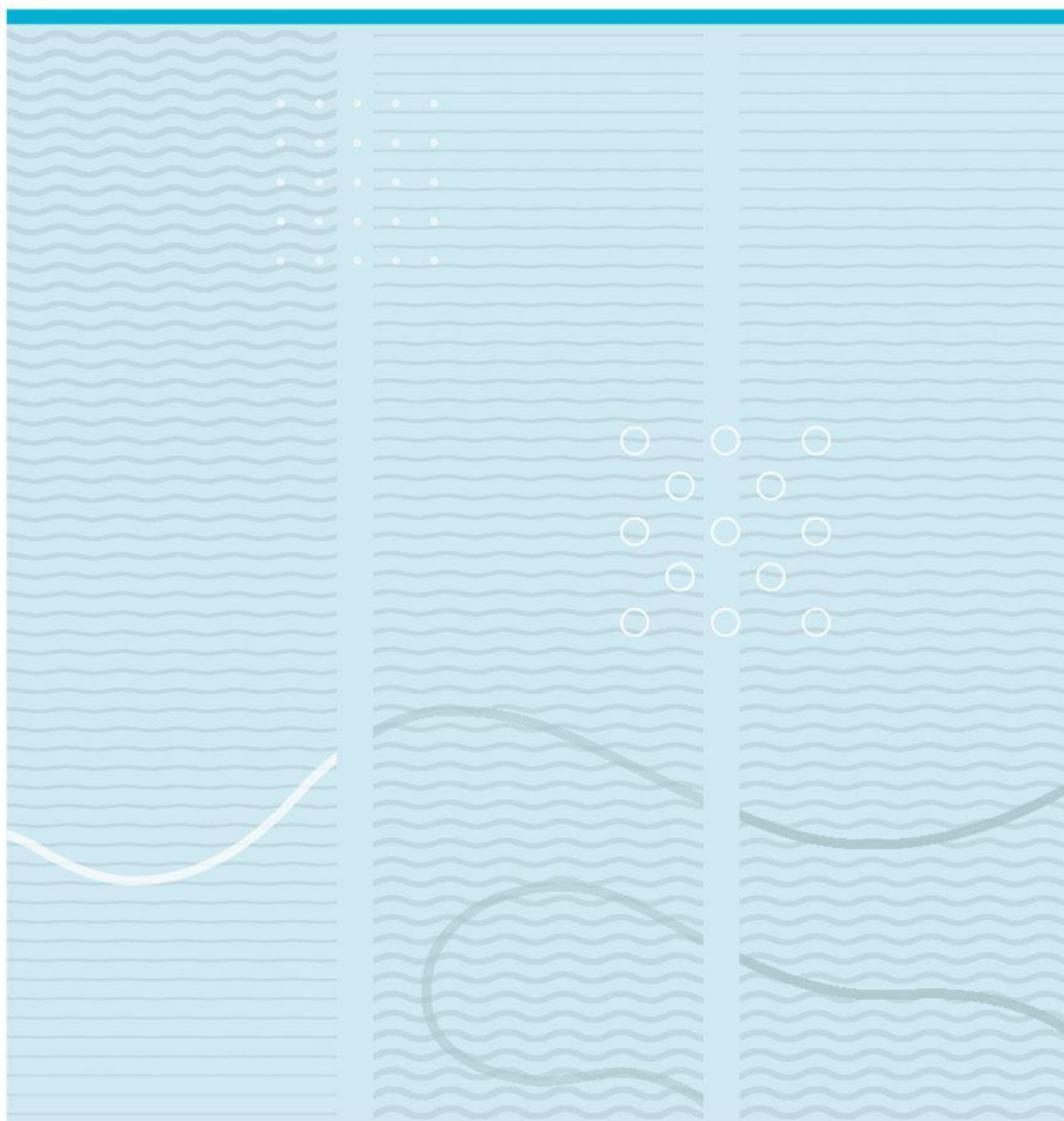


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Resistance, Navigations and Negotiations

A decolonial reading of narratives and counter-narratives from Norwegian Roma and Romani



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Abstract

In Norway today, Roma and Romani are often omitted or given little space in history books as well as in the news. When they at long last are mentioned, they tend to appear negatively. The way Roma and Romani are portrayed in the media perpetuates narratives, which become dominant discourses about them, confirmed by society at large. These narratives are constructed by stereotypes which are rooted in attitudes that follow after the establishment of the modern-colonial nation-state. In this study, I analyze different personal narratives from Norwegian Roma and Romani from the Norwegian mass-media discourse. The narratives reveal various approaches to navigating, negotiating and resisting dominant discourses about them. My desire is to contribute to awareness around previous and ongoing oppression of Roma and Romani in Norway by highlighting their perspectives with reference to how they show agency through their personal narratives.

I will answer the research questions within the scope of two themes I have identified emerging as the most prevalent in my sample of narratives: ‘Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing’ and ‘Roma and Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system.’ The research questions are analyzed by utilizing counter-narratives as methodological framing within a Foucaultian and decolonial narrative tradition as an approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach is applied in order to analyze their personal narratives as well as identify possible counter-narratives.

Inspired by the prominent thinker Boaventura de Sousa Santos, I take on a decolonial approach. By applying Stanos theory, the ‘*sociology of absences*’ I seek to analyze how Roma and Romani express experiences of being made absent with their ways of knowing and their own perspectives through dominant discourses about them. Furthermore, I apply his theory, the “*sociology of emergences*” to make visible, and engage with, their perspectives and ways of knowing. I argue, in line with Santos, that there is an equal need for the majority as well as those who are most immediately affected by colonial violence, to recognize that we all live under a colonial system, and that it is significantly important for the majority to counter coloniality through dismantling epistemic injustice.

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Oslo, 15th of February

Vilde Hoel Martinsen

1 Introduction

Coloniality of power is a phenomenon that is barely touched upon in a Norwegian context. Several researchers point out that coloniality in the context of Norway is made irrelevant (Jore, 2022: Eriksen, 2021: Bangstad og Sandset, 2019). It can seem confusing to think of coloniality of power as relevant to the context of Norway; the dominating imagery of Norway is that Norway has never been a colonizer. Although Norway has, in fact, colonized the ancestral homeland (Sàpmi) of the Sámi people, around which there is both denial and silence. The colonization of Sàpmi was a gradual process that does not differ much from the more well-known stories of settler colonialism in the places today known as Australia, the USA or Canada (Ravna, 2011). However, coloniality does not only refer to historical colonization and its consequences. Decolonial perspectives look at coloniality as embedded and intertwined with Western modernity, which is fundamental to the racist logic that divides people into hierarchies (Quijano, 2000). Guro Sibeko outlines how the Norwegian nation is partly constructed on doctrines of racism. The five national minorities in Norway, Kvens, Roma, Romani, Forest Finns, and Jews, together with the indigenous people Sámi, have all been oppressed by the Norwegian state for centuries (Sibeko, 2019, p.57). In the construction of Norway as a nation-state, minority groups, such as Roma and Romani, were not included in the new national group identity that comprised Norway. This can be understood as how the coloniality of power manifested to exclude those that did not fit with racialized conceptualizations of the Norwegian citizen, as well as with 'Norwegian values' (Quijano, 2000). Furthermore, the superiority of the constructed Norwegian race could justify that Sámi children were forced out of their homes to go to school where they would learn to become properly Norwegian. Kvens had to become Norwegian-speaking to buy land so their settlement supported Norwegian sovereignty (Sibeko, 2019, p.57). The idea of the superiority of the constructed Norwegian race could also justify that Romani children were stolen out of their homes and families to be put in new Norwegian families. Moreover, Roma have been forced out of the country. Other assimilation policies towards Romani, such as forced sterilization, were justified in the same way (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & vogt, 2007, p.17). Furthermore, Roma were put in concentration camps during the second world war, where over half a million Roma were killed (Fränkel, 2022). Simultaneously, there is broad denial about the colonization of Sàpmi, as well as a public silence related to how Roma several times were thrown out of the country and refused entry back in, even though they had Norwegian citizenship. This comes in addition to a silence towards the assimilation Romani have been subjected to (Brustad et al.,2017). Denial and silence like this have facilitated conditions for the production of

the narrative of “Norway as a homogeneous, harmonious nation-state”. (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 216).

1.1 Research topic and aims

This study addresses different personal narratives from Norwegian Roma and Romani, that reveal various approaches to navigating, negotiating and resisting dominant cultural narratives about them. The introductory context outlined above points to how silences and denials have facilitated colonial structures in Norway to still exist today and reflects why Roma and Romani are subjected to so much antiziganism. The term antiziganism refers to the specific racism directed towards Roma and Romani, which I will elaborate on later. Conversations about racism are about time sat on the agenda in Norwegian society more than ever before, but antiziganism is not included in the conversation. There is a big lack of public conversation about antiziganism in Norway; additionally, it is hardly mentioned in policy documents. Hence, the word *antiziganism* is a word that is foreign to most of the population in Norway (Lauritzen, 2022). Some scholars claim that antiziganism is the last accepted form of racism today (Fränkel, 2022). This statement is supported by various reports documenting the population’s attitudes toward minorities in Norway. A report from the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) from 2022 and a FAFO- report from 2019 both find that the antiziganism aimed at Roma and Romani is more accepted and justified than racism directed towards other minorities in Norway (NIM, 2022, p.10: Tyldum, 2019, p. 8).

In Norway today, Roma and Romani are often omitted or given little space in history books and the news. Furthermore, they are mostly excluded from discourses about themselves (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 133). As I will elaborate more in my literature review, it appears in the NIM- report (2022) that nine out of ten of the respondents that have attended primary school in Norway state that they have learned little or nothing about Roma and Romani in school. Moreover, younger people have poorer knowledge than older people (NIM, 2022, p.8). Statistics point to how Roma and Romani are poorly integrated into the teaching materials. In the NIM report, it also appears that few people have noticed stories about Roma and Romani in the news. Hence, when they, at long last, are mentioned, they tend to appear negatively (NIM, 2022, p. 54).

In a new report from 2022 conducted by The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL-center), it is found that Roma are the minority group the Norwegian population has the most prejudices about (Moe, 2022, p.9). A correlating finding emerges from the NIM report (2022),

which also includes Romani in the statistics (NIM, 2022, p. 57-60). Rosvoll and Bielenberg (2012) suggest that antiziganism is constructed by stereotypes. Stereotypes can be translated into dominating narratives the majority upholds about the groups that, in turn, constitute the hegemonic discourse about Roma and Romani. The authors point out that the way Roma and Romani are portrayed in the media perpetuates these narratives (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012, p. 25). Through analyzing four personal narratives from Roma and Romani emerging from the Norwegian mass-media, I seek to analyze how they navigate, negotiate and resist dominant discourses about them. My overall aim is to highlight Roma and Romani's perspectives with emphasis on how they show agency.

1.2 Research questions and purpose of the research

The background for my research outlined above brings me to advocate for reconsidering the apparent dominant narratives about Roma and Romani in Norwegian society, As I will further discuss in the literature review, which presents studies on prejudice and antiziganism, I call attention to Roma and Romani's personal narratives about their truths and experiences, and I seek to emphasize how their narratives offer resistance to dominant cultural narratives about them. Hence my primary research questions read as follows;

1. What characterizes the stories told by Roma and Romani about themselves in the public mass media discourse?
2. In what ways do the personal narratives of Roma and Romani express experiences of being rendered absent as knowledge producers?
3. In what ways do Roma and Romani negotiate dominant discourses about them through counter-storytelling?

Inspired by the prominent thinker and legal sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, I utilize his term "absent" in my research question, referring to how one is produced as unintelligible, disqualified or dehumanized supported by colonial structures. Santos argues that by being suppressed and marginalized, you are also left out of the monoculture of knowledge and dominant scales. Which in turn constitute a huge mode of constructed silences and absences (Santos, 2014).

I will answer the research questions within the scope of two themes I have identified emerging as the most prevalent in my sample of narratives: ‘Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing’ and ‘Roma and Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system.’ These themes will be further elaborated on throughout the thesis.

In this study, as alluded to above, I analyze how Roma and Romani express experiences of being made absent with their ways of knowing and their own perspectives through dominant discourses about them as I will illustrate through their personal narratives within the scope of a decolonial lens. This implies that I am curious to uncover how Roma and Romani resist these dominant discourses. As well as to uncover how these dominant discourses have prevented/limited their participation in shaping the discourses on themselves in the mass-media, meaning prevented Roma and Romani from being recognized with their own perspective and ways of knowing. I will conduct my study by analyzing the selected personal narratives in relation to the dominant narratives I will identify from my literature review- section. I have chosen counter-narratives as methodological framing within a Foucaultian and decolonial narrative tradition as an approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, in order to analyse the personal narratives, as well as identify possible counter-narratives.

Central to my approach is the prominent thinker and legal sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who has emerged within the decolonial approach as a central scholar. Santos argues that the first step in the decolonial project is to first identify coloniality through what he terms the ‘sociology of absences’; pinpointing where and how people are produced as nonexistent, which involves making visible colonial separations that are constructed on the fictions of eurocentric universalism. The sociology of absences is followed by reaching the more substantial *sociology of emergences*, where the emphasis is placed on engaging with ways of knowing that have been othered and excluded through the hegemonic position of the west (Santos, 2018). In line with Santos, who argues that epistemic/ cognitive injustice underlies all other dimensions of injustice, I contend that it is significantly important for the majority to counter coloniality through dismantling epistemic injustice. In this way, I will attempt, with my analysis, to fully engage with Santos’ sociology of emergences by advocating for Roma and Romani’s ways of knowing and their knowledge that have been produced as absent. This is relevant for the Norwegian context where eurocentric notions of knowledge, and Norwegian values, may be perceived as universal and thus hegemonic (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25).

The above-outlined paragraph reflects some of the purposes of my research – that the coloniality of power has made Roma and Romani’s knowledge and ways of being in the world excluded, and that it is important for the majority to engage with their perspectives and ways of knowing (Santos,

2018). A further purpose of my research is to contribute to awareness around antiziganism Roma, and Romani are subjected to in Norway. Researcher on Roma studies Solvor Lauritzen (2022) points to how racism directed towards Roma and Romani is not sufficiently recognized or named in Norway yet, and hence there is a need for establishing the term antiziganism in Norway (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 140). A further reason for focusing specifically on personal narratives emerging from Roma and Romani is to promote an empowering image of them by engaging with their perspectives, as opposed to reproducing an image of them as victims of racism, which research that wants to uncover injustice actually sometimes is in danger of doing. Because by conducting research that uncovers racism, one may be in danger of perpetuating stereotypes against one's purpose (Alghasi, Eide, Simonsen, 2020, p. 129).

1.3 Roma and Romani: Concepts, definitions, and distinctions

Romani and Roma are ethnic groups that are legally recognized as national minorities in Norway (Selling, 2020, p. 38). Mainly, Norwegian Romani are considered to have originated from Egypt and moved to Scandinavia in the early 16th century. In Western Europe, Romani people were mostly referred to as "Gypsies". In the Nordic countries, the most common term for Romani was "Tater". Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to consequently use the term Romani instead of tater or tater/Romani. Today, there are still many Romani who use the term "Tater" about themselves, nevertheless, as a (*gadji*) non-Romani, I have chosen to consistently use Romani because Tater can contain some negative connotations. Tater is translated as "fantepakk", a Norwegian derogatory word in English. Tater was the term the majority population used to name the group. One can discuss whether it may be somewhat similar to the connotations of the word "gypsies," which is a word that carries a history of oppression, exploitation, and genocide (Lauritzen, 2022).

It may be difficult to understand the difference between Roma and Romani. In short, Roma are believed to originate from India and belong to the second immigration group that came to Norway in the 19th century. The state's measures against the two groups differed (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & vogt, 2007, p. 17). I will go more in-depth about the two groups' histories in Norway in the chapter below, but first, I will clarify the distinction between the two groups, as well as why I have chosen to write about them both.

