are all prohibited under EU law (including the Racial Equality Directive and the Council Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia). The European Semester⁷⁹ encourages mainstream policy improvements that facilitate Roma integration. The European structural and investment funds for 2014 to 2020 allow Member States to establish a special investment priority for marginalized populations like Roma. National Roma Integration Strategies were established by EU Member States, and National Roma Contact Points were appointed to oversee their implementation and monitoring. They've been required to report to the Commission on their integration efforts every year since 2016 (European Commission, 2018).

In 2011, the Commission called for each member state to implement a national strategy. Sweden implemented its first Swedish National Strategy for Roma Inclusion for 2012 to 2032 (European Commission (b), 2020). In 2013, The CoE collectively agreed on specific goals to advance integration for Roma in all EU member states, (1) education, (2),

⁷⁹ The European Semester was established in 2010. It is a cycle in which the European Union coordinates its economic, budgetary, labor, and social policies. It is an element of the economic governance structure of the European Union (European Commission, 2022).

employment, (3) healthcare, and (4) housing. In 2018, a fifth goal was added regarding discrimination and “antigypsyism”, anti-Roma racism is widely recognized as the major cause of Roma exclusion, disregarding this would not demonstrate any effect on the outcome of the 2020 framework. A distinct non-discrimination aims in addition to the four Roma integration goals, as well as a stronger focus on the battle against antigypsyism, would and could strengthen the 2020 framework (European Commission, 2018).

The importance of intersectionality is sometimes overlooked when researching the Roma community because it fails to see the community as more than a homogenous group with various sub-groups and differentials between men, women, children, and nationalities, However, the 2020 framework recognizes the issues of this. While the Framework emphasized variety in regard to the population under the wide umbrella term of Roma, it demonstrated a limited capacity to cope with variation within the Roma community. It did not devote enough attention to addressing certain groups of Roma, such as but not limited to: Roma women, youth, children, or EU mobile Roma (European Commission, 2018).

4.1.1 Reporting and monitoring.

Until 2020, the Commission produced annual reports. The last report was submitted in 2019. The information came from each member State, civil society, international organization, and the FRA. In 2018, the midterm evaluation was submitted based on a timeframe between 2011 and 2017. Its aim was to make a detailed evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 regarding relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, and EU added value. Every EU member state along with European institutions have a common responsibility to make progress in integration and living conditions for the Roma community (European Commission (b), 2020)

4.1.2 The five goals of implementation by category

This section is briefly showcasing the five goals set by the CoE, and how they have developed until 2020. The first goal set by the CoE ensures all Roma children have at least (formal) primary education. The conditions are very different depending on which

EU member state is being observed. Overall, goal number one was the most successful. Looking at the report from 2018, and the effectiveness of the Roma Integration Goals, the worst affected is the employment goal and the housing goal. Even in the summary it is demonstrated as no progress (*see figure 4*). Most progress has been seen in the education goal (European Commission, 2018). In the 2019 Report on the National Roma integration strategies states have listed their promising measures, challenges, and priorities to be addressed (European Commission (a), 2019).

EFFECTIVENESS	Limited regarding progress towards Roma integration goals	Some progress towards the education goal
		No progress towards the employment goal
		Limited progress towards the health goal
		No progress towards the housing goal
	Positive regarding coordination	Positive regarding EU-level governance
		Positive at EU and national levels in promoting cooperation
		Limited alignment of NRIS and capacity of NRCs despite some improvements

Figure 4: Evaluation criterion Overall assessment Detailed assessment, categories include: very positive/positive/limited/negative/very negative (European Commission, 2018).

Sweden's promising measures in relation to education is to train teachers and secondary-level adult education in Romani Chib. As mentioned earlier, the Language Act (2009:724) supports this measure. The priorities to be addressed regarding education are firstly to support home parenting and early-childhood learning. To put it in Swedish context, there's been a vicious spiral of parents being unable to assist their children with homework owing to a lack of understanding, due to a lack of previous formal education reaching secondary school. Secondly, to systematically fight and monitor school and class segregation. Lastly, to encourage young Roma individuals to pursue a higher education. The challenge regarding education today is that 68% of Roma leave education early, the European target for 2020 is 10%. The last priority is highlighted seeing how only 18% of Roma children pursue a higher education. Roma students have a much greater absenteeism and early school dropout rates than those who are not Roma (European Commission (a), 2019).

Goal number two is set to reduce the employment gap between the general population and the Roma community. Sweden has not stated any measures related to improving employment or labor training. According to the commission, the biggest challenge to

overcome is seeing only 43% of Roma individuals partaking in paid employment. Further, 63% of young Roma are not in school, in training or in the labor market. The four priorities laid out by the Commission include fighting and monitoring discrimination in accessing the labor market and at the place of work. Create public employment services guiding individuals from the community in finding a job. To smoothen the transition between education and the labor market, Roma individuals are to be trained and employed as youth mentors. Finally, encourage employers to hire Roma (European Commission (a), 2019).

Goal number three focuses on reducing the gap in health status between Roma and the general population. Although the challenge in the EU is that only a quarter of Roma have access to national health care insurance, and health insurance coverage is one of the priorities to be addressed, all members of the Roma community have access to health care in Sweden under Swedish law (2017:30). Sweden's promising measures regarding health care include "training and employment of Roma health mediators to promote Roma access to healthcare". Health professionals all over Europe need to be aware of Roma needs, to decrease the gap in healthcare, the Commission prioritizes monitor and fighting discrimination in access to healthcare. Increase measures to prevent and combat drug addiction, smoking, and HIV infection, among other things (European Commission (a), 2019).

The fourth goal aims to close the gap between the Roma and non-Roma in access to housing and public amenities, such as electricity, gas, and water in Europe. Roma are often segregated and live in communities where most neighbors are also Roma. Furthermore, a third of Roma homes do not have access to running water, only slightly more than half have access to an indoor flush toilet or shower, and 78% of Roma live in overcrowded houses which could potentially be a result of not finding employment. Sweden's promise is to guide landlords and increase their knowledge on the Roma, eliminating prejudice and fight discrimination against the Roma in the housing market. Investments in appropriate and affordable social housing is the main priority. Secondly, to prevent forced evictions rooted in discrimination (based on being Roma). Third, to ensure clean water, essential public services for all and basic amenities with a specific focus on safeguarding the Roma community (European Commission (a), 2019).

Finally, the fifth goal that was implemented two years after the original goals targets the issue of discrimination and anti-Roma racism. The fifth goal is a very crucial added element to the goals because the root cause for the four previously mentioned goals all stem from goal number five. Roma are discriminated against across the EU. When trying to rent or buy housing, 43% of Roma has stated to experience discrimination. Many community members are not aware of their rights, which is also a consequence of lack of trust in law enforcement and authorities. Sweden states that the work by the Commission against anti-Roma racism has led to authorities and the public to acknowledging current and historic anti-Roma racism, which still needs to be continuously highlighted. In order for Roma to realize and comprehend what their rights are, they need to be empowered to participate fully in cultural, political and social life and at all stages of political and policy processes. Further, Roma needs support in access to justice aiming attention to victims of intersectional discrimination. Lastly, there needs to be raised awareness on discrimination and issues targeting Roma. Anti-Roma racism needs to be monitored, and “monitor and sanction antigypsyism, hate crime and hate speech with Roma civil involvement targeting society as a whole” (European Commission (a), 2019).

4.2 Roma equality inclusion and participation in the EU (2020 - 2030)

In 2020, the EU published a new strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation after the past framework between 2011 and 2020. The new framework is a preparation for the post-2020 initiative. The previous framework proved to have a limited impact in Roma living conditions. There is still a wide gap in all previously mentioned goals (education, housing, health, employment, and discrimination). Further, all areas have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new framework is aware of the negative impact of the pandemic, setting more measurable but ambitious targets focusing on inclusion, reducing the inequality gap, and combating anti-Roma racism (European Commission (a), 2020). The 203 the goals of the 2030 framework include changing the general public’s thinking, combating stereotypes, and combating anti-Roma racism, and discrimination. Education, employment, health, and housing continue to be the main focal areas. Overall, the integration progress has been restricted for the past ten years, during the last framework, to ensure all these goals are met and anti-Roma racism is reduced there is a two-year follow-up process implemented to measure the specific progress by

EU member states. The implementation of this is meant to pressure the member states to act and invest in the Roma community while reducing inequality and poverty rates around Europe. Even if there has been little progress, there are significant differences in various countries and across different areas of policy. All EU member states have been most progressive in the educational sector⁸⁰ (European Commission (a), 2020).

4.2.1 Discrimination and Anti-Roma Racism

There is evidence of a decrease in Roma prejudice and an improvement in the broader population's acceptance of Roma. However, Roma hate crimes, and trafficking, particularly of women and children, continue to be major concerns. An important aspect to understand about the Roma community, is that not all are socially excluded, which is something the latter framework acknowledges. However, they can all experience discrimination and disempowerment, nonetheless. The post-2020 framework sets out the goals to fight and prevent discrimination and anti-Roma racism. To reach the goal of 13% of Roma experiencing discrimination throughout their lifetime, there needs to be cut by at least half of discrimination experience by 2030. Currently, 26% of Roma state that they have been discriminated against in the past year, and 41% in the past five years (European Commission (a), 2020).

In Sweden, 30% of the citizens report that they feel uncomfortable having a Roma neighbor, while the number for the EU is at 45% (FRA (b), 2020). The framework sets out to reduce the percentage of the general population who feel uneasy about having Roma neighbors, by at least a third. By 2030, the goal is that fewer than 30% of the population should feel uncomfortable about having Roma neighbors (FRA (b), 2020; European Commission (a), 2020). At both the EU and national levels, action is required to achieve the strategic framework's goals. To achieve these goals, the Commission suggests that the national Roma strategy frameworks should include the following characteristics: “Strengthen focus on equality to complement the inclusion approach; Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust; Reflect diversity among Roma: (through an intersectional approach); Combine mainstreaming and explicit,

⁸⁰ However, incidences of Roma pupils being segregated in schools have grown (the Commission has opened infringement processes against three countries (CZ, HU, and SK) for Roma children being segregated in schools) (European Commission (a), 2020).

but not exclusive Roma targeting; Improve target-setting, data collection, monitoring and reporting” (European Commission (a), 2020). Furthermore, to measure change in any of the goals, the Commission petitions that the FRA conduct the regular Roma survey every four years, beginning in 2020 ensuring the essential baseline, mid-term and end-term data. To incite change in national policy and legislation, continuous investigation of systematic discrimination and initiating infringement proceedings. The application of the Racial Equality Directive is necessary, which will be monitored and enforced by the Commission (European Commission (a), 2020). The problem here is the colorblind approach Sweden has taken. It removes the importance of acknowledging a racial aspect and rather focuses on ethnic discrimination. As mentioned earlier, race is not even a basis for discrimination in Sweden under the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567).

The 2030 framework is still at the start of its term. There is a long way to go, and in the meantime, States must acknowledge and take responsibility for what the statistics and research say about the conditions of Roma and take measures to combat all goals mentioned in this subsection.

5. Sweden

5.1 Transformation and Incorporation of International Measurements

Sweden has signed and ratified various policies, declarations, conventions, and frameworks protecting and promoting the rights of Roma. The following section will demonstrate these and explain how they are relevant to the Swedish context, and the systematic discrimination against the Roma community at various levels.

When an international convention is ratified by Sweden, it does not automatically become a legislation. They are legally binding for Sweden but cannot be immediately applied by authorities or courts. Ratification does not, therefore, imply that a treaty becomes Swedish legislation. Only Swedish law, i.e., laws and regulations, can be directly applied. For a convention to be applicable in Swedish court, used by authorities or grant a person their rights, the rights must part Swedish law (UNICEF 2022; Funktionsrättsguiden, 2017).

For conventions to be part of Swedish law, Sweden uses two different methods: transforming or incorporating. *Transforming* entails that a current legislation is amended, adopted, or repealed to comply with international law. A law is repealed if it, for example, violates certain rights not complying with a certain convention. Transforming therefore indicates that Swedish national laws are applicable in court, not the convention itself. When there is a disagreement between the convention and Swedish law, the national law is prioritized. *Incorporating* implies that the convention is translated and becomes a Swedish law. It does not have to be the entirety of the text, instead, articles are allowed to be chosen and applied depending on what the political situation looks like, and specific needs of the state. Unlike the transformative method, the incorporating method applies the Convention directly as a national law. When a disagreement occurs between the Swedish translation of the convention and the original text, the original text is prioritized. An example of this is The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (*hereinafter the European Convention on Human Rights*) (Funktionsrättsguiden, 2017). Swedish legislation is thoroughly reviewed before Sweden ratifies a convention to ensure that Swedish law is in accordance with the treaty.

5.2 Swedish Minority Policy 1999

In 1995, Sweden signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and ratified it in February 2000. This marked the start of Sweden formally acknowledging its five official national minorities. It was in conjunction with the ratification of the FCNM that Sweden implemented minority politics as a standalone area of its national politics. The initial goal of establishing it as its own area of politics was to guarantee and safeguard the five national minorities in Sweden, including the Roma, as well as to empower their opportunities and help support their official minority languages to keep them alive and maintain them for generations to come (Regeringskansliet, 2020).