The distinction between Roma and Romani is said to be particularly Norwegian (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & vogt, 2007, p. 17). Internationally, the umbrella term "Roma" includes different sub-groups of Roma, for example, Swedish "Resande," German "Sinti" and English "Travellers" all

belong under the umbrella term “Roma.” However, in Norway, many Roma and Romani people see themselves as distinct groups, hence not all Romani identify themselves with the collective term “Roma.” However, all these groups are affected by the same specific racism: antiziganism (Lauritzen, 2022). When the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities was signed by Norway in 1999, Roma and Romani were recognized as national minorities, which binds Norway to secure their political, social, and cultural rights. Norway chose to recognize Romani and Roma as two separate minorities, while Sweden, who ratified the convention one year later, chose to recognize “Resande” as a part of the Roma group (Selling, 2020, p. 38).

Since antiziganism affects Roma and Romani equally, and the overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to awareness around antiziganism in Norway, it became natural to include both groups in my research. Analogously, the history of Roma and Romani in Norway applies to each other in the manner that they have both been confused with each other by the Norwegian authorities throughout their whole history in Norway. Roma have been victims of assimilation policies carried out against Romani. Similarly, Romani were victims of ethnic cleansing during the Second World War due to how the authorities confused them with each other. However, there are also differences between them regarding culture and ways of living, and concerning the consequences of the different policies the state has carried out against them (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & Vogt, 2007).

With an emphasis on the statements above regarding differences between the groups and adding attention to the fact that the rest of European and international research does not distinguish between sub-groups of “Roma” as the groups do in Norway, some questions become apparent; in what way did they- or did they not identify with each other from the start of their journey to Europe? Has it been a pre-existing division between Roma and Romani? To the contrary, could it be that the rest of Europe has generalized different sub-groups, “travellers,” “sinti,” and “resande” into the umbrella term “Roma”? Or could the divide between Roma and Romani in Norway be seen as a colonial divide-and-conquer strategy carried out by the Norwegian state as a part of their strategy to ‘norwegianize’ the Norwegian territory, as it is easier to create a homogenous state by ensuring that a potentially united group is divided from each other? (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & vogt, 2017, p.17).

Furthermore, to be recognized as a national minority in Norway as Roma or Romani, you must have been in the country since either the 16th or 19th century. Using Sweden as an example, you can be recognized as a national minority there as long as you have citizenship. In the context of

Roma, it does not matter when they arrived in the country, as long as they have citizenship and belong to the Roma group, they have recognition as a national minority (Selling, 2019, p. 38). With this said, one may question whether these rules regarding protection as a national minority in Norway can function as a way to strategically uphold the number of Norwegian Roma and Romani to a low level.

Based on these reflections, and additionally emphasizing how Roma and Romani frequently are grouped into the same discourses in the public sphere, as well as the fact that they experience the same specific racism, made me land on the decision to include both of the groups in my research. I hope reflecting on this will lead the reader not to perceive Roma and Romani as grouped into one, but regardless, the reader may be left with some critical reflections as to where the divide between the two groups actually originates.

1.4 Roma and Romani and the Norwegian nation-state: Historical overview

Historically, there are similarities and differences between Roma and Romani, and both of them have a long history in Norway. As aforementioned, Norwegian Romani are considered to have originated from Egypt and moved to Scandinavia in the early 16th century (Brustad, Lien, Rosvoll & Vogt, 2007, p. 17). On the other hand, Roma are considered to originate from India and belong to the second immigration group that came to Norway in the 19th century after the slavery in Romania ended (Lauritzen, 2023). It is estimated that 250 000 enslaved Roma were set free in 1856, but the legacy of the enslavement remains embodied in today's thinking (Lauritzen & Matache, 2022).

Many Romani people lived a semi-nomadic life in Norway and made a living by selling handicrafts, playing music, and carrying out specialist work for farmers, among other things. During much of the 20th century, they were exposed to a strong and forced assimilation policy carried out by the Norwegian authorities, which included forcing them into work colonies (Lauritzen, 2023). The biggest work colony was the Svanviken work colony, which was established in 1908 and was not abolished until as late as 1989. A total of 990 children and adults were forcibly placed there during this period (NOU 2015: 7, p. 13). The work colony's mission was to 'civilize' and educate children and adults on 'proper Norwegian habits and ways of living.' They were kept an eye on at all times, and if any adults tried to escape or protested, their children were taken away from them. If any children made resistance, they were punished in various ways (Rosvoll, Lien, Brustad, 2017, p.108). From 1934- 1977, Romani women were forced to sterilize as a result of a law on forced

sterilization established in 1934. The forced sterilization law was not repealed until 1977. Additionally, more than 1500 children were taken from their parents (Ekeløve-Slydal, 2014, p.88). Lobotomization of Romani also occurred (NOU 2015 : 7). The forced assimilation measures were mostly carried out by the Norwegian Mission among the homeless, who the state had commissioned to carry out the assimilation measures. The state additionally provided to implement the measures (Lauritzen, 2023: St.meld. 15 (2000–2001)).

When Roma arrived in Norway in the 19th- century, the assimilation policy against Romani people had already begun. In the beginning, the Norwegian authorities did not distinguish between Roma and Romani. Throughout the 20th century, the politics attributed to Roma and Romani became separated into two. The authorities wanted to Norwegianize the Romani people. At the same time, they wanted to throw Roma out of the country (Brustad et al., 2017, p.19). In the 1920s and 1930s, the authorities threw Roma out of the country, and they were systematically deprived of their citizenships (Lauritzen, 2023). In 1943–1944, 66 Norwegian Roma were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Only 4 survived World War II. When the 4 survivors tried to return to Norway, they were refused entry. The so-called “gypsy clause,” which denied Roma entry to Norway, was not abolished before 1956 (Lauritzen, 2023: Brustad et al., 2017, pp. 80–90).

1.5 What is antiziganism

Antiziganism is a term that names a specific form of racism directed towards the national minorities Roma and Romani, but it is worth mentioning that it also affects other groups that are perceived as the “conceptual gypsy.” In comparison, many from the middle east are affected by islamophobia regardless of if they are Muslims or not. Similarly, many beggars from Eastern Europe may be affected by antiziganism even if they identify as Roma or not, but they are perceived as Roma because “the conceptual gypsy” has become synonymous with “beggars.” In this way, the racist discourse does not take self-definition into account, and racism is owned by the people that exert the racism and not by those affected by it (Lauritzen, 2022, p.137).

Jan Selling (2013) defines antiziganism as a historically changing discourse formation in which the conceptual gypsy takes shape and the majority-society’s exclusionary practices develop (Selling, 2013, p.13). Antisiganism is a form of racism that has had consequences such as forced sterilisation, slavery, and genocide in Europe. It is not the case that this form of racism has been given its own name because it is less important, but rather because it is particularly strong, established, widespread, massive, and specific (Lauritzen, 2022).

I will now go more into depth about what the word antiziganism entails. "Antiziganism" is often translated to "antigypsyism." There is no direct translation, but the two designations have in common that they are based on the term gypsy. The word "Gypsy" derives from "Egyptian" and is based on the misunderstanding that the Roma people came from Egypt. Furthermore, the word gypsy has many negative connotations. The Norwegian dictionary starts their definition of the word "sigøyner" ("gypsy") with: "usually derogatory." When the Roma people were to be exterminated during the second world war, the Nazis tattooed the letter "z" on the Roma concentration camp prisoners, the first letter of «Zigeuner», meaning "gypsy" in German. Furthermore, during the 500 years of slavery in Romania, the word "tsigan" which means "gypsy," was used as a synonym for "slave" (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 137). Lauritzen points to how it may seem paradoxical that the term antiziganism uses a term which may come off as offensive to many Roma and Romani, as well as may reproduce racism in its meaning. On the other hand, some Roma activists have argued that using the term "antiziganism" is a way of reclaiming the condescending word "gypsy" and using it to their own advantage (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 138). Lauritzen furthermore points out that there is a need for establishing the term antiziganism in Norway, as the racism directed towards Roma and Romani is not sufficiently recognized or named in Norway yet (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 140).

1.5.1 Structure of the thesis

This master's thesis is divided into seven main chapters, including this introductory chapter. In *chapter one*, I have presented the research questions as well as the purpose of the research. I have also given some important clarifications and background information with the intent of preparing the reader for the following chapters. *Chapter two* examines existing literature on specific relevant themes to my research. This chapter will consider the most dominant discourses about Roma and Romani in Norwegian society that are of particular relevance to my research questions. *Chapter three* provides the reader with the decolonial theoretical framework to guide this study. I will outline how decoloniality applies to the context of my thesis, followed by explaining the two theoretical concepts I will apply as analytical tools; 'othering' and 'sociology of absences and emergences.' In *Chapter Four*, I will review the methodology, map out my research by presenting my epistemological and ontological foundation. Furthermore, I will present Critical Discourse Analysis, and additionally elaborate on how I will combine CDA with a decolonial approach to exert the analysis. I will further elaborate on how I will use counter-narratives as methodological framing within a decolonial and Foucaultian narrative tradition. After, I will illustrate my data collection before presenting my positionality and ethical considerations. *Chapter five* delivers my analysis and findings, where the two identified themes: 'Roma and Romani in relation to

child-rearing” and “Roma and Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system,” will be discussed and analysed. *Chapter six* provides a summary and discussion of my analysis. Lastly, *chapter seven* concludes my research, in addition to providing recommendations for further research.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of existing research on discourses on Roma and Romani’s relation to the school system, Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing, colonial structures, and documented attitudes towards Roma and Romani in Norway. The review of this research will provide an overview of current research and knowledge for considering the most dominant discourses about Roma and Romani in Norwegian society that is of particular relevance to my research questions. I will carry out my analysis by navigating the selected personal narratives in relation to the master- discourses that will be emerging from the reviewed literature in this section.

A main feature in the research field on Roma and Romani is that a great deal of problem focus characterizes it. This is revealed in various articles, such as one meta-article that analyzes 55 research papers, where it is found that it is common in international research on Roma to look at nomadism as problematic (Lauritzen, 2018, p.58). Another meta-study that reviews 151 articles finds nine dominant problem representations of Roma and Romani, commonly repeated in international research within the field (Lauritzen & Nodeland, 2018). These thematic findings may be identified as comprising discourses that correlate with findings on research conducted on the phenomenon in Norway, which will be elaborated further below. I will adopt the terms ‘master narrative’ to refer to the dominant narratives represented in the studies reviewed in this chapter, and “master- discourse,” meaning the dominant discourse in which is constituted by repeating master narratives (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.86-87).

Roma and Romani people are exposed to extensive racism in Norway and all around Europe. Despite this, the phenomenon is hardly mentioned in the Norwegian public sphere nor relevant policy documents, as alluded to in my introduction (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 133). Rather, the focus in the media is often on how the group represents social problems. One study points out that the population is aware of racism in Norway and tries to be less prejudiced. Nevertheless, it is found that racism towards Roma and Romani is legitimized in Norway to a large extent (NIM, 2022, p.10). Furthermore, ethnic affiliation is still used as an argument by the child welfare service when

Romani children are forcibly placed in foster homes (Øyhovden, 2019; Lauritzen, 2022, p. 134). Roma and Romani are highly represented in the child welfare service (Sviggum, 2023). The overall focus of this thesis is to reconsider the apparent dominant narratives about Roma and Romani in Norwegian society by calling attention to personal narratives Roma and Romani emphasize as their truths and experiences. As my analysis in this thesis focuses on the topics of ‘Roma and Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system’ and ‘Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing,’ I will in the following concentrate my literature review on these topics.

I will now explain how I proceeded with strategically selecting relevant literature to review. I started searching for articles using Oria and Google. I was interested in finding out which master narratives about Roma and Romani are most dominating in Norwegian society today to further analyze how Roma and Romani speak back against these narratives. Thus, I started to search for comprehensive representative surveys with the main criteria to elucidate how attitudes amongst the Norwegian population are towards Roma and Romani today. This was done to investigate how widespread racism/ antiziganism is amongst the population, along with finding out what type of prejudice and stereotypes are most prevalent. My supervisor recommended a comprehensive, representative survey on attitudes towards the Sami and the national minorities in Norway from 2022. After that, I searched Oria and Google with the terms: *antiziganism*, *Roma*, *Romani*, and *attitudes towards Roma/ Romani.* I found different representative reports and literature from 2019, 2015, 2012; the findings from the former reports correlated with the 2022 report, in addition to revealing new findings. One report from the The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL-center) from 2012 was written by two women, and one of them, Natasha Bielenberg, is a Roma woman. Furthermore, in the NOU 2015: 7, some co-writers/ researchers have a Romani background.

Since ‘Roma/ Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system’ and ‘Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing’ were identified as the two prevalent themes from my sample, I strategically looked for literature using the keywords: *Roma education* *Romani education*, *Roma child welfare service, *Romani child welfare service, in Oria and Google. I found that limited research on these topics has been conducted in Norway; for this reason, I will first review two international meta-research articles on Roma education in order to place research on Roma and Romani education in a broader and global context. The purpose is to gain a broader understanding of the established discourse around Roma/ Romani and the educational system and to further identify the dominant master narratives that appear in Roma and Romani education. Research with

the keywords alluded to above led me to the rapport: NOU 2015: 7, emphasizing the section that deals with Romani and education. Furthermore, I found a comprehensive research article about Roma and education in Norway. It is an empirical study by Kari Hagatun where she interviews Roma mothers in Norway, and focuses on counter-stories from the Roma mothers (Hagatun, 2019). This study is relevant for both my identified themes, namely Child-rearing and the Norwegian school system, as it addresses both. Giving emphasis to the fact that there has been conducted little empirical-based research that brings out Roma/ Romani voices in a Norwegian context within these topics, I have chosen to give this study extra space in my literature review. This is also because, in line with my research, I want to emphasize studies where Roma and Romani's voices are promoted. Furthermore, I found a research article by Malin J. Fævelen, where she interviews six child welfare workers in Norway about how they perceive Norwegian Roma and in turn, how their perceptions may affect the child welfare practice towards Roma in Norway (Fævelen, 2016). The prejudices the child welfare workers uphold correlate with the most dominating prejudices about Roma and Romani in Norway (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012; Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136; Fævelen, 2016).

I will furthermore give an overview of the situation for Roma and Romani in Norway in the context of coloniality. Since coloniality is a phenomenon barely touched upon in a Norwegian context, it was hard to conduct research on this theme. The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding of traces of coloniality present in Norway today, and that reflects why Roma and Romani are subjected to so much antiziganism. I looked at international research on coloniality, combining the terms *Roma, coloniality* on Oria and Google, and found an article addressing the theme, written by a Roma woman, Ioanida Costache. Additionally, my supervisor Kristin Eriksen is one of the few that have written about coloniality in a Norwegian context. Her article about Norwegian exceptionalism is relevant as it emphasizes how colonial structures that neutralize racism appear within the Norwegian school system. Additionally, it draws on an example where a student teacher expresses how she engages specifically with prejudice against Romani in the classroom (Eriksen & Stein, 2021). Lastly, I will summarize the master discourses that have been revealed in the reviewed literature, and offer some critical remarks reflecting on how my research will contribute to the field.

2.1 Attitudes towards Roma and Romani in Norway

The baseline for examining the current attitudes towards Roma and Romani amongst the Norwegian population is a comprehensive, representative survey on attitudes towards the Sami and the national

minorities in Norway, conducted by Norway's National Institution for Human Rights, 'Norges Institusjon for Menneskerettigheter' (NIM) (2022). In addition to the survey I rely on other findings from various reports. NIM is obligated to protect and promote human rights in accordance with the UN's jurisdiction as established by the Norwegian parliament in 2015. Their job is to strengthen the implementation of HR in Norway in line with international human rights law, the Human Rights Act, and the Norwegian Constitution (NIM, 2022).

On the 26th of August 2022, NIM launched a survey, aimed at 2,654 respondents in a representative sample of Norway's population, limited to people aged 18 or older. The report shows that the population has a low level of knowledge about the national minorities and the indigenous people Sámi in Norway, where the knowledge about Roma and Romani appears to be lower if compared to the other groups. It also appears that knowledge about Norwegian Roma and Romani people may be lower than the report indicates because the respondents might have confused these groups with seasonal workers/travelers with Roma backgrounds from Romania or other countries in Eastern Europe. It must be said that there are always weak points to survey reports such as this. People want to be as good a person as possible, so many might answer what they think is considered right. As a further matter, it appears in the report that as much as 90% of all respondents who have attended primary school in Norway state that they have learned little or nothing about Roma and Romani in primary school (NIM, 2022, p. 8). This may suggest that many may not fully know who the groups in question are when they have been answering the survey.