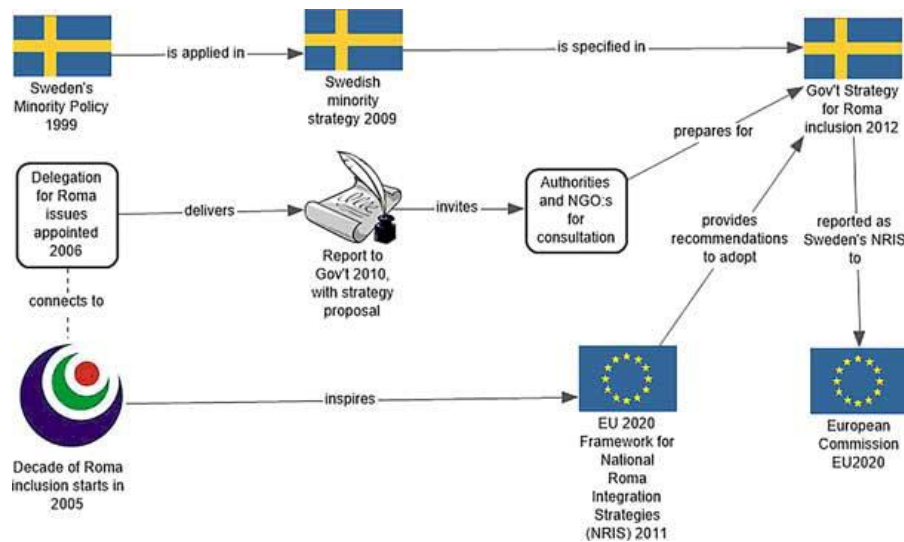


Figure 5: International and Swedish Systems of operating regarding Roma legislation (Alexiadou & Norberg, 2017)

5.3 FCNM - 2000

As stated in a previous chapter, Sweden does not define who belongs to the Roma community; instead, membership of the community is based on self-determination and self-identification. This lack of definition is due to Sweden’s historical exclusion of the Roma. The FCNM itself does not define who belongs to a national minority, because there has not been an agreement on a general definition by all Council of Europe (CoE) member states. According to the FCNM and the CoE, “The principle of free self-identification is the cornerstone of minority rights. [...] However, their decision must be based on objective criteria connected with their identity, such as their religion, language, traditions, and cultural heritage”. To monitor the FCNM, each country is required to submit a state report every five years. The report must contain information on measures taken to comply with the FCNM. The Advisory committee examines the report, and if a state does not submit a report, the Advisory Committee can be authorized by the Committee of Ministers to start the monitoring process regardless. Sweden’s fifth cycle is currently in progress, the report was received in June 2021. The former cycles were in 2005, 2009, 2013, 2018 (Council of Europe (a), 2022).

5.4 Swedish National Strategy for Roma Inclusion: 2012-2032

“The overall goal should be for a Roma who turns 20 years old in 2032 to have the same opportunities in life as a non-Roma” (Government Communication, 2012, pp. 9).

In 2012, the Government of Sweden stated that there is a need to analyze if there are any common explanations for the exclusion of the Roma community. According to the Government, this exclusion is based on four explanations that require common action for the situation to change. First, the widespread lack of trust between Roma and *gadje* as well as between the Roma and Swedish authorities and public administrations. The second factor is the anti-Roma racism and discrimination experienced by most Roma communities and individuals. Third, the long term exclusion itself, and finally, the fact that the exclusion “lies in the sometimes deep-seated ideas of tradition, status and individual rights and opportunities in relation to the importance of the collective, which can affect the realization of equal and independent Roma participation in society” (Government Communication, 2012, pp. 11). These four explanations will guide the next part of this chapter discussing the Swedish National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, and what it entails.

The Swedish National Strategy for Roma Inclusion: 2012-2032 (SOU 2010:55) (*hereinafter strategy*) was put in motion by the ‘Swedish Delegation for Roma Issues’ (*hereinafter the Delegation*) to improve the lives of Roma living in Sweden (Alexiadou & Norberg, 2017, pp. 41). The Delegation (Dir. 2006:101) was created by the Government in September 2006 and appointed in January 2007. The purpose of the Delegation is to have a close dialogue with the Roma community and to protect and foster their human rights on an international level and push the agenda forward on a national level to improve the situation of the community in Sweden. The Delegation is also responsible for educating the public on the Roma situation and their struggles as well as exchanging knowledge between Government agencies and the Swedish municipalities (Regeringen, 2006).

The poor living conditions of the Roma in comparison with the *gadje* were used as an argument for the need of a strategy. The Delegation proposed a strategy to the Government with proposals for action called the “Roma Rights Report” in 2010, published in 2011. The report was handed over to Parliament by the Government (Skr.

2011/12:56) for a final decision after consultation with various authorities, NGOs, and civil society, who all made referral comments. Based on this information, Sweden implemented its 20-year strategy (Government Communication, 2012, pp. 11; Alexiadou & Norberg, 2017, pp. 41). The strategy is based on Roma participation, inclusion, and ongoing monitoring of the rights of the Roma community. An important part of the strategy is to ensure that members of the community are included in decision making at the local, regional and national levels (Government Communication, 2012, pp. 11). In 2020, the Minister of Culture at the time - Amanda Lind, stated that additionally to the Country Administrative Board⁸¹ six authorities were assigned to work within the strategy. The additional authorities were the Swedish Public Employment Service, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the Institute for Language and Folk Memories, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs, the Swedish Cultural Council and the National Agency for Education⁸² (Sveriges Riksdag, 2021).

The main goal of the strategy is to ensure that someone born Roma today has equal rights and life quality to someone who was not born Roma. The Delegation bases the strategy on three goals, (1) closing the welfare gap between Roma and other groups, (2) eliminating Roma powerlessness (3) repairing Roma faith in mainstream society and closing the gap in trust. The strategy is aiming to achieve these goals within one generation (Government Communication, 2012, pp. 12). Among the goals delivered by the delegation, “complete compulsory schooling and adult [Roma] illiteracy shall be abolished” (Olgaç, 2013, pp. 209).

When the Government decided to implement the strategy, they used a different approach than what had been done before. Previously, the perspective focused on society and the blame for victimization has been put on the Roma community itself. The solutions have been in the hands of society while the state worked as an overlooking body. Instead, the Government decided to base the strategy from a rights perspective in order to ensure the human rights of the Roma community (Regeringskansliet, 2010). At the time of implementation of the strategy (SOU 2010:55), the Delegation urged the Government to

⁸¹ Known as *Länsstyrelsen* in Swedish

⁸² Known as *Arbetsförmedlingen, Boverket, Institutet för språk och folkminnen, Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällsfrågor, Kulturrådet och Skolverket* in Swedish.

recognize anti-Roma racism as a form of racism, both locally and advocate for it internationally. In 2014, the Government created the Commission against anti-Roma racism⁸³ and in 2016 stated that “Anti-Gypsyism is the particular racism to which Roma are exposed”⁸⁴ (Government of Sweden, 2016, pp. 13). In 2021, the Government proposed to strengthen the work against racism⁸⁵ by designing a program specifically battling these issues, by issuing eight million SEK yearly (Regeringskansliet, 2021).

The importance of these goals has not only been highlighted on a national level, but also on an international level. For example, the EU urges its Member States to draft a strategy for Roma inclusion. Further, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) showcases how strongly other countries feel about the importance of Swedish integration, the situation of the Roma community, and the efforts, or lack thereof, to better the situation.

6. UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: From a Roma perspective

In 2015, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (*see figure 6*) and 169 SDG targets were approved at the UN Sustainable Development Summit. However, the 244 indicators were only developed and approved in 2017. There was a suggestion to elaborate on the indicators, assigned to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG-SDG). The group consisted of four EU member states: France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. In 2017, 244 indicators had been developed and proposed to the UN Statistical Commission and approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Following its approval, UN Member States are expected to specify a baseline (when not clear in the indicators themselves) and target values for these indicators to be reached by 2030. The national implementation frameworks for the SDGs are related to; first, the goals, targets, and indicators, secondly, the alignment of national development strategies, policies, and programming with SDG targets and indicators; third, reporting on SDG progress; and finally, financing (Crowley et al. 2013, pp 25).

⁸³ *Kommissionen mot Antiziganism* in Swedish

⁸⁴ Translated from “*Antiziganism är den särskilda rasism som romer utsätts för*” (SOU 2016:44)

⁸⁵ Specifically focusing on antisemitism, antigypsyism, islamophobia, Afrophobia and racism against Sami.

Many of the SDGs are understated and incorporated in the Roma equality inclusion and participation in the EU 2020 - 2030, and the 2020 Framework. While the SDGs do not specifically mention the Roma population, the goals highlight many issues connected to the struggles faced by the community. The SDGs that specifically relate to Roma rights are SDG 1 (on ending poverty), SDG 2 (on ending hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (on quality education), SDG 5 (on gender equality), SDG 6 (on clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (on affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (on decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (on reducing inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) on split responsibility for data collection.



Figure 6: 17 SDGs (UNSDG, 2022).

Sweden is a participatory country in the Voluntary National SDG reporting. In the Voluntary National Review from 2021 Sweden states that they “will implement the 2030 Agenda to achieve economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable development through a coherent policy nationally and internationally. Implementation will be guided by the agenda’s ‘leave no one behind’ principle” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021). The leave no one behind principle is explained by the UNSDG as “the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole” (UNSDG, 2022). On an EU level,

the member states along with the union play a critical role in realizing this promise especially concerning the social inclusion of the Roma community (Dugarova et al., 2017, Synopsis). It is currently difficult to measure socio-economic inequality throughout the EU member states. The EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS), large-scale EU surveys, do not collect this information by ethnicity, only very few do make it difficult to establish a reliable number across the union (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp.7) According to the findings of the FRA survey, Roma place a higher value on family relationships than on organizations such as NGOs, institutions, and authorities. Local Roma communities are therefore disempowered, and their ability to effect change is limited, which poses an additional challenge (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp.23).

Like the 2020 – and 2030 EU frameworks, the SDG agenda focuses on similar goals. According to Sweden’s Voluntary National Review 2021, the country is acknowledging the issues related to SDG 1, but states that the targets are met due to “social protection for all”. The review also states that “Sweden has the lowest level of material poverty⁸⁶ in the EU. At the same time, the trend is moving in the wrong direction, with the proportion of people earning less than 60% of median income having increased.” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 74).

According to the 2021 review, SDG 2 focusing on eradicating hunger is not a major issue in Sweden. However, according to the FRA survey in 2020, one in five Roma state that they went to bed hungry “at least once last month”. Instead, Sweden argues that food habits are not sufficiently healthy or equitable and that the challenge is related to obesity (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 77; FRA (b), 2020).

One of the main goals for The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (*hereinafter the Charter*) is universal health care coverage and insurance. “Healthy life for all” is the promotion of SDG 3 focusing on this. In 2013, The Council of the EU's Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in EU Member States was adopted. It called for effective steps in achieving this goal in a fair distribution of healthcare services to the

⁸⁶ “Material deprivation refers to the inability for individuals or households to afford those consumption goods and activities that are typical in a society at a given point in time, irrespective of people's preferences with respect to these items” (OECD, 2007).

Roma Community (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp.20). The socio-economic circumstances for Roma women and girls are the dominant consistent factor of poor health and one of Sweden's challenges under SDG 3. As previously mentioned, forced sterilization happened in Sweden until the 1970s (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 81). Further, Sweden states in their 2021 review that one of the biggest challenges is related to mental health⁸⁷ (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 80). However, compared to other EU member States, the general population in Sweden's is experiencing activity limitations nearly three times lower than the Roma population (*see figure 7*).

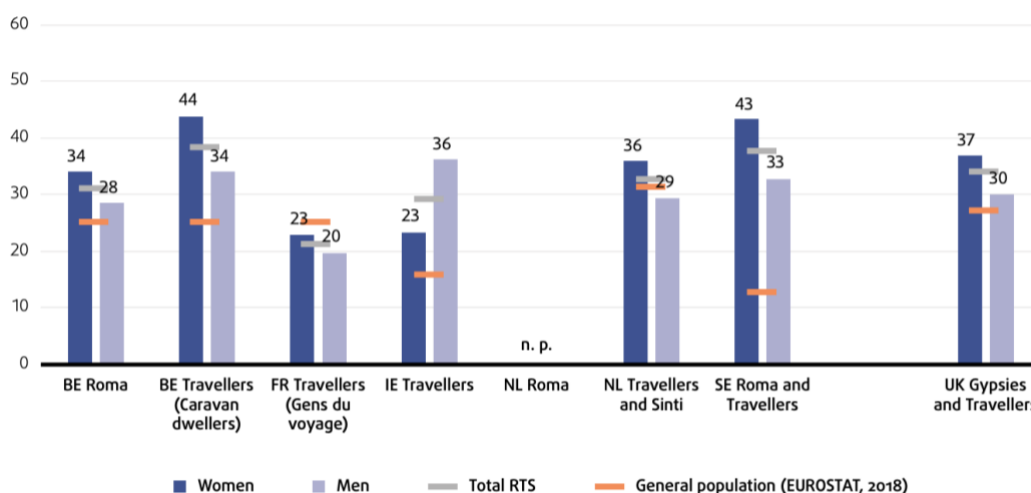


Figure 7: Share of Roma and Travellers in the six surveyed countries with severe limitations in activities due to health care (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 65).

SDG 4 seeks to provide comprehensive and fair quality education for everybody, especially those in disadvantaged situations such as Roma. All children, according to the Charter, should have equal access to compulsory education (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp.17). As previously mentioned, SDG 4 is the goal that has seen the most improvement throughout the EU, but there is a lot left to do. Due to indirect and direct discrimination towards the Roma community as well as early marriage and motherhood, Roma men and non-Roma women have a higher level of education than Roma women throughout the EU (Crowley et al. 2013, pp 10). Target 4.5 in the 2021 review states that “Sweden has a well-developed education system for all regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age”.

⁸⁷ Sweden states that there is a gap in the statistics on matters related to SDG 3 making it difficult to monitor the care provided and the overall health situation (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 81).

However, 16% of Roma (students and parents) feel they have been discriminated against by school authorities in the past 12 months, 32% over the past five years (see *figure 8* to compare between the participating countries in the study) (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 49). Sweden partly acknowledges the issue regarding the knowledge gap by providing all students with the same opportunities regardless of their background or circumstances in order to develop as far as possible. However, the 2021 review does not mention discrimination as a challenge or a goal to work for (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 83-84).

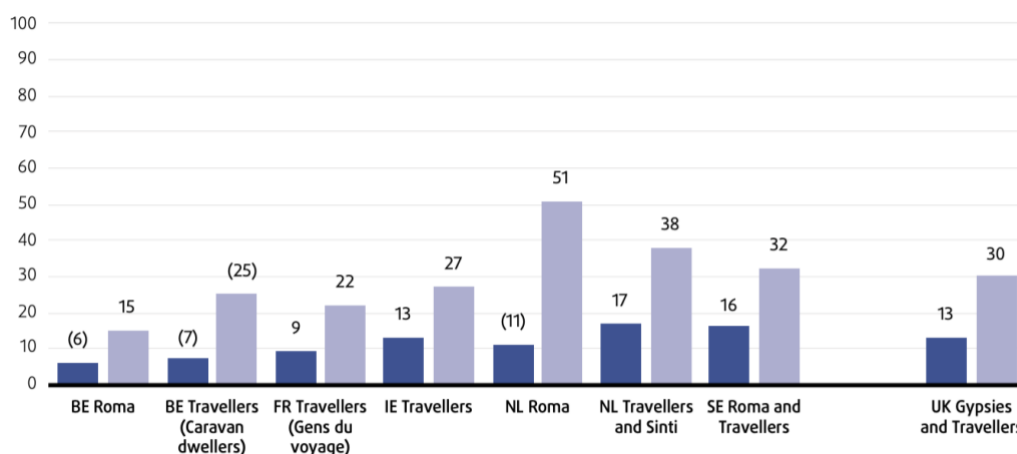


Figure 8: The percentage of Roma feeling discriminated against by school authorities (both students, guardians, and parents) in the past 12 months versus five years (FRA (b), 2021, pp. 49).

SDG 5, gender equality, is one of the major SDGs in the Swedish contexts. Sweden promotes and incorporates gender equality in their politics, policies, and frameworks. However, the gap between Roma men and women is yet to decrease. On average, among the general population in Sweden, Women spend 45 min more per day on domestic work and unpaid care compared to men (Government Offices of Sweden, 2021, pp. 86). Further specification of numbers in the labor market for Roma are demonstrated under SDG 8.

SDGs 6 and 11 are coherent to one another. They both stress the importance of “adequate housing”, including basic sanitation amenities such as clean water stressing on the importance of safe human settlements. The Urban Agenda⁸⁸ embedded that secure and

⁸⁸ The Urban Agenda was launched in 2018 but has been archived since mid-May 2021 on the European Commission's website. However, the Urban Agenda in the EU “represents a new multi-level working

safe housing, with basic foundations is a key component of social inclusion. The 2013 Council Recommendation pushes for the removal of urban spatial segregation⁸⁹ and improved housing access to public services (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp. 21) Urban spatial segregation is present in Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. Many Roma women are in the domestic labor sector, therefore spending more time inside the house compared to men that tend to be present in the formal labor market. Therefore, it impacts the health and lives of Roma women significantly more than the men in terms of adequate housing with basic amenities and clean water (Crowley et al. 2013, pp. 28).

SDG 8 focuses on labor market involvement, with goals to achieve decent work for everyone and decrease the percentage of young people who are unemployed, underemployed, or out of school. The 2020 strategy aims to guarantee that 75% of EU citizens aged 20 to 64 are employed (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp. 16). The employment gap between men and women is high throughout Europe, including Sweden. Currently, that number is met by Sweden at 61% for women, and 47% for men (*see figure 9*) (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 20). The reason more women are out of the labor market is due to women's low education and dropout rates and the expectations to care for the family. Further, discrimination in the labor market is also a root cause for the high unemployment rates (Crowley et al. 2013, pp. 23). The FRA concluded in their most recent survey that Roma integration in the labor market has not improved despite the 2020 Framework. The 2030 Framework is still set out to improve this goal (FRA (b), 2020).

method promoting cooperation between Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders in order to stimulate growth, livability and innovation in the cities of Europe and to identify and successfully tackle social challenges" (European Commission, 2016).

⁸⁹ Segregation that is related largely with racial groupings in certain locations, ethnicity, or religion in others, and/ or financial positions.

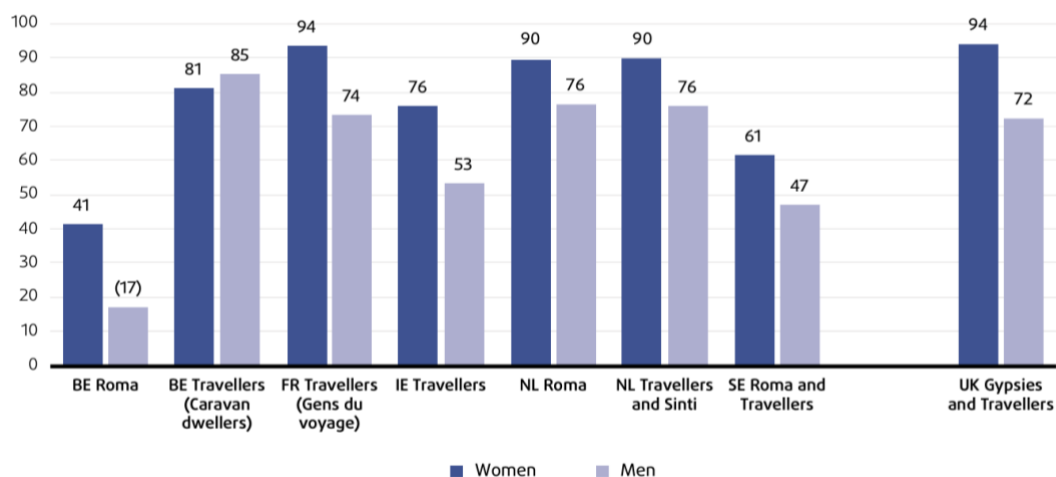


Figure 9: Share of Roma and Travellers aged 20 to 64 who are currently not working, and are not looking for work (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 57)

As seen from the SDGs mentioned, Roma women are usually more affected than their male counterparts in almost all areas of life. Additionally, domestic violence against Roma women often goes unreported because of patriarchal structures and lack of accountability (Crowley et al. 2013).

SDG 10 and SDG 17 are goals that require international collaboration to be achieved. Sweden promotes and supports for equality as well as a feminist foreign policy (SDG 5). These are crucial in the context of Roma to recognize that eradicating difficulties connected to all the previously stated SDGs, which will be achieved only if Member States collaborate. To be successful, systemic discrimination, anti-Roma racism, and prejudice must be addressed together. While some states have anti-discrimination legislation in place and recognize the Roma group as a national or ethnic minority, others are falling behind. Emphasizing the necessity of data collection and monitoring (under SDG 17), including disaggregation by ethnicity, gender, and age, all emphasize the importance of reaching the goals for everyone, including the Roma community (Dugarova et al., 2017, pp. 6).

SDG 16 was not mentioned specifically as one of importance regarding Roma policies, however, the importance of strong institutions in battling Roma issues is of key relevance. Justice for Roma, both on an individual level and at a community level is also crucial when reporting crimes of specifically discrimination or hate crimes. The Universal

Human Rights Index (UHRI) refers to SDG 16 many times when making recommendations based on CERD and specific issues regarding Roma and Roma women (UHRI, 2018).

In conclusion, the SDGs are important for all UN and EU Member states to reach a more equal society, both between Roma and non-Roma, but also between women and men, especially those who are part of vulnerable communities. To achieve these goals collaboration and cooperation is crucial.

7. UPR

The UPR is a state-driven process by the Human Rights Council with the purpose of improving the human rights situation in all UN member states⁹⁰. It is an instrument in place to promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights for all. Every five years, states are reviewed. Sweden is in its third cycle of reviews. The first one was in 2010 and the second one in 2015. Sweden's third review since the start was in 2020, and the fourth review is planned for 2025.

States are to send in a national report which is then reviewed. The state under review is done so by looking at their national report, which actions have been taken since last and to protect and promote human rights and fulfill those obligations. The other UN member states are then invited to give recommendations to Sweden on how to improve the situation in the country. Sweden must answer to recommendations covering various human rights issues based on what has been written in the national report, additional information submitted by civil society organizations, embassies, UN agencies or special procedures and treaty bodies. Based on these recommendations, Sweden can either accept, partially accept, or note a recommendation. During the last review Sweden accepted most of the recommendations made (Sweden Abroad, 2020).

In their latest national report submitted in 2019, Sweden section G. *Measures for the rights of indigenous peoples and national minorities - 'roma inclusion'*, included information about what Sweden is currently doing at a multi-level directive. Based on this report, Sweden states that they are carrying out development work on Roma inclusion

⁹⁰ 193 member states.

by educating the public, teachers and employers about Roma and their history. There is a drive for an increase of knowledge about the Roma starting in primary education.⁹¹ In the report, the capital of Sweden is mentioned many times as to show what the County Administrative Board has accomplished or is trying to accomplish. Between the second and the third review, the Stockholm County Administrative Board “distributed approximately 25,000 copies of the textbook *Anti-Gypsyism in Sweden*”⁹² (United Nations, 2019, pp. 15)

To help improve trust and faith in authorities and the government, mediators have been employed at various places where there is a need for an increased knowledge about the Roma, their situation, and their history. According to municipality reports⁹³ these mediators have helped raise the trust levels towards authorities and the government agencies among Roma, as well as increasing the knowledge and awareness of *gadje* regarding the situation of the Roma community. The biggest improvement according to this national report because of the mediators is the increased contact between parents and the schools, and higher school attendance⁹⁴. Lastly, the national report also states that all municipalities receiving a grant from the government to work on these issues, works for Roma participation and influence by having a close dialogue with Roma representatives⁹⁵ (United Nations, 2019, pp. 16).

7.1 UPR Recommendations.

To only analyze the recommendations focusing on the Roma community from all three cycles, I used search words such as ‘*minority*’, ‘*minorities*’, and ‘*Roma*’ while focused on the category labeled as ‘*minority rights*’ on the UPR website.

During cycle one (2010) the recommendations accepted by Sweden, focused heavily on strengthening measures combatting discrimination against national minorities. Sweden received 150 recommendations of which ten were labeled under the category issues as ‘*minority rights*’, with two recommendations focusing on ‘*Roma*’. Meanwhile, Sweden

⁹¹ G. 114

⁹² G. 115

⁹³ The national report does not mention which municipalities has done this.

⁹⁴ G. 117

⁹⁵ G. 118.

gave 18 recommendations during the first cycle. Those directed towards countries in Europe focused on combatting discrimination and segregation towards the Roma population and the overall focus was on discrimination towards minorities and/or indigenous people as well as the imprisonment of political activists belonging to ethnic minorities (UPR (a), 2010).

In 2015, during cycle two, Sweden received 228 recommendations in total from member states where 39 were categorized under ‘minority rights’, where 13 specifically mention the word ‘Roma’. The recommendations themselves do not differ much compared to cycle one, and heavily focus on maintaining, respecting, and promoting the rights of minorities, and their culture. The recommendations tend to focus on Roma and Sami⁹⁶ rights. During the second cycle, Sweden gave 21 recommendations and like cycle one, most of them focused on Roma rights in Europe (UPR, (b), 2015).

In June 2020, Sweden participated in the third cycle and received a total of 316 recommendations, 26 recommendations falling under the category ‘minority rights’ where 12 specifically mention the word ‘Roma’. Out of these, 214 which were accepted, 1 partially accepted and 85 which were noted⁹⁷. The ones noted mention the Roma community, where so because of laws under the Swedish constitution, and the social welfare system in place (UPR (c), 2020). During the third cycle, the recommendations focus mostly on combating discrimination and ensuring minorities, Roma specifically have equal access to housing, health care, education, and employment. Political and social participation was also mentioned as well as integration. Recommendation nr 156.125 states that Sweden should “enhance the legal framework on equality and non-discrimination in order to protect minorities against all forms of discrimination” which Sweden noted and commented “Sweden considers it important to have a comprehensive legislation for protection against discrimination. The Swedish comprehensive legislation for protection against discrimination. The Swedish Government has, among other things, appointed an investigator to consider how to get a more effective supervision of current

⁹⁶ The Sami population are the only national minority in Sweden considered indigenous. They are one of the five national minorities in Sweden.

⁹⁷ See full list of accepted and noted recommendations in appendix mentioning ‘Roma’, ‘minority/minorities’ or ‘ethnic minority/minorities’

legislation” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2020). The other recommendations made mentioning discrimination were accepted.

8. Recent studies

In 2020, the FRA released a report detailing research conducted in six different countries during 2019. The six countries included in the report are Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. The report focuses on discrimination and deprivation in all areas of life, including harassment and hate crimes, as well as poverty and social exclusion. While the report is very in-depth, it focuses heavily on quantitative data rather than qualitative data. The participants were “encouraged to add personal comments or experiences”, but their experiences were not the focus of the study (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 10). Rather, this thesis focuses on personal experiences specifically, instead of numbers. The survey's overarching goal is to support and contribute to the efforts of EU institutions and Member States towards “putting an end to the exclusion of Roma”, which the European Commission has acknowledged as “one of the most serious social challenges in Europe” (FRA (b), 2020). Below are the main findings from the FRA 2021 report, and the DO Roma rights report from 2012. Some of the data is the same in both reports, even though they are nine years apart.

8.1 DO – Roma Rights Report 2012

There has been very limited research on the Roma community and their experiences. The research available today focuses rather on numbers more than anything else throughout Europe. The latest official research done by DO in Sweden was 10 years ago. Between 2002 and 2003, the DO wrote a report called ‘Discrimination against Romani in Sweden’, released in 2004. The report demonstrated that Swedes have very little awareness and knowledge of the Roma community in general, including their living conditions. The purpose of the study was to highlight the discrimination that the Roma community faces and to develop strategies to prevent and counteract this discrimination against Roma (DO, 2004). In 2012, DO released a follow-up report called “Roma rights”⁹⁸, according to which, 230 recoded instances of discrimination had been reported to the DO between

⁹⁸ Translated from “Romers Rättigheter” in Swedish.

2004 - 2010, of which 70 per cent came from Roma women (Minoritet, 2019). FRA's latest report from conducted in 2019 and released in 2020 follows the same line of research and the findings still show much ignorance among the general public towards the Roma community.

The main findings from the DO study detail that most of Roma in the study has reported being discriminated against in public places including hotels, restaurants, and grocery stores. Besides this, the community also reports discrimination in relation to contact with social services and how they are treated during the managing of their case. The community also demonstrates little trust in social services. According to the findings, many reports received by the DO are from healthcare providers and schools requesting social services to explore the situation of children in Roma families. The study does not state on what grounds these reports have been made to the DO.

According to the DO report from 2012, very few self-stated reports involve discrimination in the labor market, healthcare, and educational institutions. 20 % of the reports covered the housing market, especially in terms of searching for apartments and being accepted for one. Being denied the opportunity to buy or rent property based on being Roma was very common. As mentioned before, Roma has little trust in authorities and the judicial system due to their systematic historical discrimination, which the DO believe is a result of the low reporting from the community themselves. According to the DO, Roma are especially afraid of social services and the fear that their children are going to the 'treated worse' if reported, although it does not state what this means specifically. Discrimination in a public place is more likely to be reported, while situations including personal involvement with authorities, or the government are less likely to be reported (Minoritet.se, 2019; DO, 2012).

8.2 Fundamental Rights Report 2021

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has mapped the situation of Roma in six countries including Sweden. This survey reveals that there are still problems with discrimination, bullying at school and hunger, although Sweden outperforms several other countries in the areas of education, the labor market, health, and healthcare. Municipalities and government agencies carried out several awareness-raising activities

to improve Roma inclusion between 2016 and –2019 (Government of Sweden, 2021, pp 52). The areas of concern to this study are going to be briefly presented in this section.