It appears that younger people generally have poorer knowledge about the national minorities than older people, with the exception of the Sámi and Jews, where the younger people have approximately the same level of knowledge as the older people (NIM, 2022, p. 8). Furthermore, it is found that a significant share of the population has negative attitudes toward all national minorities. Nonetheless, the survey shows that Roma and Romani, in particular, are subject to more negative attitudes from the population than the other groups (NIM, 2022, p. 57- 60). A survey from the HL-centre from 2012 shows that people with low income and a low degree of education are far more likely to hold prejudices against selected minority groups. Nevertheless, prejudice against Roma and Romani manifests oppositely. The survey shows that people with high income and a higher education degree are more likely to hold prejudices against Roma and Romani (Rosvold & Bielenberg, 2012; Bangstad & Døving, 2015, p. 19). Bangstad and Døving point out that prejudices towards Roma and Romani in Norway are partly reflected by socioeconomic status or a type of class-based contempt (Bangstad & Døving, 2015, p. 19).

In the NIM report, few state that they have noticed stories in the news about Roma and Romani. Statements about Roma and Romani are predominantly perceived to present these groups negatively (NIM, 2022, p. 54). Overall, it is found that racism towards Roma and Romani is legitimized in Norway, to a large extent. In this regard, the survey shows more acceptance of stereotypes and prejudices towards Roma and Romani than towards the other groups. There appears to be some clear stereotyped prejudice, such as; 34% and 32% voting for the statement that most Roma and Romani are criminals. The population's attitude to the statement that Roma and Romani contribute little to the economic community votes 39%; furthermore, 27% and 28% voted for thinking Roma and Romani do not want to work (NIM, 2022, p.10). Similar stereotyped prejudices are pointed out by Rosvoll and Bielenberg (2012), suggesting that antiziganism is constructed by stereotypes (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012, p. 25). They outline these stereotypes in particular: Romani and Roma are criminals, they do not want to work, they are dishonest, they are unreliable, and they do not want to send their children to school. This in addition to a narrative representing Roma and Romani as part of a less developed race (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012; Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136). These prejudiced narratives coincide with what Selling names *racialized antiziganism* (Selling, 2020, p. 133).

The NIM- report emphasizes that hate speech is more accepted when it is aimed at Roma and Romani rather than the other national minorities or the Sámi. Furthermore, hate speech directed towards the Roma and Romani is mostly about claims that these groups are criminals, beg, steal, and parasitize society (NIM, 2022, p. 11). It emerges in the report that the population supports the rights of the national minorities and the Sámi to a large extent, but there are more objections towards the rights of Roma and Romani than the other groups (NIM, 2022, p. 10).

The proportion who express a need for social distancing from Roma and Romani is significantly larger compared to the other minorities (NIM, 2022, p. 10). In a new report from the HL-centre, named “Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2022”, it appears that as much as a third of the population does not want social contact with Roma (Moe, 2022, p.9). The NIM report correlates with former research, such as a representative survey from 2019 (Fafo- rapport 2019:26), that deals with attitudes towards discrimination, equality, and hate speech in Norway. It appears that there is a strong consciousness amongst the Norwegian population that Roma and Romani are subjected to discrimination, these groups along with Muslims are the three groups the population thinks are the most discriminated against, according to the report (Tyldum, 2019, p. 8). Furthermore, it appears that discrimination towards these groups is more or less legitimized by the population (Tyldum, 2019, p. 71).

2.2 Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing

Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing is identified as one out of two prevalent themes from my sample. Central to this theme and to my analysis, is the relation between Roma and Romani and the child welfare service. In the research article “Room for difference? The child welfare service meeting with Norwegian Roma” (Rom for forskjell? Barneverntjenestens møte med norske romer), Malin J. Fævelen studies how child welfare workers in Norway perceive Norwegian Roma, and in turn how their perceptions may affect the child welfare practice towards Roma in Norway (Fævelen, 2016).

The article is based on interviews with six child welfare workers that work with Norwegian Roma. The analysis shows some clear traces of assimilation in their practice with Roma children, revealed through the child welfare workers’ stories about their practice. Furthermore, it is found that how they operate with assimilation is rooted in the attitudes they uphold toward the group. Moreover, their attitudes bear clear traces of racism/ antiziganism. A possible assimilation pressure inside the child welfare service must be seen in connection with how the Roma themselves are being assigned a degree of blame for being marginalized. It is documented in the report that there is an unbalanced power relationship between the child welfare service and the Roma people, and this is a central argument for putting a critical spotlight on the service. Moreover, it emerges that some child welfare workers believe that the reasons why Roma are marginalized mainly lie in internal conditions within the group, where they give great emphasis to their culture and way of life as an explanation for why Roma have social problems within their families, instead of emphasizing external, structural factors (Fævelen, 2016, p. 19). The analysis shows a clear tendency for child welfare workers to believe that parts of what they understand as the Roma way of life should be changed for them to become proper caretakers (Fævelen, 2016, p. 25).

The prejudices the child welfare workers uphold, as revealed through their stories, may seem to correlate with the prejudices that come off as most widespread amongst the Norwegian population, as revealed through the NIM- rapport, Lauritzen’s research from 2022, as well as by Rosvoll and Bielenberg’s research, that is, they are criminals, they do not wanna work, they are dishonest, they are unreliable, as well as reproducing the idea that Roma and Romani people biologically represent a less developed race (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012: Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136: Fævelen, 2016)

Some welfare workers state that they do not want to contribute to assimilation practices towards Roma. Nevertheless, the analysis points out that there may still be an unintended assimilation pressure linked to the practice that is carried out. The article suggests a more complex approach

when encountering social problems. Fævelen points out that a dynamic consideration of culture, as well as more knowledge on racism, may help in the process of preventing practices of assimilation (Fævelen, 2016). The findings from this report coincide with Solvor Lauritzen's argument that ethnic affiliation is still used as an argument by the child welfare service when Romani children are forcibly placed in foster homes (Øyhovden, 2019: Lauritzen 2022, p. 134).

2.3 International Research on Roma and Romani Education

Education is one of the key topics in international research related to Roma. In the meta-study 'Nomadism in Research on Roma Education', Solvor Mjøberg Lauritzen examines how educational research from a European context explains how Roma face disadvantages in education by referring to nomadism. Her analysis shows that an established discourse on Roma and education in international research legitimizes nomadism as the explanation for why Roma people face challenges in regard to school. Several papers address how education has been used in the past, but also recently, as a way to assimilate the Roma people (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 67). Furthermore, it emerges in her findings that it is common in international research on Roma to place due weight on nomadism as the reason for their own exclusion. The master narrative presents education and nomadism as two conflicting visions, as nomadism is often seen as a challenge for society (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 71). Lauritzen argues that this understanding of Roma linked to nomadism creates and upholds an essentialist view of Roma culture. Essentialism addresses how some specific static elements within Roma and Romani culture are either perceived as unchangeable or fundamental for a person to be characterized as Roma/Romani (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 64). An essentialist view in this context may be explained as how problems are seen as something "inherent" in Roma and Romani culture (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 63). Summarizing, Lauritzen found three thematic areas from analyzing 55 research papers; 1. Roma are closely associated with nomadism pointing to an essentialist discourse. 2. Anti-nomadism justifies Roma's exclusion. 3. These findings impact the way Roma are understood within the educational system.

In another meta-article, "What is the problem represented to be?" two decades of research on Roma and education in Europa," Solvor Lauritzen and Tuva Nodeland have reviewed a total of 151 research articles from the period between 1997- 2016. They find nine problematic representations commonly repeated within the international research field on Roma. The content of these problematic representations reproduces Roma as victims, or that Roma are associated with problems in educational research. Furthermore, their findings show that cultural differences are

reproduced as a representation within the field rather than structural features such as socioeconomic issues (Lauritzen & Nodeland, 2018). Nonetheless, I will not go further into depth about the international context, but concentrate upon the particularities of Norway.

2.4 Research on Roma and Romani Education in Norway

In the article “They assume that I don’t really want education for my children”: Roma mothers’ experiences with the Norwegian educational system” Kari Hagatun explores the way in which Roma mothers have experienced the Norwegian educational system, where she finds that there is a conflicting vision Roma mothers encounters between having their kids in school and still prioritizing their core values and practices that is important to them. The article derives from fieldwork done in Oslo in the periods between 2016- 2017. Coinciding findings are documented in international research on Roma in Europa (Lauritzen, 2018).

Hagatun’s findings show that the Roma mothers' experiences point to how the Norwegian educational system operates with a large degree of assimilation in the way in which they engage with inclusion (Hagatun, 2019, p. 1). Gressgår points out how Norwegian policy is characterized by a “friendly eagerness to include ” as long as the minorities in question are potentially “like ourselves” (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). The findings in Hagatun’s study are set out to be counter-stories from Roma mothers in Norway that explain how they negotiate between how to both prioritize education and practices that are fundamental to their culture. These counter-stories challenge the master narrative that tends to portray Roma parents in Norway as a homogeneous group, both unable and unwilling to provide education for their children. This framing of Roma's parents correlates with findings conducted in Lauritzen’s meta-article (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 63), and a comprehensive report, NOU 2015 :7, documenting Romani's relation to education (NOU 2015 : 7, p.98). D’Arcy emphasizes the need to refute the master narratives with regard to common stereotypes of Roma people, by applying counter-narratives based on their personal considerations (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25).

It appears in Hagatun’s findings that several Roma mothers are suspected by the teachers of not wanting to prioritise school for their children (Hagatun, 2019, p. 17). Several mothers explain how they have experienced that the teachers that uphold negative attitudes towards them have contacted the Child Welfare Service without raising their concerns with the parents first; hence this act, in turn, creates a widespread fear and lack of trust towards the school. The Roma mothers additionally explain how they often take their children out of school or change schools when their child gets

bullied or harassed on the basis of their background as Roma. Many mothers contact the headmasters or teachers first, without any luck in improving the situation of their children in school (Hagatun, 2019, p. 17). Correlating findings are documented in a report from the HL-centre from 2012, where it is found that many Roma people report discrimination at school without any luck in improvement. Most cases are dropped, which in turn has led to Roma not daring to speak up or report these cases (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012, p.10). The same tendencies emerge when looking at international research on the phenomenon in Europe, where it is found that many parents take their kids out of school to protect them from racism and discrimination (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 67). Similarly, experiences from Romani are documented in the report: NOU 2015 : 7. It is found that mistrust in the authorities has led to many not daring to report discrimination in school (NOU 2015 : 7, p. 97).

Another aspect that is of great importance in Hagatun's article is how the mothers explain the challenge they face with being forced into routines that are foreign to their way of living. Because "doing school" is equated with living by routines to align with the school system. Moreover, aligning with the school system by adapting to these routines requires effort and costs because implementing these routines into their daily life is oftentimes done at the expense of their way of living, as they do not comply with each other (Hagatun, 2019, p. 19,20).

Hagatun finds from her informants that there seems to be little interconnection between explanations that less traveling has led to more schooling when looking at the community at large. Nevertheless, it is often related to the ambition of more schooling when the mothers choose to travel, as the informants state they only travel during school vacations. For some years, many families have stayed at local camping places near Oslo in the weeks ahead of summer vacation; in this way, the mothers explain, their children could experience travel life and at the same time get an education. Hagatun highlights how this example may be seen as a good example of the mothers' ambition to negotiate and prioritize both education for their children as well as core values and practices that are important to them. However, this form of traveling is not the same as their traditional form of traveling, which is mostly combined with working life (Hagatun, 2019, p. 19).

For the majority population and the school system, routines like this are perceived as the most natural and 'right' way to live. Furthermore, the effort the Roma undertake to adjust to these routines is not sufficiently recognized but rather perceived as given by the school system and society at large (Hagatun, 2019, p. 19,20).

Hagatun states that Roma differ from many other minorities in the aspect that they are not willing to get formal education at the expense of what they experience as assimilation. She furthermore explains, through the thoughts of Gressgård, that Norwegian values are perceived to be universal values that all rational beings wish to adapt to. Hence, Norwegians look at themselves as a nation of equal individuals, whereas “the others” get recognised as those that own the impossible differences (Gressgård, 2007: Hagatun 2019, p. 25). From this perspective, Hagatun argues, the Norwegian school system is portrayed as universally inclusive, while Roma and other minorities that find themselves not wanting to be included on these set premises are understood to be excluding themselves. Furthermore, on this note, Roma are constructed as a problem; to be included, they must be assimilated into the systems (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25).

I have now given a review of an article that deals with the relationship between Roma and the educational system in Norway; I will now move over to give a review of Romani and the educational system based on a study from the NOU2016:7 report presented in 2015, assessing Norwegian policy on Romani, and the measures proposed to strengthen their position. The report was written by a government-appointed committee, which included some Romani, led by former Foreign Minister from KrF Knut Vollebæk. The report emphasizes how the previous policy of assimilation has affected the relationship between Romani people and society at large today. The report points out a general lack of knowledge about the Romani people's culture and history. There has been little to no dissemination of knowledge about their history and culture in schools and kindergartens in Norway (NOU 2015: 7, p. 7). I will now review the sections of the report that deal with their situation today related to education.

The study in this section is carried out based on two projects about Romani people's living conditions and the consequences of the policy for Romani people today:

1. Today's situation for Romani people - a qualitative survey that is mainly based on interviews with a selection of Romani people.
2. “A living condition- survey Romani people” - This is a registry-based survey that considers mortality and educational level based on the mission's client archive (NOU 2015 : 7, p. 97).

The report shows that Romani people who have been directly or indirectly affected by the policies carried out against them throughout the 20th century still have a high sense of fear and distrust in the Norwegian authorities and society at large. The lack of trust towards society at large weakens many Romani people's opportunity to participate fully in society. Many fear that different bodies and institutions, like, for example, schools and NAV, will contact the child welfare service and take

their kids away from them again. Nevertheless, it emerges also in the report that the group's experiences vary, some Romani have trust in the authorities, while they are affected by the previous policy towards them in various other ways (NOU 2015 : 7, p. 97).

Many of the informants experience negative attitudes and prejudice in their daily life, leading many to hide their identity as Romani at school or work (NOU 2015 : 7, p. 98). The committee states in the report that traditional ways of living, along with work that does not require formal competence, and a tradition for oral transmission of knowledge, are all reasons why Romani people have not prioritised having their kids in school. The committee states that within Romani people's way of life, formal education has never been considered important to them (NOU 2015 : 7, p.98). Nevertheless, the committee also states that negative attitudes towards the group, as well as bullying and harassment in society at large, including at school, can also partly explain a lack of participation in school. Additionally, it appears that some look at formal education as the majority population's arena (NOU 2015 : 7, p.98).

Simultaneously, many respondents state that they want education for their children. Many wish for their children to join the family on travels in connection with the parents' work as itinerant traders, as traveling is emphasised as an important maintenance of Romani culture. As a further matter, many are very concerned with facilitating so that their children can get schooling on their travels. Others state that they fear applying for an exemption because they fear the child welfare service will intervene. Several others wish not to take their children out of school in danger of them missing out on important schooling (NOU 2015 : 7, p.99). It also appears in the report that many young people are concerned with getting an education or work with crafts and wish for a vocational certificate. Also, adults who work with crafts want a vocational certificate, but since many have missed primary school, it is difficult to get the certificate. Hence this limits their opportunities to get work as there is an increasing requirement for professional qualifications (NOU 2015 : 7, p.99).

On the contrary, there are points to critique the NOU. The statements related to why Romani people have not prioritised having their kids in school are all clearly correlating with what Hagatun highlights in; "they assume that I don't really want education for my children," and fits with the master narrative that tends to portray Roma/ Romani parents in Norway as a homogeneous group, unwilling to provide education for their children (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25).

2.5 Colonial structures and Roma/ Romani

In the article “Subjects of a racialized modernity: Romani people and decoloniality in Europe,” Ioanida Costache explains how the subjugation/ enslavement of the Roma in Europe cannot be separated from the coloniality of power that was constructed by the ideologies and ideas of race that were dominating at the time, and further have been driving economic and political processes (Costache, 2021). She explains, through the thoughts of Walter D. Mignolo, that modernity and coloniality are intertwined. Hence Roma people are modern/ colonial subjects because there is no outside of the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Costache, 2021). This coincides with Quijano’s notions of coloniality, emphasizing that coloniality is embedded and intertwined with Western modernity and, therefore, fundamental to the racist logic that divides people into hierarchies (Quijano, 2000, p. 215). This logic was embodied in the rise of modern nation-states, such as Norway.