Although there has been an EU law in place for the past 20 years promoting equal treatment and criminalizing direct and indirect discrimination, the FRA study finds that almost half (45%) of the participants in the study felt discriminated against during the last year. Like the DO report from 2012, the majority of respondents (33%) felt most discriminated against in public places such as entering shops, 27% stated they felt discriminated against in restaurants, hotels and night clubs⁹⁹ and 23% in the labor market, looking for a job. Even though there are various measures, such as ILO 111, combatting especially the ones targeting discrimination in the labor market, the survey demonstrates that it is still a widespread issue. The younger population among the participants stated it affected them more and there are no gender differences among the groups (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 14).

Harassment and hate-crimes are widely known targeting Roma, and 44% of the participants state that they have been subject to this in the past year, while 7% of them were attacked physically. As stated in the DO report, most of these attacks and hate-crimes were not reported to authorities due to the lack of trust. According to the FRA, the reason most did not report is because Roma believes that even if they report, nothing is going to happen, or change. The lower minority of participants did not report because they did not know where or to whom, they would report the crime (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 14-15).

The EU, along with Sweden works towards enhancing public trust among Roma in authorities. Even so, the survey shows that the level of trust is low, which is also due to racial profiling, which has been mentioned earlier in this thesis. Racial profiling is illegal in the EU, and in Sweden but that does not remove the fact that it is still happening. Apart from being racially profiled, 7% of participants in all countries state that in the past year, they have been physically attacked by police because of their ethnic background, however, the number is slightly higher in Sweden at 12% (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 16, 33).

⁹⁹ These figures include all participants from the six participating countries.

Concerning education, among the six countries, 91% of Roma participate in compulsory education. Sweden was the only country that participated in the study nearly meeting the EU target (95%) for early childhood education (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 18, 43). The numbers generally decrease the older the participants are across the six countries. Only 66% of young adults between 18-24 have graduated lower secondary school, and the ones that have completed tertiary education is “statistically invisible”. In Sweden, 70% of Roma continue in education or trainings, compared to 92 % of the general population (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 18, 46).

There is also a major difference in literacy between the age groups. Among those over 45, 49% have trouble writing, and 51% has trouble reading, the numbers among those under 45 years old is 20% and 27% respectively. The main cause to leave secondary school and not pursue a higher education is the need to work (25%), marriage, pregnancy, or childbirth (14%) and due to relocation during the year (14%) (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 18-19). Both students and parents stated that they have been discriminated against at an educational institution. 30% of the parents’ state that they have been verbally harassed by teachers and 51% report that their child had been bullied at school (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 19, 47). Considering that Sweden has implemented various measurements combatting these issues, it is concerning that it is still an ongoing issue. The EU framework working for inclusion and various legislations on anti-discrimination do not seem to influence the general public. Instead, there needs to be a change in attitude and mentality among the people. Overall, it is difficult to state exact numbers and collect data on the amount of Roma enrolled in education. This is due to what has been previously explained about the Roma having self-determination and might not always state that they are Roma to the educational institution.

As mentioned in the report, 22% of Roma in Sweden state that they went to bed hungry at least once in the past month, the highest number among the countries. However, Sweden has the lowest share of neighbors feeling uncomfortable living next door to someone that is Roma at 30%. Moreover, 82% of Roma in Sweden, the highest among the participating countries, say that discrimination is widespread in the country. 57% of Roma are aware of the governing bodies they can turn to in case of discrimination and what anti-discrimination legislations are nationally in place (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 22 – 29)

According to the survey, most Roma are aware of their rights in Sweden and even so, there is a gap of reporting all turning back to the lack of trust in authorities. Swedish Roma was the second largest group to not trust legal systems with only 5.5% of the participants having trust in authorities (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 38).

The FRA study clearly states in their main findings that “anti-gypsyism [...] is deeply rooted” (FRA (b), 2020, pp. 14). Even so, the FRA decided to use a very stereotypical picture on their front page. Removing stereotypes from society and steer away from the image of Roma not “having a home” will take a long time, but it is not helpful when places such as the EU remain using stereotypical images of Roma. Instead, a more positive representation of Roma could have been displayed to show that Roma do graduate from school and live in proper housing. Although the study, and this thesis highlight the lack of these, it would still be refreshing to see something besides the stereotypical picture of a Roma woman standing in front of her trailer in a remote area.

9. Conclusion

Sweden has implemented most of the international human rights instruments available including the UDHR, CERD, CEDAW, ICCPR and ICESCR. These and all of the instruments mentioned in this chapter cover a range of areas relevant to the Roma situation and showed how their implementation has strengthened Sweden’s legislation. Swedish legislations are built on the ratification of these instruments along with national legislations such as the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (2009:724). In 2000, Sweden ratified the FCNM resulting in big positive changes for the community. Roma became an official national minority in Sweden, protecting them and their language.

International mechanisms focusing on the 2020 EU Framework on National Roma Integration, which the Swedish National Strategy 2012 – 2032 is created from. Post 2020, the 2030 Roma equality and inclusion framework is currently being implemented throughout its member States. The Swedish National Strategy for Roma inclusion focuses on four main goals: improving the lack of trust against authorities, combat anti-Roma racism, better the long-term exclusion and understand that exclusion is historically deeply rooted. The main outcome from the Strategy is that someone born Roma in 2012 should in

a 20-year period – one generation – have the same rights and life quality as someone born non-Roma. The strategy has seen a difference in living conditions between Roma and *gadje*, which although is not a goal, is an important aspect of life to highlight. The most important part of the strategy is including Roma at all levels and stages of the decision making, letting them have a seat at the table.

The 2030 SDGs are underrepresented and need to be incorporated into Roma inclusion plans. Although they do not specifically mention any minority groups, most of the goals fall into the areas of Roma issues and how to combat these. To achieve these goals on both a macro and micro level, collaboration and cooperation is crucial. UPR is an important process for the Government of Sweden to receive recommendations about the human rights conditions in the country. There have currently been three cycles and most of the recommendations during each one, from participating states, point to the treatment of Sweden's minority population. During cycle one, most of them focus on combatting discrimination against minorities, cycle two focuses on promoting and protecting the rights and cultures of minorities and finally, cycle three highlights the importance of equal access to housing, education, healthcare and employment for minorities and non-minorities.

The Equality Ombudsman (DO) report from 2012, as well as the FRA survey from 2020 both highlight the ongoing issues targeting the Roma community eight years apart from each other. The EU targets for education are not met, they live in unsustainable housing and 22% of the community go to bed hungry in Sweden. Swedes have little knowledge about the Roma and their culture, because of this, the Roma children are exposed to bullying at school, and the parents face harassment from teachers and management. Roma do not report the crimes due to lack of trust in authorities and fear of social services. According to the FRA, 45% are discriminated against and discrimination in the labor market is happening although Sweden has ratified ILO 111 along with various other instruments combatting discrimination in the labor market. Racial profiling and physical attacks by police are widespread and multiple people confess to have been stopped by police during the past year. Sweden is the only country among the ones in the FRA study to almost reach the EU target for enrolled Roma children in primary education.

There are various measures, instruments, and policies in place to protect and promote Roma rights and their culture. However, the public needs to have more awareness and better knowledge to understand both how these instruments are to be implemented in practice and how to work on removing prejudice in society.

Chapter IV

Findings: The ongoing issue of anti-Roma racism and discrimination in today's Sweden

1. Introduction:

The final chapter of this thesis sets out to explain the theoretical framework applied to analyze the findings while demonstrating and discussing them using a CRT lens. The findings are going to be cross-examined between the CRT, international measures, instruments and national legislations and policy as well as looking at the recommendations from the UPR cycles. To understand the depth of this issue and discuss it further, this chapter will analyze how historical discrimination by both the Swedish population and authorities has helped shape today's structural racism and discrimination.

In the strategy, (SOU 2010:55), the Government acknowledges the difficulties in trying to repair the 500 years of neglect, abuse, and violations towards the Roma community. The strategy (SOU 2010:55) is to be implemented over 20 years, and while this is a good start, there needs to be a permanent long-term strategy. It might be seen as too optimistic considering the issues are structural and have been around for generations, and anti-Roma racism is ingrained and to some extent normalized in Swedish society. 'Jokes' based on prejudice are not uncommon for the community to hear. It is going to take a longer time than 20 years - a generation - to remove the stigma and discrimination against the Roma community. It has been ten years since the strategy was implemented (SOU 2010:55) and yet, the structural issues are still present. While comparing the DO discrimination report from 2003, to the interviews I conducted during the fall of 2021, it still shows the exclusion of Roma in society. There is no agreement on further instruments or measures to strengthen inclusion and participation post 2032.

Drawing on the findings of the study, this section of the chapter sets out to analyze and respond to the question *'How does the Roma in Sweden experience and/or perceive*

discrimination and prejudice in their everyday lives based on existing policies?'. The analysis is going to be based on the five tenets of CRT combined with Hartlep's storytelling and counter-storytelling and the various forms of discrimination explained in chapter one. Along with these, it will also set out to explain it while incorporating the relevant SDGs and the recommendations from the most recent UPR session.

There will be a focus on colorblindness and how the removal of the term race from Swedish legislation and politics has affected the community as well as the way ethnic discrimination is perceived by the public, relating the issue of colorblindness back to CERD. Before delving into the analysis, it is important to understand that some of the answers in the different sections are intertwined, and that the respondents' expressed concerns, feelings, and experiences may span several of the tenets and areas of concerns.

I divided the findings into six categories based on the six tenets of CRT: racism is ordinary, race as a social construct, differential racialization, intersectionality and anti-essentialism, and unique voice of color. Since this is a qualitative study, the responses will be nuanced and reflective of personal experiences, rather than representing the experiences of the entire Roma community in Sweden.

To begin with, I asked all participants to define what discrimination is to them to have a full understanding of how they would categorize what has happened to them. The answers varied between everyone. Most of the participants explained the definition as direct discrimination, some answered based on indirect discrimination, while a few chose not to answer the question.

2. The understanding of discrimination

While the answers in all age groups were similar, the understanding of what discrimination is differed between the groups. Those in the age group between 18 to 40 more consistently gave examples of areas of discrimination based on the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567), while those in age group 41 to 60 focused more short answers reflected by feelings. Examples of such are “racism”, “everyday habits”, “when you're treated differently” or “being treated differently”. The latter age group also laid more focus on indirect discrimination “to always hide one's origin, not to lose my job or get

housing”. Those in ages between 18 to 40 gave more concrete examples answering that “when I am discriminated from gender, ethnicity, age, skin color, or sexual orientation or handicap” and discrimination being “an action/process/routine etc. contributing to an individual/group being negatively treated, based on the grounds of discrimination” or “when you’re treated in a degrading way based on gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation”. Another example of direct discrimination also based on the Discrimination Act (2008:567) is the participants stating that discrimination is “to be disadvantaged your legal and human rights” while another one stated that it is “to be different compared to the majority of humans” and “to feel outside society, violated. Worth less”.

3. Racism is Ordinary – Microaggressions and colorblindness

Microaggression can be either intentional or not. It is never physical and is based on verbal and behavioral discrimination. Most often, the perpetrators do not realize they are discriminating the person in question and would at times brush it off as a ‘joke’.

“[In] 1995, [at the] Social Insurance Agency, I applied for parental benefit, [they told us] don’t get any more children. You’re too many” (Woman, 41-60).

Although the social worker in this case most likely knew they were discriminating against the woman in question, it is still a form of microaggression combined with indirect discrimination and harassment. The Roma woman decided not to press charges or get help from the authorities due to a lack of trust in them and the belief of not being taken seriously when reporting a crime. She also believes that the image of Roma has not changed the past 50 years, strengthening the indirect discrimination towards the community based on comments as such.

One question the participants were asked to answer was “where have you felt the most discriminated against?”. The answers differed, and they were welcome to add additional areas or places where the discrimination had taken place. Multiple participants stated that it was not one specific area or location, but rather a combination of all, which is dependent on stages of life as well. The places in relation to this question focus on both direct and indirect discrimination, as well as harassment. The participants were not asked to specify which one, just “where” it had happened. Most of the answers show that the

discrimination comes from authorities or from a person in a position of power, such as a manager, teacher, landlord, business owner or social worker.

A man participating in the in-depth interviews talked about his time in elementary school and how the lack of understanding and support from teachers has affected him throughout his life and into the labor market.

“The most important point, which have affected me the most, is the school where teachers did not interfere when I was beaten at school and called a *"fucking gypsy"*. Teachers expressed themselves in a discriminatory way and said, 'you *fucking* gypsies, you are so and so'. I was put in special classes, not because I was less intelligent or wasn't well behaved at school, but just because I was a gypsy. That affected my whole [schooling]. And then a bit later on, when I went to the employment authorities to look for a job, the officer asked me what languages I spoke, just to make a little CV. I told them that I spoke six different languages. I listed them and said Romanes, and then [they] asked me "what language is that?". I'm a gypsy, I speak 'gypsy'. Then he threw me out of the [authority building]. He said, “you are a gypsy, why do you come here and waste my time. I know you don't want a job. Get out of here” and threw me out. I didn't go back to the employment authorities for many years and thought "well I don't give a shit about this then" (Man, 41-60).

Additionally, three in-depth examples of discrimination from a person in a position of power were brought up during the face-to-face interview sessions. Both examples show a case of direct discrimination, but only two were reported to the DO.

A woman from the middle parts of Sweden belonging to age group 61 to 80 expressed that to buy her condo, she needed to change her last name. In Sweden, the seller can choose to sell to either the highest bidder or the person of choice. The woman in question was not the highest bidder, however, the seller wanted to sell her condo to her knowing how difficult it is to find housing as Roma. Following this, the buyer needs to get accepted by the housing association which is where the issues start.

“In 2018, I was looking for an apartment. At the time I was living with my aunt because I was having trouble finding an apartment. At the time I was working with a lovely woman that asked me why I did not consider buying instead of renting [an apartment]. I did not think I had the funds to buy an apartment but started looking

anyway. I eventually found one I liked and went to a viewing. The lady that was selling the apartment called me after the viewing to ask me “are you Roma”. I was ashamed but did not want to lie and answered “yes”. The lady told me that the owner of the building was not going to approve of me if they knew I was Roma and proceeded to tell me that “you should change your last name”. I was hesitant at first because my last name is part of my identity. So, at 50 years old I legally changed my last name to a more ‘Swedish sounding name’. [...] I felt devalued. But I would rather accept being devalued than to be denied housing. [...] I had to do it. “I’m a Swedish ‘*zigenare*’ (*gypsy*)’, I am born in Sweden, I have Swedish parents” (Woman, 41-60).

The participant eventually was able to purchase the condo, and housing association of the building asked her once she was accepted to buy the apartment if she was Roma. They asked if she had changed her last name and why she did. The participant told them she did it because she did not want to be denied the housing. The owner answered, “she had a good heart, I would never do that”, on selling to someone from a Roma background. The participant followed this statement by also expressing regrets on now changing her name sooner, because it would have been easier for her to enter the labor market. Her children do not state they are Roma, and they use the new Swedish sounding last name. The Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567) clearly states that discrimination based on ethnicity is illegal in Sweden. Even so, the housing association did not just use microaggression, but also focused on diminishing and making understood that Roma is not something the association want to be associated with. The Roma woman in this case, did not have very much knowledge about her rights and luckily had a friend helping her with the process, which is also the friend advising and helping her change her last name.

A Roma man from middle parts of Sweden, in age group 41 to 60 claims that he and his family were subjected to direct discrimination during a summer vacation. Him and his family went on vacation with their camper van to a designated camping area, where they had booked a slot many weeks before. Ahead of arriving they had ensured that the booking was still in place and drove to the camping sight in southern Sweden. Upon arrival, everything changed.

“I went camping with my children and the caravan [...] we got into a camping site, paid, went in, set up the caravans and got everything ready [...] then a man comes and asks what we're doing there and I explained that we've got this site. Have we got the wrong place? [then he replied] I think he who has let you in does not know what you are. [So I replied], what do you mean by that? [...] He picks up the phone and calls and gives me the phone and he says we've done something wrong, that place is booked, you can go away and get your money. Then I say 'you can't, you can't do this. I know why you won't let us in, you can't do this just because we're Roma so I'm going to call the police'. Then the old man picks up the phone again [...] and calls the police and gives me the phone which says "they have every right to take you away from there. It's a private campsite. Get out of there". My kids started crying, so I couldn't be bothered to argue and nag, so we packed up and started walking” (Man, 41-60).

The third scenario is discrimination from a nurse and the principal of his children's school. The participant reported the school to the DO and involved the authorities. This is one of the few situations from this study where the participant was taken seriously, and measures were taken.

“The nurse and the principle [of the school] expressed themselves and said to my wife "You and those from your race are so damn troublesome". I took that statement as discrimination and reported [the school] [...] As for the school, I was taken seriously. The head of the school in [municipality] was contacted and we had a meeting. There they were told that you absolutely must not do that evert again” (Man 41-60).

As discussed before, colorblindness is the notion that color simply does not exist. To concur with this, Sweden has removed 'race' from legislation and any politics. Colorblindness shines through with this quote and being called by 'race' and not ethnicity is a clear example of how the term and notion of race still exists. Even though it might have been removed from legislation, it is harder to remove the idea of race from society. What might be seen as an improvement, is not. Colorblindness in fact leads to more discrimination. To say “I do not see color” removes the historical struggles, not only Roma, but that various minority groups have faced for generations. Instead, the Government and society need to highlight both hate crimes and discrimination, not tuck

it away. Society is essentially taught that racism is wrong, not what racism is, or the consequences of its actions. Most of the analysis made on national legislations point to the issue of colorblindness, and how the Roma interviewees reflect upon this. To explain the lack of ‘race’ combined with the lack of representation, colorblindness is closely related to the tenant of ‘unique voice of color’ regarding drafting and implementing strategies, frameworks, and legislations.

4. Interest Convergence – Improving the image for the good off others

Since the ratification of CERD, Sweden had made many changes in legislation but still use CERD as a baseline for certain areas of politics. In 2018, the CRD submitted a report on compliance with CERD for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Article 5 (11) in the report states that authorities have forcefully evicted Roma EU-citizens from their temporary settlements, without alternative housing offered or protection against hate crimes (Civil Rights Defenders, 2018, pp. 9). This does not only go against CERD, but also against local policies such as the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567) and the Minority Act (SFS 2009:724). The Government of Sweden openly states their wrong doings during the 20th century in their White Paper (DS 2014:8), but still repeat the same pattern with forcible removing people and maintaining Roma police records. The White Paper in that sense, was more of a statement from the Government in order to internationally become recognized for standing up and regretting the historical treatment of the community, while still having a mindset of ‘them’ and ‘us’ in certain areas.

To analyze the findings tied back to improving the image for the good of others, both interest convergence and the unique voice of color are going to be discussed and further analyzed simultaneously. Interest convergence gives the impression that the government would draft and ratify national legislations based on supporting them if there is something in it for the Government or Sweden.

“I think many see themselves as “saviors” when talking about Roma migration in Sweden because we have it better than Roma in other countries” (Woman, 18-40).

In this quote, the participant acknowledges the issue and shifts focus from herself to the Government and society for making the Roma feeling guilty for ‘complaining’ about issues that they should not see as issues, as they have it better than others. However, if people do not complain and raise their voice to injustice, we would never have an improvement in any areas of life, even less in the field of discrimination or racism. To improve the image for others, only does good for a short time, it is not a long-term commitment or solution.

“That they [the government] support [the Roma] for real, and not just when ordered by Europe” (Man 41-60).

There was only one participant that decided to mention the orders by Europe, specifically the EU. I believe this is important to highlight and realize that the community acknowledges the efforts being made, but that they also need to come from a local level, not just an international one. As mentioned earlier in chapter III, the Swedish National Strategy only came into place because of the EU national strategy that urged all member States to implement a national strategy. While Sweden is a leading country in many policies and political ideas, this participant does not believe Sweden to be a leader in minority policies or politics.

According to another participant¹⁰⁰, working for the Government, the work on Roma query differs between municipalities. According to the participant, Roma people fear of asking for help, worried that it would backfire and social services or other authority would step in and write a worry report on their situation. However, the issue is not in the hands of the community. This is something the sitting Government must deal with, and according to the participant, the Government needs more help and support from the community itself. Depending on who the sitting Government has been during the implementation period of the National Strategy, the work has been going “up and down”. The formerly sitting Government had stated they did not have time to focus on the implementation plan, while the transitional Government worked better, according to the participant. Although there was less interest and lesser budget, the work was moving along.

¹⁰⁰ (Man, 41-60)

5. Unique Voice of Color – Understanding the voice of Roma

The unique voice of color is one of the most important tenets related to the policy making in Sweden, and around the world related to the perception of the community. The ideas and implementations of legislations without the input from the community will not be as appreciated or successful as when Roma have a seat at the table. This is to understand the complexity of racism, which is only possible by those who have experienced it first-hand. According to the Strategy (SOU 2010:55), the most important thing about it, is the inclusion of Roma in decision making at all levels. They are meant to have a seat at the table. Based on these findings, the Government is not upholding their word, and instead Roma are only being partly included, but not on equal terms, and not in a way to improve their situation for the better.

“[We are far away] from the ability to have any influence and having the possibility of having a say in things concerning us [in relation to (SOU 2010:55) [...] Often the information is obtained at a late stage when you do not have a say and you are not allowed to be part of the plans to develop a proposal on how we should work. So we are quite far on some points while some other points are getting better” (Man, 41-60).

This quote comes from one of the in-depth interviews I did with a man in the middle parts of Sweden. He, along other Roma in the neighborhood all agree that there needs to be better measures for Roma inclusion in decision making. In order to improve current frameworks in place, and potentially any new one to come, almost every single one of the participants, both the ones being interviewed and the ones answering the questionnaire agree – the biggest issue about the drafting and implementation of new measures and instruments, is not having a seat at the table. The time constraints that might be taken into consideration by the Government would not have been an issue in the first place, if Roma were included in the process from the very beginning and not at the end of drafting, only to add comments and suggestions. The wording of these legislations and policies are crucial for it to be upheld in society. Changing from ‘should’ to ‘shall’ makes a very big difference in implementation.

“[For example] we say that [a municipality] has decided to change the way they work with minorities, they have a policy document you could say. What to work on, what budget etc. We are not allowed to be involved in what is to be done. But we know best. We should invest more in the labor market, we should invest more in schools, etc. You are not allowed to be involved in drawing up the policy document. Instead, we get a finished policy document in which officials and politicians have decided 'this and this', what do you think? You have 15 minutes. You can't make decisions like that. These are serious decisions that will have consequences for the Roma population for five years to come, because the document governs everything. Everybody can go back in the governing document and say 'no, but this is what you said and we are not doing anything else', even though it needs to make an impact somewhere else. It is the same from the municipal level to the government level. That's what we think "here, you are not following the law". It is clear that we should have influence and be able to influence these queries. They are not following the law. It is submitted to the European Commission, Sweden's plan for national minorities, and how they will work in the future. We were also given there two days to respond. You know how European reports are, they are long and complicated. So we have decided to write a shadow report that we will submit in December [2021] to the European Commission, in addition to Sweden's report, we will also submit a shadow report” (Man, 41-60).

“By ensuring that Roma are in various important positions in society and that the Swedish people see that we are like many other people, the only way is to get Roma to educate themselves and take their place in society. It is also important that it is the Roma who represent the Roma and not others who do not know who we are and what our needs are” (Man, 18-40).

“We have a long way to go, so you never know [if the situation will improve]. If society/ the Government doesn't let us work on our own issues, it won't be good. We should own our own issues as well as the discourse. And let us be involved and make our own decisions. It should not be consultation but collaboration to have an impact” (Man, 41-60).

“Put in more [Roma] people to work on questions [concerning] ROMA to ROMA” (Man, 18-40)

The only way to truly understand the community's struggles and issues is to engage them in the questions surrounding their life and own future, which is something the Government of Sweden needs to improve. Seeing how the legislations and frameworks are written to suit the Roma community, many activists and participants working with these issues daily agree to disagree.

Apart from this, some participants highlighted the importance of themselves as a community being advocates for their own cause. It does not only help moving rights and policies along if single individuals are activists for their rights but needs to be a group effort. For this to happen, more Roma need to be educated about their history and their rights. The participants stated that this does not always have to come from formal education but also from other activists that help the community and bring the Roma together. By amplifying their voices together there would be a greater effect, on the work to move away from prejudice that Roma are not smart, and that they do not want to work.

“If activism is awakened within the Roma [community] and they can come together, things can definitely get better. But if the Roma themselves allow themselves to be treated negatively, things will get worse. We have a prime minister¹⁰¹ in Sweden who denies the extermination of the Roma during World War II, so it doesn't look too positive” (Woman, 18-40).

“[That] Roma gets an amplified voice in government and that Roma history is taught in schools. That incitement against ethnic groups should never be okay, that authorities should call us by the right name, Roma, not the Z-word” (Woman, 18-40).

“Us Roma need to become more in pushing the agenda [forward], at all levels, from activists to a political level” (Man, 41-60).

The participants I have interviewed and received answers from through the questionnaire all come from different educational backgrounds. Some of which have not been educated beyond fifth grade, and others who are currently obtaining their PhD. No matter what educational level the participants have had, they all share the same thoughts about the educational system and the ignorance among the public. The people with a higher

¹⁰¹ Referring to the former Prime Minister in Sweden, Stefan Löfven.

education throughout the study generally worked professionally or voluntarily on Roma rights issues. Either within the Government, municipalities or on a local level. Those with a lower educational attainment pushed more for the issues at a local level. Nonetheless, they have all been discriminated against on various occasions in school or at work (among other places).

6. Roma's view on authorities, and measures that could be taken

The situation will only improve "if all authorities work together for Roma inclusion" (Man, 41-60).

Followed is a combination of all three tenets (racism is ordinary, Interest convergence and unique voice of color) since it is difficult to distinguish between the three for the following quotes and ideas from the participants. The most common reflection and complaint made by the community is the lack of representation in decision making and advisory boards. That is why the three following tenets are all interrelated and are going to be analyzed as such, interconnecting one, two or all three at once.

The analysis is focusing heavily on this aspect of the tenets since the research question focuses on the perception to these policies. Although the answers not included in these sections do not mention any policies, it is important to understand that these policies and the ones before this that have been mentioned has shaped society to what it is today. Even though the quotes and thoughts do not specifically mention an Act does not mean it is not in connection to any of it.

Sweden, has as previously mentioned, ratified, and implemented various strategies, frameworks and policies including Roma and in relation to Roma. However, as this section will demonstrate, most of the participants of the study do not believe the policies to be enough. They also believe there is not enough support from the Government on these issues. The question asked to the participants was "do you think these [the minority legislations/policies] are enough?". Answers from the participants varied, but had nothing to do with age group, or gender or Roma group.

Moreover, there needs to be more support and educating the Roma themselves about their rights. The legislations are in place, and some have been so for many years, and still, members from the community do not know about them or know very little about them. According to the FRA study (2020), the majority of Swedish Roma know where to turn when reporting discrimination and knowing about their rights. However, the answers from this study beg to differ. The group studied was smaller than the one by the FRA, but after having in-depth interviews, the only people that knew anything about these legislations and rights were those with an education or ones working for municipalities or the Government. I informed some participants about these rights and acts in place, that answered “no” to the question asking, “are you familiar with Sweden’s laws on minority rights?”. A participant expressed that people in his own community did not know about the laws, and that it is not an issue on an individual level, but rather in a bigger perspective.

“No one knows about them [the laws]” (Man, 41-60).

This man, along with others in this age group states similar things. A woman from the middle parts of Sweden said that neither her or her family knows about the laws and legislations. She knows they exist, but not what they are or what they imply. Instead, according to her, the community relies on each other, and they ask each other for help.

Most of the answers directed the focus to the municipalities and the Government rather than the individual person or educator concerning the issue of implementation of the various legislations in place today. According to the participants, 75% argued that the current legislations are not enough. Two people opted out from answering the question due to believing they did not know enough about the legislations to answer. Combined with this, 83% believes they do not get enough support from the Government on issues related to Roma rights.

“They don't cover the big picture, [authorities] need to be reinforced, [they] don't follow minority legislation because they don't know about it” (Man, 41-60).

“[They] don’t follow the laws seriously [...] I think they can be better if society learns more about what Roma are and not to be so prejudiced” (Woman, 18-40).

“The strategy and the law are toothless, they are guidelines but [there is no] pressure to follow [them]” (Man, 18-40).

“It is written in the law what our rights are, but they are not met” (Woman, 18-40).

“They are toothless laws. If you don't follow the reinforced law, nothing happens. Municipalities and government agencies don't have to follow it and private citizens just don't” (Woman, 18-40).