Coloniality is a phenomenon that is barely touched upon in a Norwegian context. Several researchers point out that coloniality in the context of Norway is made into something irrelevant (Eriksen 2021: Jore, 2022: Bangstad og Sandset 2019). As there is little research about this phenomenon in a Norwegian context, I will review one article that addresses coloniality in the context of Norway.

In the article “Good intentions, colonial relations: interrupting the white emotional equilibrium of Norwegian citizenship education,” Kristin Eriksen and Sharon Stein write about how the Norwegian state upholds the reproduction of coloniality in education by framing the nation-state as inherently good in various ways. They explore the interrelations between western epistemology and colonial structures of race, as well as whiteness and inequality under the discourse of nordic exceptionalism. The Nordic exceptionalism discourse may be explained as dominating views of the Nordic countries, in this case, Norway, as a global champion of social welfare and democracy. Reproducing this image of Norway strengthens the dominance of the self-image as Norwegian over other racialized people, thus upholding coloniality. In this article, Eriksen and Stein argue that discourses about exceptionalism can absolve educational institutions of their responsibility when it comes to working toward social justice. Furthermore, they argue that Norwegian educational institutions reproduce colonial structures that neutralize exploitative capitalist economic structures, epistemic violence, and racism (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 210).

One of Eriksen's findings in the classroom on how the teachers engaged with knowledge production around topics like inequality and politics showed a tendency amongst the student teachers to uphold an ideal of being as neutral and objective as possible. Furthermore, Eriksen points to how education that denaturalize convictions of the dominant culture is oftentimes seen as political propaganda from a majority point of view, while education that naturalizes the dominant culture is understood to be politically neutral (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 218). Western knowledge appears as the hidden norm, and in that way, colonial relations get reproduced (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 218).

In the classroom, one of Eriksen's findings was that there was a stated fear of discussing the existence of prejudice. The students' teacher explained how she found it difficult to state that there exist prejudices towards Romani people, so she only addressed it indirectly in the classroom. She explained that this was because she did not want the focus to become too negative. Additionally, the teacher said that, according to her, there is not so much marginalization in today's Norway. Eriksen argues that in this way, the teacher avoids the discomfort of challenging the dominant exceptionalist image of Norway and potentially her own worldview. Eriksen points to how the exceptionalist self-image of Norway gets challenged by the history of Romani in Norway. The brutal oppression of Romani in Norway is mostly omitted from history books in school. In this way, the exceptionalist view of Norway gets replicated (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 218).

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature from four different themes linked to my topic. The purpose of the review has been to get an overview of the existing literature on attitudes towards Roma and Romani in Norway, as well as getting an overview of the literature on the relationship between Roma/ Romani and the educational system, and Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing, and to identify which master narratives about Roma and Romani were addressed within these themes. A summary of the master narratives will be presented now.

In the first thematic review, we are confronted with attitudes towards Roma and Romani in Norway, where they are found to be the two groups the population has the most prejudice about compared with the other national minorities and the Sámi people (NIM, 2022, p. 57- 60). The NIM report identifies specific prejudices against these specific groups. The prejudices that appear as most dominating of Roma and Romani are narratives of them as criminals, beggars, that they do not

want to work, and that they do not contribute economically to society (NIM, 2022, p.10). Similar stereotyped prejudices are pointed out by Rosvoll and Bielenberg, suggesting that antiziganism is constructed by stereotypes (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012, p. 25). As previously noted, they outline these stereotypes in particular: they are criminals, they do not want to work, they are dishonest, they are unreliable, and they do not want to send their children to school. In addition to these, the stereotypes reproduce the idea that Roma and Romani people biologically represent a less developed race (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012; Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136). Furthermore, these attitudes correlate with the prejudice the six child welfare workers uphold, emerging from Fævelen's interviews (Fævelen, 2016). I will argue that these dominating stereotypes can be translated into master narratives a large portion of the majority may uphold, constituting the hegemonic discourse about Roma and Romani. This relates to Foucault's argument about how explicit judgments become the hegemonic discourse confirmed by society at large (Foucault, 2013).

The reviewed literature on the relationship between Roma and Romani and the educational system shows that there is an established master narrative that places due weight on nomadism as the reason for their own exclusion from school; this master narrative is present in Lauritzen's meta-study and correlates with what appears in the NOU- report as well as Hagatun's article. Additionally, another master narrative, present in Hagatun's article correlates with former and more recent research found in the NOU 2015 : 7, the HL- center's report from 2012 and Solvor Lauritzen's meta-study from 2018: Roma/ Romani parents are perceived as unwilling to provide official education for their children.

The large proportion of Roma and Romani children who appear to be under the care of child welfare services presumably in itself, poses a danger of assimilation (Muižnieks, 2015). Hagatun points out how Roma are constructed as a problem; to be included, they must be assimilated into the systems (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). This may correlate with Fævelen's research. Her analysis shows a clear tendency for child welfare workers to believe that parts of what they understand as the Roma way of life should be changed for them to become proper caretakers (Fævelen, 2016, p. 25). Moreover, this could be translated into the master narrative: 'The idea that Roma and Romani people biologically represent a less developed race,' which is present in Lauritzen's findings, as well as in Rosvoll & Bielenberg's research (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012; Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136).

Furthermore, the purpose of the thematic review of colonial structures and Roma and Romani was to gain an understanding of the existing colonial structures that are present in today's Norway, and

that reflects why Roma and Romani are subjected to so much antiziganism. I will argue that all the above-reviewed literature points to master narratives that are a symptom of the colonial structures that exist in Norway today.

Research on social justice often highlights the negative, thus, in that sense, the research that wants to uncover injustice can actually also contribute to perpetuating stereotypes against its purpose. By conducting research that uncovers racism, one may reproduce an image of Roma and Romani as victims of racism rather than an empowering image of them as resource persons entitled to have an opinion (Alghasi, Eide, Simonsen, 2020, p. 129). As alluded to above, Rosvoll and Bielenberg suggest that antiziganism is constructed by stereotypes (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2022, p. 25). Counter-stories empower minority narratives to challenge the traditional stories and perspectives that shape society (Fage-Butler, 2021). Hence, when the narratives about Roma and Romani that shape society are set out to consist of prejudice that, in turn, constructs racism, personal narratives can be used as a means to fight against antiziganism. To enable an antiracist consciousness, the majority may be confronted with personal narratives and perspectives that may reconstruct their own worldviews. It is pointed out in the reviewed research that there is a need for more counter-perspectives from Roma and Romani. In her article Hagatun points out, through the words of D'Arcy (2014), that there is a need to refute master narratives with regard to common stereotypes of Roma/ Romani people by applying counter-narratives to advance Roma and Romani's own voices (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). With this stated, I will therefore argue that my research can contribute to filling a part of the research gap.

3 Decolonial theoretical framework

Reality is a social construct that cannot be understood without emphasis on specific power structures (Foucault, 2010). Everyone constructs each other, yet the majority have had the power of definition throughout history, which is what a decolonial perspective desires to highlight and work to shift (Smith, 2021). Santos operates with a decolonial perspective in which he seeks to enable the coexistence of alternative ways of knowing and scientific knowledge, recognized as the dominant knowledge (Smith, 2021, p. 270). That is why a decolonial theoretical framework is applied to guide this study. In the background-chapter and literature review, we are confronted with how the history of Roma and Romani in Norway, acknowledged as the dominant discourses, have prevented Roma and Romani from being recognized for their ways of knowing. That is why I wish to contribute to engaging with, as well as advocating for, Roma and Romani's ways of knowing. Moreover, I seek to engage with their knowledge that has been produced as othered and

nonexistent, compatible with a process of decolonization and what Santos terms a *sociology of emergences*.

Decolonial studies draw on elements from postcolonial studies. The two approaches emerged in different socio-historical contexts. Postcolonial theory is often linked to India, while decolonial theory is most often traced to Latin American theorists. Defining postcolonialism is difficult because there are disagreements in the field about disciplinary boundaries, which makes the concept come off as somewhat diffuse. In large terms, postcolonialism is concerned with the consequences and chain-reactions that followed after colonization, hence a critical analysis of colonialism. Although there is an overlap between the concepts, decoloniality separates from postcoloniality by looking at colonialism more profoundly. Meaning, being mainly concerned with how previously colonialism, starting from the fifteenth century, did not end the coloniality of power but continues as a cognitive injustice that manifests in society as colonial structures that continue to exist after the direct imperial rule/ colonization is abolished. The decolonial theory is concerned with breaking with structures that reproduce and maintain coloniality, operating with resistance to coloniality, not only colonialism (Quijano, 2000). As there is an overlap between both traditions, and the decolonial and postcolonial are used somewhat interchangeably, I will use elements from both traditions, on account of coloniality-framework as the core focus point (Smith, 2021).

Anibal Quijano has fostered a theorization of the ‘coloniality of power’ arguing that coloniality operates at all levels of society. He defines coloniality of power as

“that specific basic element of the new pattern of world power that was based on the idea of ‘race’ and in the ‘racial’ social classification of world population – expressed in the ‘racial’ distribution of work, in the imposition of new ‘racial’ geocultural identities, in the concentration of the control of productive resources and capital, as social relations, including salary, as a privilege of ‘Whiteness’ – is what basically is referred to in the category of coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2000, p. 218).

I will draw on two theoretical concepts in this thesis: the concept of othering and Santos' theory, the Sociology of absences and emergences. The two theoretical concepts will be presented now.

3.1 Othering

A central and prominent thinker in the field of postcolonial studies is the Palestinian-American professor Edward Said. His concept of orientalism is grounded in how the orient is seen as a

negative reflection of the west, where orientalism is seen as a hegemonic discourse. People living under colonial conditions are made inferior by the west. Hence this upholds a construction of “the other” where structures of coloniality and orientalism maintain the power of definitions. Said brings forth a theorising of the construction of “the other” (Said, 1978). He illustrates how the 'West' and the 'Orient' have no ontological stability, because both notions are created by humans that confirm and identify with the Other; “Us” Westerners on the one side and the others on the other side. Furthermore, orientalism refers to the process by which knowledge produced about the East from the West is produced to legitimize western colonial domination (Said, 1978). Notions of how those people far away are not like “us,” along with how they do not appreciate “our” values - is the very bottom line core of the orientalism-tradition Said describes in his book ‘Orientalism: western conceptions of the orient’(1978). He argues that without this notion that upholds arrogance, we would live in a world without war (Said, 1978). Said points out that European culture has normalized itself as superior by gaining more power through constructing “the Other” as inferior (Said, 1978, p. 7). He brings attention to how it has been a massive and calculated attack towards the Arabs and Muslims societies due to their backwardness, lack of democracies, and attitudes towards women, which diminishes the fact that concepts like modernity, enlightenment, and democracy are complex concepts on which people disagree about (Said, 1978).

How Hall sees othering is closely linked to Said’s idea of Orientalism. Hall refers to how there exists an ambivalence in ‘difference.’ He argues that difference can be positive for a subjective sense of self, the production of meaning-making , and social identities. On the other hand, it brings forward the construction of “the other ” that is different from the majority of society. Upholding a construction of “us” and “the other”, he argues, is a way of structuring the societal order by including those that act in accordance with accepted norms, values, etc (us) and exclude those who do not (the Other) (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, Hall argues that stereotyping occurs when heavy inequalities of power affect an excluded group. He explains that stereotypes reduce a person to simple, easily grasped, and vividly memorable characteristics. Additionally, he argues that stereotypes construct boundaries that exclude all that does not fit. Hall argues that this idea of stereotyping seems to coincide with Gramsci’s perception of the struggle for hegemony and also links this to Foucault’s perception of power. Accordingly, for Hall, power is about the power to represent someone in specific ways (Hall, 1997, p. 258).

Hall points to how discourses in the mass media are constructed on ideologies regarding how minorities, gender, class, etc. are represented. Thus, the media may become active agents in the ‘othering’ of minorities. Nevertheless, Hall argues that dominance and power always coexist with

resistance in various forms. Moreover, the resistance towards the dominant discourses on Roma and Romani is what is desired to be highlighted in the analysis of personal narratives from Roma and Romani later on. Nevertheless, Hall argues that what may serve as resistance may vary based on different perspectives; Those that hold the master discourses may also think of their perspectives as resistance against the ‘different’ discourses that minorities may interject (Hall, 1997).

Hall articulates the notion of ‘contesting stereotypes’, meaning increasing representation in the media, that service resistance towards the dominant discourses. He argues that limited representation of the community in the media affects the way the group in question is recognised in real life. He argues that by ‘contesting stereotypes,’ one may turn the stereotype against itself. This is done by asking questions about who produced the representational image, who was silent during the process of the production, how the image is being distributed, and by who, and lastly, what is the source behind the image (Hall, 1997).

3.2 Sociology of absences and emergences

Boaventura de Sousa Santos is a legal sociologist. His groundwork is rooted in reaching global social justice, which according to him, can only be done through global cognitive justice. In his theory on the ‘sociology of absences and emergences,’ he is looking to enable the coexistence of alternative ways of knowing together with scientific knowledge (Smith, 2021, p. 270).

In the Book ‘Decolonizing methodologies’ Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes;

“In the twenty- first century Indigenous communities are among those communities that have been excluded from the world - in some cases quite literally excluded to the margins of societies. They represent a portion of peoples whose languages and cultures have been obliterated, assimilated or at best hybridized into some other culture” (Smith, 2021, p. 275).

This ties together with Boaventura de Sousa Santos's theory called ‘sociology of absences,’ and how some marginalized groups are actively made absent, supported by colonial structures that still exist after the groups have been excluded from the world. His theory comprises identifying what is hidden from view and further explains the colonial structures that contribute to producing what is seen as non existing. Santos argues that by being suppressed, marginalized, and disqualified, you are also left out of the monoculture of knowledge and dominant scales, constituting a huge mode of constructed silences and absences (Santos, 2014).

Santos argues that what does not exist is actively made nonexistent. By nonexistent, Santos means not existing in any relevant way of being (Santos, 2014, p. 118). Following this line of thought, Roma and Romani are made invisible or barely visible with personal narratives in the mass media discourse because they are actively excluded by the hegemonic position of the west (Santos, 2014).

In this study I look at constructions of “the other” through both post- and decolonial perspectives. As outlined above, in line with Said and Hall’s postcolonial lens, “the other” may be understood as a social construct consisting of stereotypes about a minority group through epistemological categories (Said 1978: Hall, 1997). While “the other” within a decolonial approach referred to as what Santos terms “the absent” entails that people are made absent/ othered not just through stereotypes, but they are made dehumanized (Santos, 2014). Santos’ term “the absent” ties together with what Maldonado-Torres (2007) refers to as coloniality of being. The coloniality of being portrays how coloniality produces poverty and risk into the lives of marginalized people. In this sense, Roma and Romani render silenced and invisible (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Santos’s theory of ‘sociology of absences’ is grounded in what he calls ‘abyssal thinking.’ I will now dive into what ‘abyssal thinking’ entails to better explain his theory of the ‘sociology of absences.’ Santos defines modern western thinking as abyssal thinking, and by modern western thinking, he refers to the hegemonic version of western modernity. Further, he describes modern western thinking as a system of separation with visible and invisible distinctions. The visible ones are represented by the Global North, and rest on the invisible ones, being the Global South. By Global North and Global South, Santos refers to epistemological categories, not just geographical categories. In this sense, Roma and Romani represent the Global South in the Global North in the Norwegian context. The colonial separation between visible and invisible distinctions ties together with the division between abyssal and non-abyssal knowledge or put in another way, a separation between what is seen as true knowledge and what is ‘othered’ knowledge (Santos, 2014, p. 118). Further, he explains that the visible are seen as this side of the line, whereas the invisible are seen as the other side of the line. This side of the line is seen as the knowledge produced by the modern west as universal, thus seen as “true” knowledge, and the other side of the line is the knowledge that vanishes as relevant or seen as ‘othered’ knowledge.