“Even though we are a minority, [the laws] are not taken seriously. [...] Roma should own their queries and bring it forward. There are always high officials who are like experts. And new reports are created all the time, with the same conclusion and that more money is needed to do research, they say” (Man, 41-60).

“They have implemented policies and actions at a political level, but it is not broken down to the individual level so that all Roma can truly feel secure about their identity” (Woman, 18-40).

“Discrimination by private individuals is more direct. They express straightforwardly what they think of you. The officials have just changed their language. Now they talk about culture, and different cultures. Discrimination by officials affects your life in a completely different way, so I think it's more serious [...] [Discrimination and hate speech] Is a habit, unfortunately, we are used to discrimination by private individuals. But I would say it's just as big. Those private individuals are often civil servants and politicians anyway” (Man, 41-60).

6.1 Authorities – Lack of Trust

In this section, it is also important to highlight the lack of trust for the Government and authorities due to historical structural discrimination. Only 32% of the participants that stated they had been subject to discrimination reported the crime to DO. Out of the participants that had stated they had reported discrimination to DO in Sweden, 37.5% thought they were taken seriously. One of the participants of the study had sought professional help for mental support due to the discrimination, some had not sought professional help or support at all, while others state to rely on friends and family. Although only one participant stated they had received professional help, four stated that the help available was sufficient.

Some of the Roma that had voiced they had never reported discrimination, also stated they have friends that wanted to report discrimination but did not do so because of fear. There is a fear among the community, which came to light when doing the in-depth interviews concerning the Swedish social services. There is a history of Roma children being placed away from their parents because they are seen as unfit parents. The community has a shared fear in reporting to DO because they believe they do not have enough knowledge to move the case forward, and in fear that their children are going to be taken away from them, or that they would get reported for something out of their hands. One participant stated that her lack in trust on follow-up from reporting discrimination comes from not being taken seriously after reporting being followed in the grocery store.

“I called the police to report the discrimination and they told me they would get back to me. That was six years ago” (Woman, 41-60).

A woman in age group 41 to 60 stated in her in-depth interview, her fear with the social services in Sweden. Like the FRA study (2020), Roma people have a common fear of something happening to their children. The woman stated that she, along with her sisters and friends have all been afraid of social services for many years. She knows multiple people that have lost their children and must attend court to regain custody of them once again. Since it was a very sensitive topic, I did not ask under what circumstances this happened. However, knowing that the FRA stated that there is a common fear, I decided to ask her more about why there is such an installed fear within the community.

“They come and take our children. If we report being discriminated against or if our children are having trouble in school, we are afraid that their teachers will call the social services and take our children away. I have friends who it has happened to” (Woman, 41-60).

Another participant also mentioned the social services and stated that his children are aware of their surroundings and scared of the social services based on what has happened to family members previously.

"Because of the Antiziganism the children have to endure, they were tired of school. They didn't want to go to school. I couldn't in good conscience force them to go to school. Then there was more absenteeism and social services got involved. Then you

have to explain to social services why they don't want to go to school. It affects them. Everything affects them. I look at my children every time we go to a social meeting how scared they are, because they know that that cousin was taken, the other one was taken and so on. Their lives are very difficult if they don't have a strong family that strengthens and encourages them." (Man, 41-60).

I asked one of the participants if they believe the reason for the low reporting is a result of lack in authorities and no follow-up, to which they answered "definitely".

"There is a culture of silence among the officials in the [municipality] [...] The trust is not high for the authorities although I work with them, I know what it looks like. I have worked as [job and job] and I encountered it all the time. Why should we have this, why should we do this? You can't say that, you can't do that. [...] Unfortunately, you don't always get treated well. [...] DO is a toothless tiger. There is very little they can do when you are discriminated against. It's nice on paper but in reality it's not the same" (Man, 41-60)

I further asked the participant if he sees any difference between anti-Roma racism for him during his school years and for his children during their time in school.

"No, and that's what makes me even angrier that I have to be and report their school to the DO because it was so serious. You shy away from making a DO report. It's a pain to fill out too. So you don't feel like it. But when I saw that my children were getting into the same situation as me, that they are not getting the opportunity to complete their schooling, they are being treated differently. [...] School is incredibly important. If you have a good teacher who encourages you, you can do anything. It will work out so well for you. If you have a school that doesn't care and doesn't give a damn about you, you'll have long-lasting consequences for your whole life" (Man, 41-60).

6.2 Authorities – Police register

One of the participants¹⁰² from the middle parts of Sweden shared with me about the Police register previously mentioned, from 2013. She had not known she was part of such register, neither did her children. She states that one of the biggest difficulties is being

¹⁰² (Woman, 41-60)

“accepted as Swedish” as based on her visibly ‘looking’ Roma. Tying this back to the issue of colorblindness, Swedish society keep seeing the Roma as ‘others’ and hence ‘othering’ the community as a whole, overseeing the importance of their heterogenous autonomy. With the help of a friend, she found out both her and her kids were in the register. She questioned this and filed a complaint with the help of her friend, and the police sent home a form for her to fill out. She asked “why” she was in this register to which the police answered, “we cannot tell you”. To relieve the anxiety and fear among the community, the Police could and should have been more transparent once their register came to light. At the point of the discovery of the register, both children of the interviewee were minors, and she feels like the compensation, as agreed upon by the lawsuit, was a way to silence the Roma. As mentioned earlier, the compensation was 30.000 SEK plus an additional 5000 SEK.

The committee for the CERD mentions police profiling specifically in recommendation number 26 made to Sweden in 2018. The committee states to be concerned about reports of frequent police profiling, five years after the initial list was discovered. They argue that Sweden needs to follow SDG 16¹⁰³ and 10¹⁰⁴ to achieve this (UHRI, 2018). Looking specifically to SDG 16.10, Sweden needs to better their transparency on lists such as the one from 2013 and acknowledge their wrongdoing. An NGO such as the CRD should not have to hire a legal team to resolve this, and ask for settlements, it should be something the Government takes initiative and responsibility for. Without doing so, it will not increase the trust among the community on authorities and the Government, which is one of the key aspects of the National Strategy. It is important to highlight here that the register was made public after the implementation of the strategy, and yet, authorities and the Government did not address it properly.

By being part of the police register the participant lost all trust with the police and authorities, she previously had, stating that “I have never been a criminal and I have never done anything illegal in my life”¹⁰⁵. Further, emphasizing that her children were minors, and her husband has never done anything illegal. She proceeded to state that her children

¹⁰³ 16.b – Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws; 16.10 – Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

¹⁰⁴ 10.3 – Ensure equal opportunities and end discrimination.

¹⁰⁵ (Woman, 41-60).

lost their trust in the police at an early age, which affects decisions they take today, but wanted to reassure me, once again, that her children have never done anything illegal.

6.3 Lack of serious implementation of the National Strategy (SOU 2010:55)

According to various participants, the issue is not about the legislations or lack thereof, it is the ways in which it is being implemented and how the municipalities and the Government are handling it.

“I don’t care about the prejudice when the laws aren’t being followed to better equal conditions for Roma” (Woman, 18-40).

The National Strategy (SOU 2010:55) as described earlier, is and was a primary legislation on Roma inclusion over the next 20 years. The Roma community themselves work hard to up live this but feel it is not always enough and that there needs to be more done by the Government.

“Strengthen Roma inclusion work [by having] a budget, that does NOT exist today. Without a budget the query has no power!!” (Woman, 18-40).

As seen here, and as mentioned before, the budget gets smaller while the needs get bigger as the population grows bigger. However, an issue on a municipal level is the unwillingness to use the free resources provided by the Roma activists themselves to provide knowledge about the Roma.

“The municipalities are slow when it comes to queries on minorities. They would rather try out the law [...] they want you to sue them to test the law if they are obliged or not or if their interpretation of the law is correct, they interpret it their own way. So far it is difficult to see any real change. Small steps are made all the time, that makes us move forward but some paragraphs of the law are far [from being reality] (Man, 41-60).

Even though there is a Strategy in place, meant to integrate Roma, one participant specifically focused on the ‘new’ people arriving to Sweden, either as refugees or immigrants and expressed that there needs to be a better plan for implementation in the labor market, among others.

“Roma are neglected, we are not included in the efforts that, for example, new arrivals are, when it comes to the labor market. While we cannot get jobs on equal terms as the general society because of the historical involuntary exclusion Roma have lived in for 500 years [the new arrivals can]” (Woman, 18-40).

The importance to highlight that the Roma have been in Sweden for 500 years was a current trend among the individuals answering the questionnaires. Only two of the in-depth interviewees mentioned this. I believe it is a way to highlight the importance of Roma presence for a long time in Sweden, and how long it has taken to achieve ‘better’ rights for the community, especially based on all the structural discrimination they have had to face in the past, and still do to this day. They wanted to stress the long going history of Roma, and the lack of change in attitudes towards the community.

“We have been here for 500 years and have been exposed since then. Laws changed, but not attitudes” (Woman, 18-40).

Combined with the perception of the implementation by the community, the committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raised concerns on the implementation in 2018¹⁰⁶.

“While taking note of the strategy for Roma inclusion (2012–2032), the Committee, nevertheless, remains concerned that Roma continue to face difficulty in accessing education, employment, housing, health care and justice. The Committee is further concerned about reports of forced evictions of certain Roma groups, living in informal settlements, and reports that Roma continue to be subjected to hate crimes (art. 5)” (UHRI, 2018).

In correlation with this, multiple SDGs need to be taken into consideration for Sweden to fulfill their requirements, which are SDG 3, SDG 4 (4.5), SDG 10 (10.3, 10.4), SDG 11 (11.1) and SDG 16 (16.3) (UHRI, 2018).

A participant that has been working on the plan and has been involved in the process states that the most important outcome of this plan needs to start in early education.

¹⁰⁶ Recommendation nr. 24; CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23 (UHRI, 2018).

“When you think about their plan for 2032, the school is where it has to start. The older ones have brought this with them, it's hard to change. So how are we going to change it? Well by getting the right education in schools when it comes to minorities and giving an explanation. If you know that Roma have been slaves for 500 years and continue to be treated badly in Europe like in Romania for example, then you also understand why they beg on the streets. If you understand that Roma were murdered during the Second World War, they were not allowed to go to school here in Sweden until the 60's, then you understand what has happened. You won't have the same prejudices. You grow up educated with an understanding of what minorities have been subjected to. [...] So you change the view of the Roma. But the school says 'we can't buy new textbooks, we haven't been mandated by the government to do this'. The publishers say they can't print the books because they haven't received an order from the schools. It's become like a circle that goes round and round while we're giant on them and telling them this is where the change starts. The school has to get better. There's a law that says you have to use [...] different materials. Everyone is blaming each other. But every day that goes by we have consequences for our children and for the children who are in school now. So we need to be on this a lot more. We offered the whole [municipality] this exhibition [exhibition about Roma]. Then we developed a small exhibition that we could put in libraries and schools. We asked that we come there for free and exhibit” (Man, 41-60).

7. Race as a social Construct – “Good” vs. “bad”

While analyzing the answers from the participants taking out important highlights on stereotypes, multiple Roma stated that there are both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ to come from prejudice. Most of which are bad, and representation of media only further highlights this. The committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated in their recommendations from 2018¹⁰⁷ that they were concerned with the widespread racist hate-speech and violence affecting Roma, among others. They refer to SDG 10 (10.3), SDG 16 (16.1, 16.3, 16.6) and SDG 17 (17.18).

¹⁰⁷ Recommendation nr. 10; CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23 (UHRI, 2018).

One participant specifically addressed the issue of prejudice arguing that Roma are ‘bad’ people comes from home because non-Roma have the wrong idea of Roma.

“They learn at home that Roma are not as good as everyone else [...] They have an image of propaganda of Roma called Antiziganism” (Man, 41-60).

“Can't get a home or a job because of [my] ethnicity. Being distrusted and devalued in terms of theft, level of knowledge and status in society” (Woman, 18-40).

“I am never allowed to refuel my car on equal terms, without advance payment. I am not allowed to rent premises attached to my accommodation like other tenants, the reason is usually "we have had problems with people like you". I have in my work heard government officials speak insultingly about Roma or pointed out prejudices as "facts". I have been questioned about my well-being, as if I was not speaking the truth. I have been refused entry to restaurants, camping sites and other public places where my ethnicity or clothing has been mentioned as a problem. I have been denied a "promising job" when it was appeared that I am Roma” (Woman, 18-40).

This quote in detail explains the issue of prejudice and using the concept of ‘othering’ to group together the Roma as both a homogenous group, but also believing the prejudice that all Roma are the same.

To overcome this prejudice that is spanning for generations, education and knowledge about the Roma, their history and their current situation is key. That way youth learn about it from a young age, and they are possibly able to break the vicious cycle. However, this is easier said than done. To break this cycle, it is necessary for individuals to grasp it, and believe what is being taught at an educational institution rather than what is being taught at home, in media or in society.

Further, an important aspect of race as a social construct is the idea that the discrimination or racism is accepted among friends or individuals close to the person being affected by this. As mentioned, most of the time Roma do not correct or say against any of these things, not because they do not care, but rather due to not standing it anymore, and instead takes the hate and normalizes it.

“Friends who discriminated me and had a lot of prejudices. The tax agency who at first did not help me to take back my Roma surname. Elderly people with ignorance

and old prejudices. Facebook and social media where people write/post ugly things” (Woman, 18-40).

These indirect discriminations are also based on the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ stereotypes connected with the community. This is tied back to SIRB and the reflection on what Roma ‘should’ or ‘should not’ be. Most of the participants stated that the prejudice is the worst when lumping everyone together based on the previously mentioned “othering” contributing to what might be seen on the news or historical beliefs. Among these are labels of “othering” are expressions or sayings such as: “abusers”, “drug users”, “thief’s”, “beggars”, “arranges marriages for little girls”, “steals children”, “not trustworthy”, “parasites”, “unknowledgeable” and “that we [Roma] do not want to work”. These historical misconceptions that are still alive today were easy to implement but are difficult to dissolve. For those who live the discrimination it is very real, and while the Roma community might not always be vocal about it on an individual level, the uncertainty and lack of trust in authorities stems from these misconceptions.

“Like, when you go shopping in different stores. Then the staff and guards look more at us than at others, because they are afraid that Roma will shoplift” (Woman, 18-40).

“When you go shopping, the staff call on the security guard, and make sure that he or she will follow us throughout the store” (Woman, 18-40).

The last quote was backed up by another participant that worked as a security guard in clothing stores and grocery stores for a few years, who stated that she would be asked by her supervisor to “keep an eye” on the Roma in the store. The participant was transparent about her background from the start and disclosed that she was Roma and was then told to follow the Roma specifically because it is “her people” and that she would “recognize their behavior”.