‘The other side of the line’ refers to the people affected by coloniality, which in this context are the Roma and Romani. In turn, Santos argues that the people belonging to the other side of the line are produced as nonexistent with the knowledge they produce, beliefs, practices, and so on. A good example is how the traveling lifestyle of Roma and Romani has been disqualified as it is not a part

of the accepted conception of inclusion, hence deviating from how the modern western world has organized societies (Santos 2014, p. 118). Another example is the cases revealed in Fævelen's study, where she finds that several in the child welfare service do not consider Roma to be able to rationally assess for themselves what constitutes good child rearing (Fævelen, 2016). In this way, they are made nonexistent with their child rearing. As an ultimate consequence, children can be taken from their parents as a result of abyssal thinking in the child welfare service.

Modern law and knowledge are seen as the most accomplished demonstration of abyssal thinking. They both create visible and invisible distinctions in which the visible rests on the invisible (Santos, 2014, p. 119). Put differently, by producing some knowledge regimes as systematically absent or erased by disqualifying them, the western knowledge system can normalize itself and stand in a hegemonic position, and the way in which this is done is by a totality of abyssal thinking. Abyssal thinking in the field of knowledge is reflected in how modern science upholds the monopoly of true and false (Santos, 2014, p. 119).

Compatible with Santos' take on abyssal thinking is how Stuart Hall explains the western knowledge system. Hall argues that the West is a concept which 1. allows people from the west to classify societies into categories, 2. Condenses complex portrayals of other societies through a system of representation, 3. Determines a standard model of comparison, and 4. Lays down criteria of evaluation of which other societies can be ranked. In turn, this is the operation in which the colonized, in this context, Roma and Romani, have been coded into the western system of knowledge (Smith, 2021, p. 49).

An important aspect that supports the hegemonic position of the west is the process of globalization. Santos defines globalization in this way: “ the process by which a given entity reaches the globe by enlarging its own ambit, and by doing so, develops the capacity or the prerogative of naming as ‘local’ all rival entities” (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p.3). This definition brings together the understanding that globalization emerges from local roots (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p. 2). Santos further claims that there exists two kinds of globalization; one that operates with capitalism and the other fighting against capitalism. He argues that hegemonic globalization deals with transnational interactions from above. Furthermore, counter-hegemonic globalization is developed through the fight against hegemonic globalization and represents transnational interactions from below, the below meaning the people that historically are affected by coloniality (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p.5). Santos talks about transnational interaction from below, which may be explained as when the people affected by coloniality – the historically marginalized – who were

not expected to survive into the twenty-first century, are operating with resistance in different forms (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p. 4). This is also coinciding with what Santos means by the sociology of emergences.

Santos argues that the first step in the decolonial project is to first identify coloniality through the sociology of absences, identifying where and how people are produced as nonexistent, which involves making visible colonial separations constructed on universalism. This is followed by reaching the more substantial sociology of emergences, where the emphasis is placed on engaging with ways of knowing that have been othered and excluded through abyssal thinking. (Santos, 2018).

4 Methodology

My overall aim with this thesis is to contribute to awareness around previous and ongoing oppression of Roma/Romani in Norway by highlighting their perspectives with reference to how they show agency through their personal narratives. I will seek to identify possible counter-narratives deriving from their personal narratives. Counter-narratives empower minority narratives to challenge the traditional stories and perspectives reflected in society about these groups (Fage-Butler, 2021). Hence, I will use counter-narratives as methodological framing within a Foucaultian and decolonial narrative tradition and a Foucaultian approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a critical approach used to analyze text and speech with the aim of examining why some meanings become marginalized, and some become taken for granted/ privileged (Bryman, 2012, p. 538). Approaching my thesis questions by using CDA is made relevant as I study narratives from Norwegian Roma and Romani in the Norwegian public sphere, with the aim of critiquing the discourses that make up the dominant narratives about these groups. My main focus is to identify how the dominating narratives about Roma and Romani are constructed on the grounds of eurocentric worldviews. Additionally, I aim at emphasizing perspectives through personal narratives from Roma and Romani to uncover how these dominant discourses have prevented/limited their participation in shaping the discourses on themselves, and from being recognized with their own perspective and ways of knowing (Santos, 2014). CDA will help to expose how certain power structures work to maintain dominant discourses that legitimize the current attitudes, antiziganism, and prejudice towards Roma and Romani in Norway, as well as examine how their voices become marginalized.

In this chapter, I will examine my methodological choices to answer the research questions at hand. Decolonial and critical perspectives have driven me to the methodological approach I will now

outline. I will start by introducing my research's scientific position: epistemological foundation, ontology, and decolonizing epistemologies. I will continue presenting critical discourse analysis as my methodological framework, then introducing how I will combine CDA with a decolonial approach. Furthermore, I will focus on narratives from Roma and Romani; thus I have chosen counter-narratives as methodological framing within a Foucaultian and decolonial narrative tradition, which I will explain further (Miller, Liu, Ball, 2020; Fage-Butler, 2021). After presenting my data collection I will lastly continue with positionality and ethical considerations.

4.1 Epistemological foundation, Ontology, Critical- and Decolonizing Epistemologies

Epistemology within disciplines in social science refers to how one can gain knowledge about the social world (Tjora, 2017, 26). CDA is closely related to critical theory, upon which the main point is that the quality of knowledge is not separated from its ability to create change and social justice. In this sense, one does not speak of "neutral" research or knowledge in this tradition. The epistemological foundation of my thesis is grounded in critical and decolonizing methodologies. Within decolonizing perspectives, research is not seen as an innocent exercise but rather an activity that occurs within social and political circumstances (Smith, 2021, p. 5). Research about national minorities as well as *with* Indigenous communities, involves the acknowledgment of coloniality and the standpoint of academia in the marginalization of Roma and Romani perspectives (Kuokkanen, 2007). Furthermore, my epistemological foundation is informed by interpretivism, which is linked to the epistemological foundation in CDA. Interpretivism refers to how the social world cannot be studied objectively as in natural science. Furthermore, interpretivism involves the understanding that humans are not controlled by universal rules; hence the focus is placed on the subjective meaning behind human action (Bryman, 2012, p. 28).

Critical theory is seen as a normative element in the analysis. The focus is on what is wrong with something in society, and from a normative angle, focuses on how the 'wrongs' can turn to 'rights.' Critique is based on values. Most people would agree that they wish for a just and fair society. However, people have different sets of values depending on how they see justice and freedom. However, critique considers what exists, what might exist, and what should exist based on a consistent set of values, according to Fairclough and Foucault (Fairclough, 2010, p. 7). My methodology builds on elements from Foucault, who was the founder of discourse analysis, and Fairclough, who was inspired by Foucault and has influenced CDA further. Additionally, I am using elements from Edward Said, who was a poststructuralist and also builds on Foucault but operates

with identifying the colonial component when pointing to the “wrongs” in society. Foremost, I am adopting a decolonial approach in which I am using Santos' take on decoloniality. Santos builds on both of these traditions but criticizes them for conducting criticism from a Western point of view (Foucault, 2010; Fairclough, 2010; Santos, 2014). CDA has a specific perception of what ‘critical’ entails, and decolonial thinking has another perception of what ‘critical’ is. Later on I will go more in-depth regarding how I will apply the concept of “critical” in my research by explaining how I will combine CDA with a decolonial approach.

As my epistemological foundation is informed by interpretivism and decolonizing methodologies, the ontological foundation of my research is constructionism. Ontology may be described as the approach one undertakes to what exists in society and the understanding of social entities (Bryman, 2012, p. 32). Constructionism as an ontological foundation means that my research is grounded in an understanding of the social world as a product of social constructions. To go more in detail, the idea behind constructivism is that the social world and social entities are a product of social interaction. This approach dismisses that the social world is an objective, predetermined, external reality where social actors do not have an influence on the construction of the social world (Bryman 2012, p. 33). CDA is preoccupied with the interpretation of social interaction and with how interactions are formed by the social world and social entities such as institutions, power, and structures (Bryman, 2012, p. 401).

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Discourse may be defined as specific ways of talking about certain things within specific domains (Aakvaag, 2008, p. 309). Jan Selling states that discourse denotes the human approach to reality (Selling, 2020, p. 184). Another definition by Foucault explains discourse as a constructed knowledge/truth regime used, for example, in media, speeches, or political solutions (Escobar, 1984; Foucault, 1971). Furthermore, discourses shape futures, worldviews, and understandings of others and the self (Fairclough, 2010; Williamson et al., 2018). The world, as we perceive it, is discourse relative, meaning that being within different discourses consequently means living in different worlds (Aakvaag, 2008, p. 310). Discourses produce institutions and social facts. Social relations and what people do together are also regulated by discourses. This is because discourses determine how reality and interaction are to be defined, what is normal and abnormal, what is acceptable and unacceptable, what we can demand from each other, which expectations are linked to different subject positions, who is granted the right to do certain things, how social relations are

legitimized or naturalized, and so on (Aakvaag, 2008, p. 311). At the basis of any discourse is a system of rules and codes that regulate what can be said, when it can be said, to whom, etc. These underlying rules and principles make it possible to distinguish one discourse from another. Critical discourse analysis aims to dig down into the underlying structures that regulate the discourses (Aakvaag, 2008, p. 309).

I will use Foucault, and Fairclough's approaches to CDA because they both look behind and beyond the sentences and point to the ideology attributed to the specific discourse (Fairclough, 2010, p.8). Norman Fairclough was inspired by Foucault and argues that language is a power-tool within certain contexts. Language may be used to create change, thus can change or enforce behavior (Fairclough, 2010). According to Fairclough, CDA has three basic characteristics; it is dialectical, relational, and transdisciplinary. It is relational because it primarily focuses on social relations rather than individuals or entities. Discourse constitutes a complex set of relations of communication between people who write or speak. Fairclough states that discourse cannot be defined independently but must be understood in the context of analyzing sets of relations. These relations are what Fairclough calls 'dialectical.' CDA is not an analysis of discourse alone but an analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other elements of research, such as identities, power, and ideologies, among others. Furthermore, this type of analysis, bridging different disciplines such as politics, sociology, linguistics, makes CDA transdisciplinary (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). Fairclough points to how the analysis is a theory-driven process of constructing data, thus the methodology should be transdisciplinary. For instance, when establishing research questions or an object of research, it is transdisciplinary when the research questions or the object of research are constructed on the basis of theories (Fairclough, 2010, p. 5).

At the same time, Michel Foucault was inspired by Antonio Gramsci, known for his theory of cultural hegemony, concerned with how the state uses cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. Foucault was engaged with how truth is constructed by knowledge created by specific groups that comprise the reality of broader society. In other words, what constitutes knowledge and the normalization of facts are socially constructed, according to Foucault. Furthermore, Foucault points to how explicit judgments become the hegemonic discourse confirmed by society at large (Foucault, 2013).

Through the thoughts of Fairclough, power and discourse 'flow into' each other and are interlinked in the sense that power can be internalized in discourse and vice versa. Fairclough shares Foucault's understanding of power, meaning that power exists in every social relation (Fairclough, 2013, p. 4).

Foucault argues that power exists everywhere, suggesting that it is not always exercised by the dominant from the top. While Hall supports Foucault with this approach to power, Santos breaks with this idea; in his understanding in order to work towards social justice, one has to work to dismantle the power from the top (Foucault 2010: Santos, 2014). Power can be defined in many different ways, and several theories define it differently. As aforementioned, I am adopting constructivism as an ontological foundation, where the notion of power, stemming from the work of Antonio Gramsci, could be described as getting people to think in a way that is more beneficial for a specific group (Lukes, 2004). Furthermore, this definition can hold space for a decolonial take on notions of power, hence shedding light on the mechanisms behind hidden colonial structures.

Foucault looked at power-knowledge constellations that characterize modernity. The overall aim was to show that the myth of modernization as a liberation from power is very problematic and that modernization is, on the contrary, about the emergence of new and far more comprehensive and intensive forms of power (Aakvaag, 2008, p.313). The understanding of discourse stemming from Foucault is connected to how reality is created by different use of power, thus, how different social phenomena transform through power (Escobar, 1984; Foucault, 1971). Foucault states that knowledge exists in discourse within power relationships, Moreover, knowledge is seen as an exercise of power. Ruth Woodak argues that racism as social practice and ideology is produced and reproduced discursively (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 1). The methodological framework I adopted will help me to recognize discursive power as well as how coloniality is produced and preserved discursively.

4.3 CDA and a decolonial approach

A decolonial approach to CDA in the context of my research aims at uncovering how Roma and Romani are produced as excluded through the structures of coloniality (Quijano, 2000, p. 23). Furthermore, it emphasises narratives from Roma and Romani to challenge the established Eurocentric worldviews that make up the dominant discourses about reality (Selling, 2020, p. 184). The choice of combining CDA with a decolonial framework is made for many reasons. The combination allows me to reveal how hidden notions of power operate to preserve coloniality (Santos, 2014). The Foucaultian tradition is criticized by decolonial thinkers for not including the aspect of coloniality when identifying dominant discourses, nor does this tradition have an optimist take on breaking out from the dominant discourses (Foucault, 2010). For this reason, combining a decolonial theoretical framework allows me to bring to light hidden colonial structures through

CDA, thus not reproducing western academic structures that are in danger of preserving Roma and Romani as marginalized.

CDA looks at linguistic strategies used in texts. In other words, the choice of certain terms with reference to a specific context creates a connection to the theme. In the case of my research, certain judgements/prejudices about Roma and Romani reproduced in the public sphere create a connection to how they are recognised, hence constituting the discourse about them (Fairclough, 2010). Furthermore, the overall purpose is to expand the notion of critical thinking beyond the ‘western’ tradition of critique. The western tradition, and accordingly the Foucaultian tradition of CDA, has not considered the colonial aspect with reference to critical notions. When placing the focus on power relations and knowledge production, with reference to what is critical– the production of inequalities, from a decolonial perspective, looks at the social wrongs by identifying eurocentric and hegemonic institutionalized discourses (Eriksen, 2021, p.69). Edward Said expressed how the European identity is made superior and how the orient is constructed as other to the west, and that these power structures unfold through a reproduction of ignorance in the representation of people living under colonial conditions (Said, 1978). Combining a decolonial framework with CDA makes it possible to detect “the connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalized” (Loomba, 2005, p. 45).

To critically analyze dominance and detect the visible and the hidden, Boaventura de Sousa Santos’s aim of pursuing hidden knowledge is considered relevant, as well as identifying the lack of representations, with what he calls the ‘sociology of absences.’ He looks into how knowledge is hidden due to how ongoing colonialism produces exclusions, as well as identifies how a group of people could be produced as absent with their knowledge and ways of being in the world (Santos, 2014). Briefly put, Santos argues that everyone suffers under the same colonial system that reproduces injustice, separability and racism. As a result, we are all in a cognitive crisis, according to Santos, and he suggests the sociology of absences and emergences and going beyond abyssal thinking, which is a deep dive into the sociology of absences, as possible solutions to the cognitive crisis we are in (Santos, 2014).

4.4 Counter-narratives as methodological framing

I have chosen counter-narratives as methodological framing within a Foucaultian and decolonial narrative tradition to analyse the narratives as well as identify possible counter-narratives. Before explaining this in more detail, I will bring forth how Fage-Butler defines discourse through the

thoughts of Foucault, with reference to how it applies to narratives; “discourses indicate the cultural DNA of times and places; they provide the meanings that circulate in any society and furnish semantic content for the narratives we are told, the narratives we tell, and the narratives that tell us” (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 86). Furthermore, a Foucaultian tradition is primarily concerned with the social positioning of ‘narratives’ as produced through discourse, with an analytical lens on representation and power (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 86). In this study, I apply the term narrative to the single stories that emerges, and discourse is applied when several narratives correlate and make up a dominant narrative, which becomes the master discourse confirmed by society at large.

I am using counter-narratives as methodological framing to bring emphasis to experiences deriving from Roma and Romani with the aim of critiquing dominating narratives about the groups. The purpose of the chosen approach is to bring into science the experiences of those people whose stories are often omitted, highlighting their voices to illustrate the false dominating narratives about the groups that create and uphold dehumanizing views/ antiziganism (Miller, Liu, Ball, 2020). Ruth Wodak states that racism as social practice and ideology manifests discursively, meaning that how the majority talk and write about these groups creates and reproduces racism. Accordingly, it manifests in the dominant societal discourses (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p 1, 2).

Narratives, as well as counter-narratives, are defined in many different ways, often with a foundation in different forms of associated epistemology and ontology. As my epistemological foundation is informed by interpretivism and decolonizing methodologies and the ontological foundation of my research is constructionism, I am approaching “narrative research” with elements of the poststructuralist tradition in line with Foucault, as well as a decolonial approach. I am adopting a definition of counter-narratives defined by Molly Andrews as; “the stories which people tell and live which offer resistance, either implicitly or explicitly, to dominant cultural narratives” (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004, p. 1). Foucault notably stated, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Resistance is distinctly relevant to the context of counter-narratives, that is to say, Roma and Romani’s counter-narratives oppose power by moving towards dismantling master narratives and highlighting what is important to them and how they show agency (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.90).

I will adopt the terms “master discourse” and counter-discourse” referring to discourses that stand opposed to the dominant discourses (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 86). Foucault states that counter-discourses point to “subjugated knowledge” that is situated beyond approved official

knowledge (master discourse). Furthermore, these counter-discourses are produced as lower down on the hierarchy, below the required level of cognition. It is indeed the counter-narratives that, in part, comprise the counter-discourse (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 89). Discourses are a part of the “mechanics of power,” and thereby, “counter-discourses” as well as counter-narratives function as a means of counter-power (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 90; Foucault, 1980, p. 116). As alluded to in the literature review, I will use the term ‘master narrative’ to refer to the powerful, dominant narratives that counter-narratives stand opposed to. They are interconnected in the sense that counter-narratives assert the existence of master narratives by responding to them (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.87).

The Foucaultian approach to counter-narratives brings forth a division between narratives as a demonstration of individual agency on the one hand and narratives as affected by sociocultural context on the other (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.85). Since my research advocates for reconsidering the apparent dominant narratives about Roma and Romani in Norwegian society and emphasize counter-stories from these groups, I am curious to explore how they show agency and resistance through their personal narratives. As opposed to how the dominant societal discourses about them are affected by the sociocultural context associated with eurocentric worldviews.

Stemming from Foucault’s approach to discourse from the Archeology of Knowledge (Foucault, 2002), Fage-Butler presents to us Foucault's approach to discourse converted into operational, analytical tools to examine the discursive basis for counter-narratives (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 91). The steps to exert the Foucaultian discourse analysis will be presented now;

1. Identifying all the statements in a text that relate to the theme
2. Identifying how the several statements intersect around the main discourses that relate to the topic, and identify main discourses
3. Discuss what the constructs presented in the data do- what do they achieve? What economic benefits or political utility may derive from their inclusion? Whose interests do they benefit?

With the word “statement,” Foucault refers to the “atom of discourse,” meaning one or a few sentences that represent an object or a subject, for example, Roma and Romani, in a particular way (Fage-Butler, 2021, p. 91). CDA may help to understand the sources behind power imbalance in the way Roma and Romani are represented in the dominant discourses about them in the Norwegian

public sphere, and in turn, help to highlight their perspectives and emphasize how they show agency. An aspect of power behind discourse is how some groups have low access to various discourses, for example, how Roma and Romani have low access to the discourses on themselves (Fairclough, 2015, 89). I will carry out my study by analyzing the selected narratives in relation to the master discourses emerging from my literature review, in addition to analyzing a section from NOU 2015: 7 to support the identified master discourses.

4.5 Data collection

This section will provide information regarding the strategy used for collecting data. I have operationalized my thesis by demarcating the time frame from 2015 until today. The starting point for the delimitation is a report presented in 2015 that investigates and documents the policies pursued against Romani by the Norwegian authorities, organizations, and institutions from 1850 until 2015 (NOU 2015: 7). The report was presented in 2015, assessing Norwegian policy carried out against Romani, as well as uncovering which measures had been proposed to strengthen their position. This was a symbolically important process that potentially could have been an opportunity to open the door for change. Nevertheless, it is still unclear whether the Norwegian government will change its policy based on the report (Selling, 2020, p. 116).

Simultaneously, in 2015, an official apology from the state was carried out by the Norwegian prime minister at the time, Erna Solberg, where she apologized on behalf of the state for the racist policy the state had carried out against the Roma, where Solberg promised compensation (Carlsen & Helljesen, 2015). This was also a symbolically important event that potentially could have led to a turning point. Nevertheless, as previously alluded to, statistics show that Roma and Romani still are the minorities the Norwegian population has the most prejudice towards today (Moe, 2022, p. 9; NIM, 2022, p. 57-60). This indicates that the state still has a long way to go when it comes to strengthening the position of Roma and Romani in Norwegian society. A part of the compensation from the state in 2015 was the establishment of 'Romano kher' which means Roma's house in Romanes (kirkensbymisjon.no/romano-kher). It is a culture and resource center that provides various services such as film and storytelling evenings to showcase the diverse Roma culture to a minority and majority audience, homework help, and individual guidance for Norwegian Roma in skills development for public services, among other things.

The aim of qualitative research is in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon/ group/situation as it is here and now, and it is often based on a form of strategic non-random selection of study objects (Balsvik & Solli, 2011, p. 19). I searched in different online newspapers with the terms *romani *tater, and *roma *sigøyner (gypsy) in A- text, Aftenposten, nrk.no, dagsavisen, and tv2.no. I proceeded with using the snowball method to select more articles. Using this method when working with articles refers to using the reference list of an article to identify additional articles (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

I started out with the criterion of selecting counter-stories from Roma and Romani, where their portrayal of life was not solely grounded in experiences with racism and discrimination but would show nuances and mundane experiences that extended beyond racism and oppression. Additionally, I relied on the criterion that the data- articles were written within the time-frame 2015 until today. A further criterion was strategically selecting data-samples where they were given as much space as possible in the text.

As I proceeded with selecting samples based on these criteria, I discovered that in every article I read, racism was constantly addressed in various forms. I then changed the criteria; to select narratives where they offer resistance to dominant cultural narratives about them. I pre-read a total of 20 articles where Roma and Romani said something about themselves. Furthermore, I found two repetitive themes emerging from the articles; school and child-rearing. This led me to proceed with my selection of these two codings, which left me with ten articles. After that, I added a criterion; to strategically select all the articles that relate to the theme where both Roma and Romani were represented equally, which led me to end with three articles and one tv- series episode.

In sum, my inclusion and exclusion criteria were;

Inclusion criteria:

- Material published after 2015
- narratives where Roma and Romani get as much space as possible in the material
- Selected from Norwegian media on online platforms: A- text, tv2, nrk, aftenposten, using the snowball- method
- Keeping a balance between material deriving from Roma and Romani; Equal amount of material from each of the groups
- Using the codings: school and child-rearing (Skole og barneoppdragelse)
- Personal narratives where they offer resistance to dominant cultural narratives about them

Exclusion criteria:

- Not material from diffuse sites such as blog posts or Facebook posts
- Not published before 2015
- Not articles that do not relate to the themes: child-rearing and education
- Not articles that do not include personal narratives

Overview of data collection

Title, author, year, newspaper/ website	Type of article/ video Roma or Romani?	Theme in article	Codings/ key subjects
<p>Vi vil ha utdanning og arbeid! Ni rom- og romanikvinner skriver (We want education and work! Nine Roma and Romani women writes)</p> <p>Nora Pettersen Elin Pettersen Monica Karlsen Safira Josef Madonna Josef Diemantra Karoli Johnsen Rebeka Johansen Natalina Jansen Linda Aleksandersen</p> <p>05.10.2015 Aftenposten</p>	<p>Debate- article, nine Roma and Romani women writes (Roma and Romani)</p>	<p>In this text we are confronted with an extract of what these young Roma and Romani women will present at a conference on inclusion, where they will talk about their experiences with institutions and public services in Norway, as well as fear for the authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norwegian school system - Relation to the state - antiziganism

<p>Gina (21) mistet språket i fosterhjem: - Fikk identitetskrise (Gina (21) lost her language in foster care: - Got an identity crisis)</p> <p>Silje Kathrine Sviggum 26.01.2023 nrk.no</p>	<p>Debate- article Interview with Gina Roma</p>	<p>Interview with a Roma girl that has been placed in three different Norwegian foster homes growing up, none of which knew her language (romanes) or knew about the Roma culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child-rearing - child welfare system - antiziganism - assimilation
<p>Mor og far i sjokk - barn av taterslekt skal tvangsadopteres (Mother and father in shock - A child of Tater- origins are forcibly adopted away)</p> <p>Asbjørn Øyhovden 20.08.2021 tv2.no/nyheter</p>	<p>Debate- article Interview with two Romani parents; Line and Per</p>	<p>Interview with Romani parents, their child is being forcibly adopted into a new Norwegian family, where the child is denied learning about its cultural origin as Romani, additionally Romani-language. The selected narrative from this article emerges from the biological parents to the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child-rearing - child welfare system - assimilation - antiziganism

<p>Ikke spør om det - Norske Rom (Don't ask about it - Norwegian Roma)</p> <p>Claudia Josef Gino Gulbrandsen Latina Johnsen Natalina Jansen Natasha Bielenberg Raya Bielenberg</p> <p>28.12.2021 NRK</p>	<p>An episode of an online television series called 'don't ask about it' on NRK</p>	<p>This television show invites different marginalized groups in Norwegian society to answer questions people usually don't dare to ask. In this episode, six Roma answer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norwegian school system - child-rearing - antiziganism
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An intersecting master narrative that relates to the topic, was found to be the Relation to the school system emerging from NOU 2015 : 7, from a section that documents Romani in relation to the Norwegian school system. I have strategically selected this section from NOU 2015: 7 as my collected data because it contributes to supporting a master discourse emerging from my literature review that is of particular relevance for analyzing a narrative in relation to the Norwegian school system. It is a part of the NOU- report that was meant to lead in the direction of reconciliation between the state/society at large and the Romani people. Nevertheless, The NOU report received a mixed response in the Romani community, and some Romani dislike it (Selling, 2019, p. 116). It can seem problematic to first be persecuted by the state, followed by the state researching the group, although the committee that has carried out the NOU consists of some Romani. Additionally, the research that emerges from the NOU intends to strengthen the group. Nevertheless, from the point of view of persecuted people, at least for some, 'research' may be a term linked to colonialism and European imperialism. For many national minorities and indigenous people, 'research' may be perceived as a dirty word (Smith, 2021, p. 1).

Title, author, year, newspaper/ website	Type of data	Theme in article	Codings/ subjects key
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<p>NOU 2015 : 7 Assimilering og motstand — Norsk politikk overfor taterne/romanifolket fra 1850 til i dag (Assimilation and resistance — Norwegian policy towards the Taters/Romani people from 1850 to the present day)</p> <p>Regjeringen.no A state's appointed committee led by Knut Vollebæk</p>	<p>NOU- report that investigates and documents the policies pursued against Romani by the Norwegian authorities, organizations and institutions, from 1850 until 2015.</p>	<p>A section in the report that examines the relationship between Romani and education. The report finds that formal education has not been important for Romani due to their traditional way of living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assimilation - Romani in relation to the Norwegian school system - Cultural explanations
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4.6 Positionality and Ethical considerations

Different questions concerning validity and reliability often occur with qualitative research. This is mostly due to the fact that this type of design, in large terms, relies on the researcher's own interpretations of the material studied (Bryman, 2016). By using a decolonial framework as a theoretical and methodological approach, I have already made explicit my standpoint and values.

Hence, I am engaging with the voices of the Global South to promote decolonization and social justice (Santos, 2018). I consequently stand in solidarity with the research groups “the analytical lens is not detached from me as a researcher, as ways of knowing cannot be seen as separate from ways of seeing” (Eriksen, 2021, p. 60; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). An important point with an approach rooted in a critical and decolonial understanding of knowledge is that the purpose of the research is more important than methodological rigidity – the purpose being to work toward social justice. As previously alluded to, the epistemological foundation of my research is not grounded in thinking that knowledge is neutral, it is, therefore, important to be reflexive and clear about my purpose and positionality (Bryman, 2012, p. 28).

My positionality is influenced by being a white Norwegian woman and a gadji (a non-Roma/Romani). I have grown up with all the benefits that follow being white and belonging to the majority population. Nor have I had any experience with facing discrimination or racism on the basis of my culture. Kristin Eriksen summarizes being a white woman researching the other very well in her Ph.D. dissertation “*We usually don’t talk that way about Europe...*”- *Interrupting the coloniality of Norwegian citizenship education*. She reflects on being a white researcher conducting research on social justice, and how that might stand in danger of reinscribing structures of privilege, explained as shortcomings in regard to not experiencing seeing oneself as a racially situated being (Eriksen, 2021, p. 60). Therefore, it becomes essential to recognize and reflect on one's own positionality, one's own whiteness, and privileged position in the fight against racism/ antiziganism and discrimination.

My position brings forward a paradox; on the one hand, I would argue, in line with Santos, that there is an equal need for the majority as well as those who are most immediately affected by colonial violence, to recognize that we all live under a colonial system. That a particular ideology has systematically erased others while normalizing itself, and becoming aware of these structures helps us move forward toward a society that is self-aware, and compatible with a process of decolonization (Santos, 2014). On the other hand, as a white majority woman, I may risk taking space from “those who are most immediately affected by colonial and racial violence in order to advance one’s own career and other personal interests” (Eriksen, 2021, p. 60; Stein, 2016, p. 18).

This brings me to emphasize ethical considerations concerning using articles as my data. It is important to let the voices of those concerned to be heard, on the other hand, one has to weigh which damage it could potentially do to people by talking to them about personal issues, especially when the researcher is a gadji (Non- Roma/Romani) (Bryman, 2016, p. 36). An advantage of using

articles as data is that I am not in danger of intruding. Roma and Romani have been victims of the dark sides of research through, for example, racial research in Norway. In addition, such small minority groups can often experience pressure to participate in research, which quickly slips into extractivism: the majority will "have" their knowledge and perspectives so that "we" can create a better society. Santos emphasizes how the decolonial work must be done by both the minority and the majority – it cannot be up to the minority to do all the work themselves (Santos, 2014). Nonetheless, it is important for me to emphasize the voices of the research groups, as there is an obvious lack of Roma and Romani people's voices. They are excluded from knowledge production, in addition to having low access to discourses on themselves. By using a selective sample of self-representation texts, their own voices may emerge through what they have already chosen to share, which may be seen as a respectful way to emphasize their perspectives. The selected sample of self-representation texts can give an impression of tendencies of experiences among Norwegian Roma and Romani in Norwegian society. On the other hand, it is important to bring to light that Norwegian Roma are not a homogeneous group, nor are Romani, hence that there exists a diversity of disagreements within the two groups and that the texts only reveal tendencies. Another advantage of using articles as my data is that I am not in a position to influence what is being said or written.

Nonetheless, my research lacks the group's perspectives on my chosen texts. It might seem appropriate to have gathered a group of Roma and Romani people to discuss questions concerning my selected sample of self-representation texts and ask questions like; Do these texts adequately grasp the magnitude of the issue(s) at hand? Moreover, do the chosen texts represent the diversity of Roma and Romani's experiences as you see them? However, due to time, capacity, and social distancing restraints, this would have required a considerably large amount of planning, a privilege I, unfortunately, did not have. However, I attended a conference in Stockholm in May 2022, the Critical Approaches to Romani Studies conference, with Roma/Romani from all over the world. The researchers that presented their research were mostly Roma scholars embracing a critical approach to shape the discourses on themselves and challenge the dominant discourses on them. In large terms, many of the issues they spoke about, and furthermore, their findings correlated with what emerges in my collected data as well as my findings. Hopefully, reflecting on the ethical nature of a lack of the group's perspectives on the texts I have chosen, as well as attending this conference, will alleviate any concerns readers might have.

5 Analysis and findings

I will carry out my study by analyzing the selected narratives in relation to the master discourses that have been identified from my literature review. As previously mentioned, I have grouped my collected data into two themes to further exert the analysis: Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing' and 'Roma and Romani's relation to the Norwegian school system.' As previously noted, my sample consists of four articles within which I will analyze four personal narratives. Within the theme Romani in relation to child-rearing', I will be analyzing excerpts from two newspaper articles that address two cases of adoption. Within the theme 'Roma and Romani's relation to the Norwegian school system,' I will analyze excerpts from one newspaper article and one from a television series on NRK. Furthermore, to go more in-depth on establishing one of the master discourses, I will analyze an excerpt from NOU 2015 : 7 as a master narrative.