“In shops, clothing stores, pubs and among ordinary people. When they find out that you are Roma, you can get a response like "oh, I didn't know that, but you don't seem to be like the others"” (Man, 41-60).

This furthers the notion that Roma are meant to behave or come across as ‘others’ labeling Roma as something that is ‘bad’.

One participant stated that anti-Roma racism is very normalized and accepted in society, which is noticeable on the jokes that people around Roma make.

“Do you have one of those skits so that you can steal things [followed by a laugh by the perpetrator]” (Woman, 18-40).

8. Differential Racialization – The labor market and the media.

The most common place to experience differential racialization as analyzed by the answers from this study, is the workplace. Differential racialization is the notion that the individual is ‘good’ in one aspect, but not the other. To analyze this, I have chosen to focus on the ‘bad’ equaling to being Roma, as presented by the answers. The discrimination faced in the labor market takes on various forms, both direct and indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination is more common in the labor market since it is not as visual and more difficult to prove. Moreover, the media plays a large role in intensifying the idea of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Roma, depending on representation in movies, books, music, and news. In this sections, multiple testimonies from men and women between the ages of 18 to 60 are going to be presented to show a more reflective image of the various aspects that occur in the labor market, clearly affecting Roma of all ages.

“I myself, work in a shop, and my colleagues have told me to keep an eye on the Roma who come here, because they always steal” (Man, 41-60).

“I am proud to be Roma, but I don’t always express it among my customers at my company, so that my customers [won’t] back off” (Man 18-40).

According to both these quotes, along with an in-depth interview by a woman in age group 41-60 from northern Sweden, the biggest challenge in the labor market has been to overcome discrimination by her colleagues. She stated that she has previously worked in the restaurant business for over 30 years, mostly only alongside other non-Roma or as she describes them “Swedes”. She states that “as soon as the manager found out [that I was Roma], everyone changed [...] they treated me strangely”. They would ask the participant

“Is it true you are gypsy¹⁰⁸”. She stated she had done a good job, and prior to this had never once been questioned about her job or origin. The management and employees would question her, and she stated that “no one had my back”. They would tell me after finding out I was Roma that “you are good [at your job] and you are a good employee”. The reason this needs to be highlighted is the connection to the different racialization the participant experienced. After the management has found out she was Roma and incident happened at the restaurant.

“A customer had called in a missing phone. The manager came straight up to me, not the others. “Ah, he knows I’m a gypsy”. I asked him “Why did you come to me? Because I am a gypsy?”. The participant stated that the manager had said that was not the reason, but she herself understood that it was, since nothing like this had happened before. She states “I get irritated” about when she was ever in these situations.

Differential racialization explains the notion that she had been doing a great job for the past 30 years, but when seen as Roma she was told she cannot be trusted, based on prejudice.

Like this story, another participant, a man in the age group 41 to 60 claims he was not discriminated against when he first started working at the company, but it only started after the management found out he was Roma.

“I worked at a [company]. Six months worked out perfectly. When they found out I was a gypsy, it was completely ruined, I wasn't allowed to do anything. I was treated completely differently. I didn't get to do the tasks I was doing before. It affected me in many ways. I avoid saying where I'm from now [to employers]. Now I'm in a situation where I can't avoid it. Everyone knows who I am and what I do, in social services etc. I can't hide it, but I don't want to hide it anymore. [...] It's not me that's at fault, it's them that's at fault” (Man 41-60).

Another in-depth interview showed the severity of how Roma are treated in the workplace. The participant was seen as a ‘good’ Roma, while his peers were not. The management did not seem to care about the biased and hateful comments the direct boss had to say about the community.

¹⁰⁸ Referring to the derogatory term ‘zigenare’

“I resigned from my old job at [organization]. We got a new manager who was [non-roman], who had worked on human rights [before]. When he comes in there I report to him what we have done before and what we are doing etc. He says "can't you tell your people to get their act together?". I said "what do you mean?". [He said] well, we know they're just pretending, tell them to get their act together and start working and stuff. I don't think you understand the problem [I said to him] and started to explain the situation to him. I told him what we need [at the workplace]. We need social workers with a Roma background, to which he replies “are there social workers with a Roma background? I thought everyone just begged”. He was very, very prejudiced. He was going to be my boss. I contacted the top official in [the municipality] who works with human rights and minorities and explained what had happened to him [...] then he says "[name] nobody cares. You can sue us if you want, you can see how far you get". That attitude. [Racism] is something that still exists and is ongoing and that's what we fight every day” (Man, 41-60)

This situation made him report the discrimination to DO, but there was no follow-up and no further information. The participant states it has been two years since the incident happened. Based on this response along with multiple others, there is an understanding to why the community does not go through the paperwork it takes to report the crimes. The lack of trust, follow-up and understanding of the situation.

Based on being Roma there are many things that the mainstream media has pushed for even more such as “Roma not taking responsibility [...] that Roma are a dirty people, that they steal, beg and fraud people” (Woman, 18-40). According to this woman, it is based on ignorance which needs to be corrected by providing the necessary means in schools. However, according to another participant many positive things are being highlighted in media nowadays changing attitudes and perception about Roma.

“The visibility in the media has started to change. There are cooking shows, Roma artists etc. It makes the public perception of Roma, it has changed a bit "well, they are ordinary people like you and me". The food is exciting, it's an international language cooking. So it's slowly but surely changing” (Man, 41-60).

The importance of understanding and being part of the change, according to a participant, comes from them taking a stand and being proud of who they are.

“I am a proud Roma and I think more Roma should come forward with their Roma ethnicity in the workplace, to counteract the distorted image that Roma are not educated and cannot work” (Man, 41-60).

This is the idea that the Roma when not saying they are Roma, fit into Swedish society. The idea of being good at something if it ‘fits’, the following participant clearly have good credentials, and according to the interview also obtains a university degree. However, this was overlooked by the fact that she was Roma, because as soon as she removed specifics from her CV, that would not have affected her job, she was approached by employers. Included in this, are normalized anti-Roma racism jokes, that would make any of the participants uncomfortable, but as one participant stated, “we laugh along, hoping to get the job”.

“Actually, I have experienced discrimination in all the places listed in the previous question¹⁰⁹, but I chose the labor market because that is where it has been most noticeable. On my CV it says that I know Romani and that I have participated in panel discussions/programs where we have talked about racism against Roma. I am very open about it and didn't even think that it would reduce my chances of getting a job. From the beginning I was naive and thought, no but there are better applicants therefore I don't get these jobs. But when I removed anything Roma related from my CV, it opened many more doors, which is a great shame. I have been on job interviews when the employer asks about my origin, and I answer Roma. Some get uncomfortable, others have no problem with it and some [make] racist jokes. For example, there was a man who [said] "haha it is you who have many siblings" “just [don't wear] no big skirt when you come and work!" etc. I was quite put off but at the same time I'm used to it” (Woman 18-40).

9. Intersectionality

Once analyzing the data there was no clear indication of intersectionality, primarily the difference between men and women and the way they perceive and experience discrimination. However, the perception of discrimination between someone who is 18 and someone who is 80 is clearly different, based on life experiences and lifelong

¹⁰⁹ Authorities, school/university, Restaurants/bars/café's, healthcare, housing, shops, labor market.

discrimination. This thesis does not specifically focus on these differences due to the limitation of the study and will therefore not go into further detail.

10. Storytelling and counter storytelling – Unlearn held views

To explain and analyze storytelling and counter storytelling, an understanding of the difficulty of unlearning something thought to be true needs to be further emphasized. In this case, it is the negative ideas and prejudice previously mentioned about the Roma. This is tied back to the Swedish education system, and how the authorities and municipalities need to work together to provide students with sufficient information and knowledge about not only the Roma community, but all Swedish national minorities. Society needs to unlearn the idea that educational institutions are not biased, because they are.

There is a combination of issues to highlight in regard to the ignorance and willful ignorance about the Roma among Swedes of all ages. One of the most common misconceptions is where the Roma origin from.

“‘Does that mean you are from Romania’ is a commonly asked question” (Woman, 18-40).

This type of comment or question would be asked by people of all age groups, even the younger generation that according to the Minority Act (2008:567) should be taught about the Roma in school, demonstrating a clear oversight in the education system. By speculation, this could be both ignorance and/or lack of interest from the administration or individual teacher in question. Since this is a commonly asked question, or assumption by the majority of *gadje*. Four participants stated that they at least once had heard this statement.

“Go back to your home country”

Due to lack of relevant background understanding from students, they do not know much about Roma, their history, or their origin. A common answer to clarify what being Roma is, is that the participants would state they are ‘*gypsy*’¹¹⁰ for the person asking, to make

¹¹⁰ *Zigenare*

the person wondering understand. Usually, it would be followed by the question “*so, what is your country?*”, to which the Roma would have to explain who the Roma are and where they are from, which the participants found tiring. However, the participants would also clarify that they do not appreciate using the word ‘*gypsy*’ to describe themselves but use this term to make it easy for both themselves and the person asking to make it more understandable, and steer away from follow-up questions.

The questions in fact are not the issue, but rather the need to ask. I would personally rather have a person ask for a deeper understanding than to have a conversation with someone that assumes the prejudices are right. If someone asks to know more about the Roma, their culture, history, or language and is aware of the issue in using the terms ‘*gypsy*’ or ‘*zigenare*’ and acknowledges this, it is a step in the right direction.

Moreover, one participant from Southern Sweden stated she has two children in elementary school who struggle to learn about Roma in school. According to the Language Act (2009:724), the children should not only be provided with sufficient information about the minorities, but also have access to tutoring in Romani Chib, as well as books in their language. According to the participant, the municipality is doing a good job maintaining and upholding the Act, instead it is each individual institution that does not take it seriously.

“Now it is more accepted with the language [Romani Chib] in schools” (Woman, 18-40).

When the participant went to school herself it was not accepted to speak Romani Chib to other Roma children in school. The participant has had to learn the language as an adult and is trying to push for educational institutions around the municipality she lives in to have more options for Roma children. Since 2019, there has been an immense improvement, perhaps because of the reconstructed Minority Language Act (2009:724). Prior to 2019, there were books fitting for all children at the lower and middle schools, except Romani Chib, but even though it is growing slowly there is still improvement, which, considered by the participant is greatly appreciated. Two separate participants state that there is an issue with the translation of these books, because Romani Chib is not a homogenous language. Romani Chib consist of various dialects, and therefore it is more difficult to translate books into Romani Chib or find a suitable language tutor.

“Few people actually know who the Roma are, the prejudice around [us] is very old, but it is still being taught” (Woman, 41-60).

11. Long term impacts of discrimination

The final part of the findings focuses rather on the impact discrimination of all kinds has had on the participants, good or bad, rather than what sort of discrimination they have had to face. Much of the impact was or was leaning towards a “negative feeling”.

The education system has been highly impacted by the generational education gap effecting the Roma community. The community has only been allowed to legally attend Swedish schools for the past 60 years, which has made the generation living through that having difficulties today. During our interview I said a few words that the participant did not understand which made her frustrated.

“Not having a sufficient education. It’s not fun at all. I do not feel like I can keep up with society, sometimes I do not understand basic Swedish words” (Woman, 41-60).

Further, another participant¹¹¹ had also stated that many Swedish words were difficult to understand. Instead of asking what the words meant, she often kept quiet as she was embarrassed to not know them. It is important to understand that these two participants grew up speaking Romani Chib at home, at a time when they did not properly attend Swedish schools, learning the Swedish language. Society often forgets that Roma are in fact bilingual.

The feeling of being less intelligent due to structural discrimination from authorities is further highlighted when the woman felt she could no longer help her children with basic tasks for school, as she had no education past seventh or eighth grade. The reason the interviewee left school early, was because her own parents were not able to help her with her schoolwork. She lost her motivation to continue when the teachers told her she should

¹¹¹ (Woman, 61-80).

wait until she is 18 instead and go to 'Komvux'¹¹². The teachers had little knowledge of her Roma culture and background, and little understanding of the situation she was in.

The participants own mother called the school once to ask the teacher and principal for additional help in teaching her daughter to read and write, as she was not able to herself. The mother was not allowed to go to school as a child and could only start at a later age because of Swedish legislation. The participant eventually learned how to read and write properly in her early 20s. Today, she feels it is challenging helping her own children with their homework because she states she still does not know how to "properly" read and write. She once called the teacher of one of her children and explained that she does not have an education past eighth grade, which the teacher was surprised about.

"Teachers and the Swedish people need to know that we were not allowed to go to school until the 60s. We cannot be expected to know as much as the non-Roma do" (Woman, 41-60).

Various participants were focused on what the generation to come would have to endure in terms of discrimination. The strategy (SOU 2010:55) is meant to ensure the same possibilities for Roma children born today as those of non-Roma children. However, according to these statements, the community has little credibility in that happening.

"That I see discrimination completely differently since I have experienced it. I don't want children to feel the way I felt" (Woman, 18-40).

"It makes me disappointed in society, worried about the children's future" (Woman, 18-40).

"The children should not have to hear these things" (Woman, 18-40)

"My own children are being affected by it. I don't care as much about myself" (Woman, 18-40).

Mental health is still very stigmatized, especially among the older generations. Therefore, it might be difficult to be honest about the mental health issues that come with the

¹¹² Adult school in Sweden for those who would like to study or need to in order to have a high school diploma to attain university.

generational trauma of discrimination. Even so, a few participants from different age groups felt it impacted their mental health:

”Mentally demanding (Man, 41-60).

“Bad self-esteem” (Woman, 18-40).

“Depressed, unwillingness to keep fighting” (Man, 18-40).

”[It has impacted me] a lot. Minority stress among others. Lower self-esteem and hate against society and the ones that have violated me” (Woman, 18-40).

”[It has impacted me] a lot. I have avoided going around looking in stores that are a little bit more expensive because then security comes” (Woman, 18-40).

As seen here, multiple participants state that it has affected their mental health and the majority are in the youngest age group between 18 to 40. But according to the findings, only one had sought professional help or support of any kind in relation to mental health. The reason for this is the lack of trust in the healthcare system, not taking them seriously. According to one of the in-depth interviews, the woman stated that instead of relying on professional help, many just console each other and show support among family and friends. However, even if the community supports each other, most of the participants state that discrimination has led them to have had to hide their identity somehow.

“It has made me not always daring to be myself. But in later years it has instead made me want to fight for Roma rights and to be proud of my history” (Woman, 18-40).