This section of the thesis will analyze how Roma and Romani are made absent with their ways of knowing and their own perspectives through dominant discourses about them. This will be done by emphasizing their perspectives through personal narratives and in turn, analyze how they show negotiations of dominant discourses about them within the two themes: Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing' and 'Roma and Romani's relation to the Norwegian school system.'

I have operationalized the analysis by analyzing the excerpts of narratives data-sample by data-sample, meaning operating by dividing each sub-chapter by each selected data-sample within the two grouped themes. In each of the sub-chapters, I will first present the context of the text, followed by discussing and identifying how different master discourses intersect with the theme. Furthermore, I will analyze the personal narratives emerging from the selected articles and discuss how they show negotiations of common master discourses. I will apply Santos' sociology of absences and emergences with the aim of identifying how the master narratives about Roma and Romani are constructed on the grounds of eurocentric worldviews. In addition to this, I will place emphasis on where Roma and Romani are recognised with their ways of knowing, or, in Santos' words, where the sociology of emergences is made present . Furthermore, I will use the concept of othering to make visible how they have been excluded through what Santos terms *abyssal thinking* (Santos, 2014).

5. 1 Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing

This chapter is based on two newspaper articles that address two cases of adoption. The first article is from 2023 and revolves around a Roma girl who, growing up, has been placed in three different Norwegian foster homes, none of whom knew her language (romanes) or knew about the Roma

culture. The personal narrative from this article emerges from Gina, the adopted Roma- girl (Sviggum, 2023). The second article is from 2021 and addresses how a Romani child is being forcibly adopted into a new Norwegian family, where the child is denied learning about its cultural origin as Romani. The personal narrative from this article emerges from the biological parents of the child (Øyhovden, 2021). An identified discourse within this theme is Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing. It is important to specify that I am not looking to analyze the cases addressed in these two articles in-depth, nor will I go into depth about practices within the child welfare service. On the other hand, I have operationalized my approach to these two articles by emphasizing how Roma and Romani operate with approaches to resistance, as well as how they navigate and negotiate the dominant master discourses that will be identified. Furthermore, in order to identify possible master discourses to the discourse on Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing, I will attempt to emphasize how there might be tendencies of an underlying racist structure within the child welfare service' practices with Roma and Romani. Hence, the two articles might serve as two examples of cases where there has been an assimilation pressure linked to both cases. That is not to say that these racist structures or assimilation are present in all child welfare workers' practices with Roma and Romani, but to point out that some tendencies exist. I have previously pointed out how widespread negative attitudes towards Roma and Romani are in society at large (NIM, 2022, p. 57- 60). When these attitudes are to be found within an institution such as the child welfare service, such attitudes may have fatal consequences, such as that ethnic affiliation is being used as an argument by the child welfare service when Romani or Roma children are forcibly placed in foster homes, or that Roma and Romani lose their culture and language when they are adopted away. I will start by first presenting the two articles with the selected quotes, followed by identifying some master discourses about Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing. Afterwards, I will analyze the selected quotes from the material, where I will discuss how they navigate and negotiate the master discourses that emerge from the literature review.

5.1.2 Article 1. Gina (21) lost her language in foster care: - Went into identity crisis

The article is divided into different sections, where different people in relation to the topic are interviewed. First, there is an interview with Gina who is a Roma and represents the case, furthermore three more people are interviewed: the general secretary of the foster home association, a professor of pedagogy at the University of Tromsø and the manager at Bufdir. I will first explain more about the context of the article, before presenting the selected excerpts. In this article, we are

confronted with how 21-year-old Gina, a Norwegian Roma girl, was placed in a foster home when she was eight years old. Gina was placed in three non-Roma foster homes in different parts of the country, none of whom knew her language (romanes) or had knowledge about Roma culture. Gina's contact with her biological family was broken after some time, because she was not allowed to have contact with them. A year and a half later, she did not speak her own language (Romanes) anymore. Gina chose to move back to her biological family after high school. Her biological family has taught her her own language, so she can communicate in Romanes today, but she is not fluent. Merete Saus, professor of pedagogy at the University of Tromsø points out that it is not unusual that adopted Roma children lose their language, Nevertheless she specifies that it is illegal because it is a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She furthermore emphasizes that all children that are under the child welfare service have the right to maintain their own language and to enjoy the benefits of their culture as well as their ethnic group as it follows in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Sviggum, 2023).

Gina's excerpts read as follows;

“ When I met my mother and my siblings, we had to speak Norwegian so that child welfare service and the police could understand. I just completely forgot the language” (Sviggum, 2023).

“It is very difficult to find belonging. I fit into both the Norwegian and Roma communities, but I don't feel that I am fully one or the other” (Sviggum, 2023).

“I know how insecure a child can feel. I never got positive feedback on being a Roma. Therefore, I felt a lot of shame”(Sviggum, 2023).

The article points to how the hardest thing for Gina growing up was that she was met with ignorance; This was particularly difficult in high school. In reply to this, she says;

“I had an identity crisis. No one had knowledge. I had many questions, but was left with no answers. It was difficult for both my foster parents and me” (Sviggum, 2023).

Both Roma and Romani are highly represented in the child welfare service (Sviggum, 2023). I will now present another article from 2021 that revolves around a case where a Romani child gets forcibly adopted away from her parents before analyzing the selected narratives from both articles.

5.1.3 Article 2. Mother and father in shock - A child of Tater-origins is forcibly adopted away

This article addresses the case of Line and Per, belonging to the Romani minority and their child, who was forcibly adopted away from them. The child had lived in foster care since it was nine months old, and when this article was published in 2021, the child was seven years old. The article further addresses that the parents went to court with the case to get their child back. However, the claim for return was rejected, and adoption was decided in court. Nevertheless, the most recently appointed psychologist who worked on the case argued that adoption means further assimilation of the child. The psychologist further argued that the biological parents have good caring skills and that the child should return to their biological parents. The court also concluded that Line and Per could not properly care for their child, whereas their lawyer says the judgment will be appealed. The first psychologists gave Line a diagnosis of mild developmental disability but took back the diagnosis years later and stated that they had no reason to think that the mother was mentally disabled today. The parents, as well as their lawyer, believe that the diagnosis and their Romani background have been decisive for the verdict. It is found that the court portrays the child as ethnically Norwegian and that the child welfare service has not made a plan to safeguard the child with knowledge about their cultural origins. The child welfare service has also refused the parents to speak the Romani language with their child during visits. In addition, the child welfare service has actively chosen not to tell the child about its origin as Romani. The child welfare service explains that this is due to the fact that the child is vulnerable and should be protected from too many impressions. It is a comprehensive article describing the case in which various actors have been interviewed. In this case, I will focus on the story that emerges from the Romani mother, Line (Øyhovden, 2021).

Line:

“The Child welfare service has made statements and behaved in such a way that I have not been able to use or teach our language when we are together with our child. How would that be possible when our child has not been told that it has tater origins? We have only been allowed to meet our child three times a year. That would only lead to confusion. We have tried to get the child welfare service to inform the child, without success. As a result, I am denied the opportunity to learn away our language and our culture during the meetings” (Øyhovden, 2021).

Before analyzing the personal narratives from the two articles, I will continue by following the next step in the three-staged approach, namely to identify how the several statements intersect around the main discourses that relate to Roma and Romani in relation to child-raising. In Fævelen's research, as it appears in my literature review, we are confronted with some clear traces of assimilation in the child welfare's practice with Roma children, revealed through the child welfare workers' stories about their practice. Furthermore, it is found that how some operate with traces of assimilation are rooted in attitudes they uphold towards the group and that their attitudes bear clear traces of racism/antiziganism (Fævelen, 2016). The attitudes the child welfare workers seem to uphold towards these groups do not only represent individual cases, but reflect tendencies of attitudes the Norwegian population upholds towards Roma and Romani in society at large. As alluded to in my literature review, the prejudices the child welfare workers uphold, as revealed through their stories, may seem to correlate with the prejudices that come off as most widespread amongst the Norwegian population, revealed through the NIM- rapport, Lauritzen's research from 2022, as well as by Rosvoll and Bielenberg's research: Roma and Romani are criminals, they do not want to work, they are dishonest, they are unreliable, as well as reproducing the idea that Roma and Romani people biologically represent a less developed race (Rosvoll & Bielenberg, 2012: Lauritzen, 2022, p. 136) As revealed in my literature review, a survey from 2019 by Fafo shows that Roma and Romani are the two groups the population thinks are the most discriminated against (Tyldum, 2019, p. 8). Furthermore, both the NIM-rapport and Fafo-report document that this racism/antiziganism, discrimination, and prejudice aimed at these two groups are more accepted and justified rather than when it is aimed at other minorities (NIM, 2022, p.10: Tyldum, 2019, p. 8).

It emerges in Fævelen's research that many of the child-welfare workers' perception of Roma's way of life entails that their way of life must be changed for their living conditions to improve and for the Roma to be able to take part in "modern" society. Meaning that some of the child welfare workers blame Roma for being marginalized (Fævelen, 2016, p. 25). This may correlate with Hagatun's findings concerning the school system and also with Lauritzen's findings (Lauritzen, 2018). On this note, how their way of life must change for their living conditions to improve may be translated to the master narrative; Roma and Romani are not capable of proper caretaking for their children due to their cultural way of living. Along these lines, Foucault points to how explicit judgments become the hegemonic discourse confirmed by society at large (Foucault, 2013). In light of my research, I interpret "Roma and Romani are not capable of proper caretaking for their children due to their cultural way of living" as a possible identified master discourse on

child-rearing in relation to Roma and Romani. I will argue that this master discourse may intersect with the statement belonging to article 2; *“The Child welfare service has made statements and behaved in such a way that I have not been able to use or teach our language when we are together with our child. How would that be possible when our child has not been told that it has tater origins? We have only been allowed to meet our child three times a year. That would only lead to confusion. We have tried to get the child welfare service to inform the child, without success. As a result, I am denied the opportunity to learn away our language and our culture during the meetings”*. Researcher on Roma studies, Solvor Lauritzen, argues that ethnic affiliation is used as an argument by the child welfare service as to why the child, in this case, is forcibly adopted away (Øyhovden, 2019; Lauritzen 2022, p. 134). This may be further interpreted as an example of a case where some of the child welfare workers may not find Roma and Romani to be proper caretakers due to their ways of living.

Furthermore, this master discourse may relate to another master discourse, the Norwegian exceptionalism discourse, which may be explained to be that the Norwegian state upholds the reproduction of coloniality by framing the nation-state as inherently good in various ways. Thus, reproducing this image of Norway strengthens the dominance of the self-image as a Norwegian over other racialized people (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 210). The Norwegian exceptionalism discourse may intersect with the statement from article 1; *“When I met my mother and my siblings, we had to speak Norwegian so that child welfare service and the police could understand. I just completely forgot the language.”*. This may point to how the child welfare service is not safeguarding the maintenance of her native language and may be ignorant to how it affects her not to be able to speak her language; thus, it may also be recognized as a way to assimilate. This may intersect with the statement in article 2: *“The Child welfare service has made statements and behaved in such a way that I have not been able to use or teach our language when we are together with our child. How would that be possible when our child has not been told that it has tater origins? We have only been allowed to meet our child three times a year. That would only lead to confusion. We have tried to get the child welfare service to inform the child, without success. As a result, I am denied the opportunity to learn away our language and our culture during the meetings”* When the parents are denied to teach away their language as well as their culture to their child, it may be understood as traces of assimilation present. The act of assimilation is usually understood as a minority policy that a state or government carries out towards a linguistic or cultural minority or immigrant group to make them as similar as possible to the majority population. As aforementioned, Fævelen's findings point out some clear traces of assimilation in the

child welfare's practice with Roma children (Fævelen, 2016). These two cases may be set out to be two examples where traces of assimilation are to be found. In that way, the nordic exceptionalism discourse may be recognized as a master discourse, because an act of assimilation is rooted in how one culture is perceived to be better than the other, hence in this context the norwegian culture may be perceived to be better than Roma/Romani- culture. I have now identified two possible master discourses to the discourse on Roma and Romani in relation to child-rearing. I will now move forward with analyzing the identified statements from both articles.

Article 1. “ *When I met my mother and my siblings, we had to speak Norwegian so that the child welfare service and the police could understand. I just completely forgot the language.*” By pointing out this, Gina expresses how the child welfare workers may not have prioritized safeguarding the maintenance of her native language. Nevertheless, it might be that the child welfare service tried to make it possible for them to speak their language, but did not succeed in obtaining an interpreter. Regardless of any reason the child welfare service might have had, the result was that Gina was not allowed to speak her language, which led to her eventually forgetting it completely. Santos argues that language and identity are deeply intertwined (Santos, 2014). By erasing the language, parts of the Roma identity may also be erased. Hence, when she is denied to speak her language and has no way to maintain it, a part of her identity might get fragmented. This interpretation can be further substantiated when she explains, “*It is very difficult to find belonging. I fit into both the Norwegian and Roma communities, but I don't feel that I am fully one or the other*”. This might also point to how she feels fragmented due to how she has been denied access to her own culture by being placed in several new homes that do not know her culture. In this way, she is deprived of knowledge from her own culture. Not prioritizing and safeguarding her language, and cultural belonging, and also not safeguarding her access to knowledge within Roma culture, might be an example of how abyssal thinking is reflected within the system. As addressed in my theory chapter, Santos defines modern western thinking as abyssal thinking. By modern western thinking, he refers to the hegemonic version of western modernity. Santos describes modern western thinking as a system of separation with visible and invisible distinctions. The visible ones are represented by the global North and rest on the invisible ones, by the Global South. This division ties together with the distinction between abyssal and non-abyssal knowledge, referring to the separation between what is seen as true knowledge and what is ‘othered’ knowledge (Santos, 2014, p. 118). Producing some knowledge regimes as systematically absent or erased by disqualifying them, the western knowledge system can normalize itself and stand in a hegemonic position; how this is done is by a totality of abyssal thinking (Santos, 2014, p. 119). In this way, in the case of Gina, Roma culture, as

well as knowledge from her own culture gets ‘othered’, in relation to the Norwegian culture and eurocentric knowledge recognized as a hegemonic culture and ‘the right knowledge’. This passage ties together with what Hagatun explains through the thoughts of Gressgård, that Norwegian values are perceived to be universal values that all rational beings wish to adapt to. Hence, Norwegians look at themselves as a nation of equal individuals, whereas “the others” get recognised as those that own the impossible differences (Gressgård, 2007; Hagatun 2019, p. 25).

Gina continues; *“I know how insecure a child can feel. I never got positive feedback on being a Roma. Therefore, I felt a lot of shame”*. This points to how the negative attitudes towards Roma reflected in society at large have also been reflected in the child welfare service and when she has encountered other public bodies, reproducing what Santos termed as ‘belonging to the other side of the abyssal line.’ The other side of the line means being produced as nonexistent within Roma's knowledge, beliefs, practices, and so on (Santos 2014, p. 118). Beyond that, she has been assimilated into Norwegian society by not being able to speak her language or have access to the knowledge about the culture she was born and raced with the first eight years of her life. She illustrates the impact this has had on her when she explains, *“I had an identity crisis. No one had knowledge. I had many questions, but was left with no answers. It was difficult for both my foster parents and me”*. This points to how fundamental it may be to be rejected to speak one's native language and have access to one's own culture, and furthermore, how the assimilation she has experienced has not been sufficiently recognized. In a report from the parliament of Norway on national minorities (2020- 2021), it is written that the assimilation policy took place from the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, without mentioning that assimilation towards these groups is still ongoing in certain areas (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2020-2021). The silence towards the ongoing assimilation she has encountered may facilitate conditions for the production of the narrative of “Norway as a homogeneous, harmonious nation-state”. (Eriksen & Stein, 2021, p. 216).

Article 2.