“Yes. I rarely say I am Roma” (Woman, 18-40).

”Sometimes I don’t want to say that I’m Roma because I don’t want to be subjected to prejudice from anyone” (Woman, 18-40).

“It wasn’t until I was in my mid 20s that I started telling people I was Roma. I feel like a big part of my identity has been lost until now, and I will never get it back” (Woman 18-40).

“Roma are afraid to disclose their ethnicity in job interviews” (Man, 41-60).

“You have to hide your identity to get the same opportunities. It's hard to have to lie about your identity, where you come from, all the time. I think that puts the deepest wounds in children and young people. I've been stabbed, I've been shot, I've been beaten so many times that I have no place left to scar anymore. I'm not afraid. I say I am a gypsy, if you want to confront me, do it. I'm used to it. I avoid bringing up the subject unless I have to” (Man, 41-60)

This is implied by the participants stating they had to hide their due to decades of prejudice forming an idea that one should in fact hide their identity. This is strengthened by older family members encouraging some participants to do so. The social construct that created the notions of race and ethnicity, also created the social idea to hide one's identity.

”[It has impacted me] negatively, I've had to hide my origin to be treated like a human” (Man, 41-60).

One participant stated that since being an adult, it has been a lot easier accepting oneself and battling the discrimination and racism faced from a young age. She states it has “of course” affected her but that she “finally feels more welcome and important [at her new job working on Roma rights]”. She feels that her colleges, even though they are non-Roma, have been very supportive and states that “Not all Swedes [have prejudice]”.

“I can finally say “I am Roma”” (Woman, 18-40).

Only one participant stated that the impact had not taken a toll on his mental health or impacted his everyday life, rather he stated that “It has been manageable” (Man, 41-60).

Four out of the seventeen people answering the questionnaire stated that the discrimination had been rather positive and had made them fight for Roma rights. While they have been negatively impacted by the actions behind the discrimination, the participants turned the cards around.

“It gave me a lot of motivation to prove all things wrong, so I engaged politically. Lately it hasn't been going as well because I lost the motivation, but I don't know what the reason is” (Woman, 18-40).

“Angry. And I will show you that Roma are regular people and we can work” (Man, 41-60).

“Made me strong. To prove that I can, but I am very suspicious towards authorities” (Man, 41-60).

”It made me want to fight more for Roma rights” (Man, 18-40).

The resilience and strength to rise within the community after being discriminated against for generations, is immense. The community does not want someone to voice their issues for them, but they want to be part of the process, and be seen and advocated for their own cause. As seen by these quotes, men, and women in both age group 18 to 40, and 41 to 60 believe the Roma must start fighting for their cause. In the end, that is how it all started in the 1950s and 1960s with previously mentioned, Katarina Taikon, fighting for Roma rights. She was and still is a very important figure in the Roma community in Sweden. Seeing the changes, she made by acknowledging that the community were deserving of their rights, legislations and policies started to change. Sweden has come a long way, on paper, since then. The issue now is combatting anti-Roma racism that is flourishing in society. The way to combat this is by enforcing the discrimination law and understanding that colorblindness has caused it to be more difficult to prosecute discrimination based on ethnicity, as it is different from racist hate crimes, targeted towards race.

“Antiziganism is a global phenomenon that does not only happen in Sweden. Amnesty International has done research where antiziganism is the most accepted form of racism in our society. Not only ethnic Swedes expose Roma to antiziganism, but also Swedes with immigrant backgrounds often bring prejudices against Roma [from abroad]. Despite research showing that exclusion and poverty shape all groups of people, social deviance continues to be blamed on ethnicity. It does not even take into account those Roma who have [not] had the [same] opportunity and struggled to improve their living conditions. These Roma have to struggle twice as much because first of all, all prejudices have to be knocked down. Today we see educated Roma women and men who have [had] to hide their ethnicity for equality. As a result, young Roma girls and boys have to wait many more years to have strong Roma role models as their role models today have to hide the fact that they are Roma” (Woman, 18-40).

Based on this quote it is crucial to highlight the importance of strong Roma figures that fight for Roma rights. All children deserve to have someone that looks like them, from a similar background to look up to.

“I am a proud Roma, a fighter for Roma rights and founder of [an] organization. I took back my family name, which my family took away [changed] because fear of not being able to get a job, or not getting the right help from the authorities. I am not fluent in my language because my mother lost it when she herself was not always allowed to speak it or perhaps was sometimes ashamed. I want to break down prejudices. I have a family that supports me 100% in my non-profit work for Roma” (Woman, 18-40).

This quote comes from a young Roma activist I had the chance to interview. She works for the improvement of Roma rights and by this quote tackles both the issue of prejudice against the community, and the difficulty in being born with a Roma last name. As mentioned earlier, Roma who have a last name connected to the community find it much more difficult to find housing, jobs and are more prone to being discriminated against based on their names. Many Roma that I have interviewed, and that I have known growing up, have a Roma first name and a “Swedish” first name. All my immediate family members do. This is also an aftermath of having the need and want of acceptance historically by the Swedish society and renounce their Roma roots.

The impacts of anti-Roma racism are widespread, and it is going to take many years before we see a real change. Education is very important, and as mentioned earlier both in Chapter one and two, as well as by multiple participants, there needs to be an improvement in the education system and children today need to learn about Roma, their history, and their struggles to fully comprehend their situation today.

“Worse, poorer times mean that Roma find it more difficult [in life], as they are still not working or academically educated. Knowledge is power” (Man, 41-60).

To if the situation is going to improve “*It can become better, but Antiziganism is always going to be there*” (Woman, 41-60).

To finalize the analysis of this thesis. One of the participants from the in-depth interviews highlighted the importance of mentioning the consequences of anti-Roma

racism. He explained further why it is so important to understand the history to understand what is happening to Roma today.

“The consequences for the Roma children growing up now and having to live with this [racism]. If someone looks at you in a bad way and you don't have any opportunities, you become what they think you are. You have no other way to cope. The consequences of Antiziganism is the most serious part of discrimination. They give you a hopelessness, you get no motivation, you have no desire. Because of Antiziganism, many people end up with mental health related issues, and don't feel well. [...] They never get the opportunity to live their lives to their full potential. Just because of a prejudice. It's so serious that I can't even [speechless]. [...] Roma are starting to believe [what they say] more and more. The consequences of Antiziganism sounds like nothing, but it is the most serious thing there is. [Physical] fighting is nothing, you'll be fine. You get scars, you survive, you keep getting stronger but to live all the time not being able to be yourself is devastating, for all Roma communities around the world” (Man, 41-60).

General Conclusions

This thesis set out to answer the question “*How does the Roma in Sweden experience and/or perceive discrimination and prejudice in their everyday lives based on existing policies?*”. Sweden is rather transparent concerning their handling of the Roma issues, however, there is an immense lack of follow-up regarding the implemented measures in ensuring that they work in practice. Although Sweden has become more transparent over the years, there is still a faulty system in place. The Government and municipalities need to meet the needs of the Roma community and listen to them when they express the willingness and commitment. Roma are the ones that best understand their own situation and until the Government and especially the municipalities acknowledge this, there will not be much change in practice, only in theory. Non-Roma individuals need to be more open to the idea that Roma are in fact Swedish, and many of them have been so for over 500 years. Even the newly arrived Roma are Swedish. The notion of colorblindness has widened the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’ instead of bringing everyone closer. Before the public and authorities understand the term ‘race’ and the underlying issue of removing it from legislations completely, there will not be an understanding of racism and discrimination, or how to combat them.

The perception of discrimination and anti-Roma racism among the community is consistent and affects thousands of people every single day. Since the change in politics and policy in the early 2000s, much has changed but there is still a very long way to go. Roma individuals need to be included at the very start of the process whether it be drafting a new framework or deciding on new policies at a municipality level. The generational trauma experienced by the community is still very ingrained in even the youngest members of the community. The lack of trust in authorities and the government is followed generation by generation. The authorities and the government fall short on keeping their word, and the police register further strengthened the lack of trust the community already had against them. One of the main outcomes and ideas from the National strategy until 2032 is the inclusion of Roma in decision making. Based on the findings from this study, both on perception but also on realization of facts, it is not working in practice. Individuals at a municipality level, as well as a governmental level

all agree that more work needs to be done in order to include the community in the decision making and not have it be a stressful situation for the community.

The EU and the UN along with Sweden continue to draft and implement new legislations and frameworks to protect and prevent anti-Roma racism. There needs to be a reform change along with the frameworks, not just allowing the Roma to enter the room, but to also allow them a seat at the table. Their voices need not just to be heard, but to be amplified. The Roma community in Sweden, and in Europe are the ones living and experiencing the discrimination and anti-Roma racism daily. It is important to consider that the national strategy has an implementation period of 20 years, however, it is very optimistic and ambitious to think that there will be real change past 2032 without the full inclusion of the community. Seeing how far Roma rights have come since the 1950s and 1960s, the outcome is positive but realistically will take longer than 20 years in total. Issues raised by the community during the 1950s and 1960s are still present today, and even if legislations and policies are in place, much is kept in the dark and not as openly discussed as it was then, which might be the main causes of the perception and prejudice still being present nowadays.

On paper all these frameworks, new legislations and policies look impressive, but the reality is different. Much of which is due to the idea of Sweden being a role model for other states and roots back to Bell's idea of the *Brown vs The Board of Education* verdict. States do what best benefits themselves, not their people. If they would like to increase the level of education and individuals speaking Romani Chib, the government needs to act and ensure teachers at all levels, perhaps through incentives motivating the community to become educators themselves. Although Sweden is working towards this, and the EU goals Sweden has set for itself reflects these goals, there is still a long way to go.

The community individuals providing their testimony who have had a part in the implementation and overlooking of the drafts of the national strategy and any document being sent to the EU and the UN, all agree that there needs to be more time to digest and edit the drafts given to them. The short time span to seem included in the process simply is not sufficient time. The long and complex EU documents need attention and not to be read and understood under pressure. On a multi-governance level, Sweden needs to

improve immensely to see any real difference and effect long-term for these policies to work, and not just to look good on paper for the international community.

Further, the perceptions of all these policies, discrimination and anti-Roma racism combined is what makes this study important. The ideas and perceptions from the municipalities and the government do not do any of the legislations justice, if not the opinions of those affected take space. The inclusion process cannot be hurried and must rely on negotiated inclusion, in which both the group to be included and the including society may agree on a set of terms and conditions for inclusion without any coercion by the governing bodies or organizations.

Although it has been almost 80 years since Katarina Taikon along with other activists started demonstrating and advocating for Roma rights in Sweden, there is still a long way to go. As the community has voiced throughout this study, the public's opinion on Roma is hurtful, but the immense problem lies within authorities and the government. Without a real change in the public opinion about Roma and knowledge building, prejudice will be prolonged against the community. On a policy level, many positive changes have been made in terms of education, housing, residency rights, healthcare and in the labor market as well as the Roma being recognized as an official national minority. However, there is still a large disparity between policy and practice that needs to be acknowledged and understood by all levels of governance in Sweden.

Moreover, there is still a widespread need for future studies, especially ones that are conducted by the community themselves. The representation of Roma in the media and the correlation between media representation and general opinion is closely related as seen previously but needs deeper research. Further, an understanding of the impact of social media and information on the younger population to see a difference in knowledge building among the younger and the older generations, who did not have access to such information.

In conclusion, through the policy review and findings from the interviews, the Roma people continue to be subjected to various human rights violations throughout Europe. While Sweden has improved immensely there is still a very long way to go before all children born Roma have the same rights and opportunities as those born non-Roma. The

challenges faced by the community are not always understood by those who are non-Roma. The government and society can only do so much and without any valuable input from the community, it will stay a vicious cycle with no real long-term change. Non-Roma individuals will never fully understand the struggles and perceptions of the community and their lived experiences.

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Appendixes

Appendix I - Interview Questions

1. Ask about age and gender.
2. What Roma community do you identify yourself in?
3. What does discrimination mean to you? How would you define it?
4. Have you ever been discriminated against?
5. Explain situations where you have been discriminated against.
6. Where do you feel the most discriminated against?
7. Authorities, restaurants, schools, healthcare
8. What do you think the perception of Roma people is in Sweden?
9. How do you think that society's perceptions about Roma differ from reality?
10. What preconceptions/ misconceptions do you think are false/ unfair, and why?
11. Do you believe the government gives you support?
12. If yes, do you think that support is enough?
13. How do you feel about the Swedish government and the policies implemented?
14. Are you aware of these policies?
15. What could be done to better the situation for Roma based on these policies?
16. Broadly, how do you want things to change, so that your culture is fully respected in today's Sweden? Are there any major changes that you would like to see happen?
17. Do you have anything to add?

Appendix 2 – Interview list

Questionnaire			
	Age group	Gender	Roma group
1	18 – 40	Man	Arli
2	41 – 60	Man	Lovari
3	18 – 40	Woman	Traveller
4	41 – 60	Woman	Do not know
5	18 – 40	Woman	Lovara
6	18 – 40	Woman	Kaale
7	41 – 60	Man	Swedish Roma
8	41 – 60	Woman	Lovari
9	18 – 40	Man	Gurbeti
10	18 – 40	Woman	Lovari
11	41 – 60	Man	Lovara
12	18 – 40	Woman	Polish/Russian Roma
13	18 – 40	Woman	Lovara
14	18 – 40	Woman	-
15	41 – 60	Man	Lovari
16	41 – 60	Man	Lovara
17	18 – 40	Woman	Arli
Interviews			
18	41 – 60	Woman	Do not know
19	41 – 60	Man	Kalderash
20	18 – 40	Woman	Lovari
21	41 – 60	Woman	Polish Roma
22	41 – 60	Man	Lovari
23	61 – 80	Woman	Swedish Roma
24	61 – 80	Woman	Swedish Roma
25	41 – 60	Woman	Swedish Roma
26	41 – 60	Woman	Swedish Roma

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to show my immense gratitude every single individual that decided to participate in this study, either through interviews or through a questionnaire. Your answers are beyond valuable. Without you, this thesis would not be possible.

I would like to thank all my friends from UNIPD that helped me gather my thoughts and ideas during this time. The advice I have gotten along the way while conducting the study has been tremendously helpful.

Lastly, I deeply want to show thanks to my thesis supervisor Professor Pietro De Perini for sharing his expertise and having patience with me. Thank you for helping me organizing and gathering my ideas and thoughts and encouraging me when I needed it. The encouragement and positivity throughout this study has been what made it even more fun to keep writing