Line:

“The Child welfare service has made statements and behaved in such a way that I have not been able to use or teach our language when we are together with our child. How would that be possible when our child has not been told that it has tater origins? We have only been allowed to meet our child three times a year. That would only lead to confusion. We have tried to get the child welfare service to inform the child, without success. As a result, I am denied the opportunity to learn away

our language and our culture during the meetings” (Øyhovden, 2021). Similarly to the case of Gina, the parents of the Romani child are rejected to speak their language with their child. Additionally, they are also rejected teaching their child about their culture during their meetings. This is a direct violation of article 30 of the convention on the rights of the child, which reads as follows:

“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 practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.”(Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Article 30)

The violation of article 30 applies to the case of Gina, and to the case of the child of Per and Line. In 2018, Norway was required by the UN to correct several conditions surrounding Norwegian foster children with minority backgrounds. The UN specifically mentioned Roma children, where they confronted Norway for the excessive use of foster homes for Roma children in particular (Sviggum, 2023). Since the distinction between Roma and Romani is said to be particularly emphasized in Norway, Romani are presumably included in the description “Roma” in this context. The European Court of Human Rights has found a violation of the right to family life in seven cases. A NIM report from 2020 points out how this is a central human rights challenge in Norway (NIM, 2020). Moreover, even though the intentions of the child welfare service for the children in question may be paved with the best intentions, the “best intentions” may be based on discriminatory grounds rooted in a Eurocentric worldview, recognized as what Santos terms abyssal thinking (Santos, 2014, p. 118).

Conversely, an important aspect to emphasize is how the journalists that have written the two articles operate with power sharing when they both view the cases in favour of supporting Roma and Romani’s narratives in both the articles. In this sense, Hall (1997) points to how discourses in the mass media are constructed on ideologies regarding how minorities, gender, class, etc., are represented. In both of these articles, the journalists in the media become active agents in operating with resistance, in solidarity with Roma and Romani and against the dominant discourses reflected in the child welfare system (Hall, 1997). An aspect of power behind discourse is how some groups have low access to various discourses (Fairclough, 2015, 89); in this case, Roma and Romani have low access to the discourses on themselves. Nevertheless, it points in a positive direction that the

journalists share their power by giving Roma and Romani access to the discourse, where they can speak up with their stories towards the dominant discourses about them. This aspect may be in line with Santos' meaning of the sociology of emergences,; in this case, the journalist's emphasis is placed on engaging with views that have been othered and excluded through abyssal thinking (Santos, 2014).

5.2 Roma and Romani's relation to the Norwegian school system

This chapter is based on an excerpt from a newspaper article written by nine Norwegian Roma and Romani women explaining why it has been difficult for them to finish school and in turn get a job. An intersecting master narrative that relates to the topic emerges from NOU 2015 : 7, from a section that documents Romani concerning the Norwegian school system. Hence excerpts from the NOU will be analyzed to discuss how the narratives show negotiations with the identified master discourse emerging from the NOU. The section serves as a dominant cultural narrative about Romani regarding the Norwegian school system.

After that, I will analyze one excerpt from a television series on NRK, a narrative emerging from a Roma mother that explains what is important for children's development within their culture and way of living. I will analyze this narrative in relation to intersecting the master discourses emerging from my literature review. I will carry out the analysis with reference to how the Roma mother shows negotiations between both, prioritizing her own practices that are fundamental to their culture and the education within the Norwegian educational system.

5.2.1 We want education and work! | Nine Roma and Romani women write

In the text, 'We want education and work! | Nine Roma and Romani women write', we are confronted with how nine Roma and Romani women explain their experiences with institutions and public services in Norway, and whereby both groups depict a summary of their stories of oppression in Norway. The text is published leading up to a conference organized by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud in collaboration with the Spanish authorities, where these women will present proposals and talk about their experiences with being Roma in Norway. Some Norwegian politicians will be there to learn from the groups in question. Furthermore, the Roma and Romani women state that the Norwegian politicians may also learn something from the Spanish authorities as Spain has more experience in including Roma and Romani (Pettersen, et al, 2015).

In this text, we encounter nine Roma and Romani women who explain their history in Norway as historically marginalized. They are now meeting to discuss issues that apply to them, and they will present proposals and their experiences with institutions and public services in Norway. This initiative connects to what Santos names a ‘transnational interaction from below’, namely from the excluded and their allies, presenting their stories, experiences, and perspectives to the public services to make a change (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p. 4). A transnational interaction from below may also be interlinked with the *sociology of emergences*: how Roma and Romani’s truths, experiences and narratives get recognized as valid truths, whereas the colonial structures are recognized as what have made Roma and Romani marginalized and systematically oppressed. Becoming aware of these structures and making space to include their perspectives on the issues that apply to them is compatible with a process of decolonization and what Santos names the sociology of emergences (Santos, 2014). The following quotes will be analyzed below. The excerpts are chosen by following the first step in the three-staged approach to Foucaultian discourse analysis outlined in the methodology section, Identifying all the statements in a text that relate to the theme;

“In both groups there are many who have not completed schooling. Few take higher education. This is, among other things, related to the fact that many from both groups have little trust in the authorities due to history” (Pettersen et al., 2015).

“The fear of the authorities makes it difficult for us and for our children to trust politicians and also school and nursery staff. In addition, people from both ethnic groups have been met with prejudice from ‘most people’” (Pettersen et al., 2015).

“Many have been bullied and harassed because they are from a travelling family. Being “Tater” or “gypsy” has even been used as hate speech (skjellsord). Many of us and our children have experienced this at school. And many are met with the same attitudes when they apply for a job. It also makes it difficult to thrive and finish school and difficult to enter the labor market” (Pettersen et al., 2015)

Before analyzing the above excerpts, I will follow the next step in the three-staged approach, suggesting to identify the main discourses, and how several statements intersect around them (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.91). Hence, a master narrative will be presented, documented in the NOU

2015:7 - Assimilation and resistance (assimelering og motstand). Even though this rapport only applies to Romani and not Roma, Hagatun's research and findings from the HL-center report (2012) and Lauritzen's meta-study show correlating findings about Roma and school, as it appears in my literature review. Therefore, I argue that this extract can be applicable to both groups, even though this extract is primarily about Romani.

“Within the Tater/Romani people's traditional way of living and professional practices (yrkesutøvelse), formal education has not been important. This is connected to the fact that knowledge was transmitted orally between generations, as well as the fact that formal education was previously not so central within a number of the chosen work Tater/ Romani people practiced. Parts of the older Tater/ Romani population have therefore not been so concerned about the children finishing upper secondary school or getting other forms of formal education. Negative attitudes towards the ethnic group, bullying and harassment in society at large, including at school, can also partly explain this. In addition, some, especially in the older generation, see school and formal working life as the majority population's arena.” (NOU 2015 : 7, p.98).

The committee states in the report that traditional ways of living, along with work that does not require formal competence and a tradition for oral transmission of knowledge, are all reasons why Romani people have not prioritized having their kids in school (NOU2015, p.98). These are all cultural explanations as to why there has been a lack of Romani participation in school. Coinciding with this master narrative, as aforementioned, in her findings, Hagatun illustrates that Roma parents being perceived as unwilling to provide official education for their children represents a widespread prejudice that may be translated to a master narrative (Hagatun, 2019). To emphasize cultural explanations to justify why Roma and Romani do not have their kids in school may disclaim the reasons for widespread antiziganism and may contribute to reproducing a narrative that generalizes, creates, and upholds a stereotyped representation of the groups.

Nevertheless, the NOU- report also states that “negative attitudes towards the ethnic group, bullying and harassment in society at large, including at school, can also partly explain a lack of participation in school» (NOU2015, p.98). Yet, the committee does not recognize the correlation between the occurrence of discrimination in different forms and Roma and Romani's history of forced adoption of children and ethnical cleansing that may have led to a fear of the authorities as well as institutions like the school (Rosvoll, Lien, Brustad, 2015, p.108).

In their study, Lauritzen and Nodeland found that cultural differences are widely reproduced as a problem representation within the field of research on Roma and Romani. Furthermore, they emphasize how previous research did not place enough weight on structural features such as socioeconomic issues, discrimination, and their history of oppression, leading to distrust towards society as a whole (Lauritzen & Nodeland, 2018). Their findings correlate with the example from the NOU2015 when the committee states that

“Within the Tater/Romani people's traditional way of living and professional practices (yrkesutøvelse), formal education has not been important. This is connected to the fact that knowledge was transmitted orally between generations, as well as the fact that formal education was previously not so central within a number of the chosen work Tater/ Romani people practised” (NOU 2015 : 7, p.98).

The first sentence points to how Romani differ from the majority and how education has not been considered important to them, which points to a divide between ‘us’ who find education important and ‘them’ who do not (Hall 1997). A further matter is how it is a disclaimer to blame Roma and Romani for their own exclusion. As their traveling lifestyle has been an essential part of their working life, the sentence; *“Within the Tater/Romani people's traditional way of living and professional practices (yrkesutøvelse), formal education has not been important”* points indirectly to how nomadism is used as a reason for their own exclusion, correlating with Lauritzen’s finding in her meta-study, that it is common in international research on Roma and Romani to place due weight on nomadism as the reason for why Roma and Romani are excluded (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 71). Moreover, when the committee hides behind the notion that education is not important for this group, the authorities and the school are exempted from the responsibility of dealing with the serious discrimination that takes place.

Step three of the three-staged approach to Foucaultian discourse analysis suggests a discussion of what the constructs presented in the data achieved. What economic benefits or political utility may derive from their inclusion? Whose interests do they benefit? NOUs are studies published by committees or working groups set up by the government. The purpose of an NOU- report is to investigate an issue and make suggestions for improvement. When the committee comes to the fore that the group itself has a significant degree of the blame for their own exclusion from society, a portion of the responsibility is taken away from the state regarding improving Romani’s situation, and a large share of the responsibility is placed on Romani people themselves.

A reason why the report places responsibility on Romani for their own exclusion may serve as a way to strategically leave it up to the group themselves to integrate more into the systems. Hence, this may imply that to better adapt to the system, Roma and Romani are forced to lower the prioritization of their traditions and core values within their culture. In this way, the ambition to Norwegianize the group may still be a reality, but as a more hidden agenda. Lauritzen points to how education has been used in the past, but also recently, as a way to assimilate the Roma people (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 67). Along these lines, the traditional western school framework may continue to stand in a hegemonic position, where it is implicitly recognized as ‘the right way to educate.’ From a decolonial perspective this position may be recognized as Eurocentric (Eriksen, 2021: Kerr & Andreotti, 2017; Stein, 2016). Furthermore, it may correlate with Hagatun’s point stated above that Romani and Roma are constructed as a problem, and that to be included, they must be assimilated into the system (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25).

A Master discourse related to the theme, “Roma and Romani’s relation to the Norwegian school system,” have now been identified to contain the main emphasis on cultural explanations as the reasons for Roma and Romani’s exclusion from school. How Roma and Romani speak back against this master discourse will be presented now from the excerpts outlined above.

“In both groups there are many who have not completed schooling. Few take higher education. This is, among other things, related to the fact that many from both groups have little trust in the authorities due to history” (Pettersen et al., 2015). Here, Roma and Romani emphasize that their current situation must be understood in terms of history. In her research, Hagatun finds that there seems to be little interconnection between explanations that less traveling has led to more schooling when looking at the Roma community at large (Hagatun, 2019, p. 19). Her findings give greater emphasis to how their situation today must be understood in terms of history instead. Roma were enslaved in Romania for over 500 years, and up to half a million Roma were exterminated during the Holocaust. Additionally, Norwegian authorities made a conscious attempt to exterminate Romani by preventing them from reproducing and assimilating them into society. As to why they have little trust in the authorities due to history must be also seen in connection with the relatively recent past, and the fact that the two minorities have been exposed to genocide. The argument reflected in the quote above, namely relating to the importance of understanding Roma and Romani’s situation today in terms of history, also dismisses the master narrative revealed in the NOU 2015 : 7 and Lauritzen’s finding in her study about the use of cultural explanations as the reasons for Roma and Romani’s exclusion from school. Not placing sufficient emphasis on how history has consequences for them today also disclaims the reason for widespread antiziganism,

which is highlighted in the next excerpt; *“The fear of the authorities makes it difficult for us and for our children to trust politicians and also school and nursery staff. In addition, people from both ethnic groups have been met with prejudice from ‘most people’”* (Pettersen et al., 2015). This statement points out how antiziganism is highly widespread. Furthermore, it is not sufficiently challenged, and hardly mentioned in the Norwegian public sphere, or relevant policy documents, while it remains an integral part of Norwegians’ attitudes. Prejudices towards these groups, along with antiziganism, are therefore allowed to circulate in society relatively undisturbed (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 133). The next paragraph of the excerpt further substantiates these points; *“Many have been bullied and harassed because they are from a traveling family. Being “Tater” or “gypsy” has even been used as hate speech (skjellsord). Many of us and our children have experienced this at school. And many are met with the same attitudes when they apply for a job. It also makes it difficult to thrive and finish school and difficult to enter the labor market”* (Pettersen et al., 2015). Here, the Roma and Romani women further highlight how encountering hate speech/antiziganism makes it hard to finish school and get a job. This points back to the danger of cultural explanations regarding why Roma and Romani do not finish school; they may disclaim the reasons for widespread antiziganism, and may contribute to reproducing a narrative that generalizes, creates, and upholds a stereotyped representation of the groups. Furthermore, the use of these explanations mirrors how the attitudes reflected in society are not that different from what they were during the period of assimilation.

5.2.2 Don’t ask about it

The last part of my selected sample is an episode of an online television series called ‘Ikke spør om det’ / ‘don’t ask about it’ on NRK. I will start by presenting my selected quotation from this sample, followed by explaining the context of this episode, before moving over to present the master narratives and analyze how the narrative shows negotiations with the identified master narrative. This online show invites different marginalized groups in Norwegian society to answer questions people usually do not dare to ask. In the episode I will take into consideration, six Roma are asked these uncomfortable questions. The following quotes are systematically chosen by following the first step in the three-staged approach to Foucaultian discourse analysis, which suggests to identifying the statements in a text that relate to the theme:

“Why do you take your kids out of school?”

The Informant:

“Not everyone takes their kids out of school. Schooling is compulsory in Norway. When my girl started school, I really struggled with the fact that I had to wait until the end of June until she finished school to travel with her. Many times, I regretted putting her in school because traveling is a natural and essential part of our life. Travel is traditional within our culture. When I see the grass and the trees turn green, and the sun comes out, there is something in me that makes me have to get out of the house. I have an urge to get out in the camping wagon, to be outside with other Roma people and my family. Just open the door to the wagon in the morning and get out with my cup of coffee, greet everyone and chat, the children play in the playground, one washes the wagon and one cooks, this is a special feature amongst us” (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21)

CDA, combined with a decolonial perspective, is concerned with exploring why some positions become privileged/taken for granted while others become marginalized through language. To further analyze the question; “why do you take your kids out of school” it may seem convenient to start by considering who is asking this question to whom, from what position, and in what context (Bryman, 2012, p. 538). As stated above, the concept of this program is to ask questions from a majority perspective to the minority in question. In this case, the question was asked from a Norwegian, majority perspective towards the Roma (minority). The question is asked in a way that indicates that there is an underlying assumption in the question, being that Roma people take their children out of school, in relation to the majority, who do not take their children out of school, which points to a divide between “the other” who take their children out of school, and “us” who do not (Hall, 1997). One may argue that there is a norm in Norwegian society, to complete the traditional form of schooling. Furthermore, “us” (the majority) are behaving in accordance with accepted norms and values, that is to say, following the compulsory schooling within the traditional western school framework, while “the other” (Roma) are not acting in accordance with accepted norms and values with taking their children out of school. Hall argues that upholding a construction of “us” and “the other” is a way of structuring the societal order by including those that act in accordance with accepted norms and values, and excluding those who do not (Hall, 1997).

Before analyzing the narrative from the informant, I will continue with the next step in the three-staged approach, namely to identify how the several statements intersect around various discourses relating to the topic, meaning how different statements intersect with various discourses on Roma and Romani’s relation to the school system (Fage-Butler, 2021, p.91). As aforementioned, the show from which this episode is taken from builds on the concept that marginalized groups in

Norwegian society are invited to answer questions people usually do not dare to ask them, which may point to a common prejudice about Norwegian Roma. On this note, the assumption in the question may be identified as belonging to a master narrative related to the topic; Roma and Romani's relation to the school system. The prejudice the master narrative upholds is related to the perception of Roma/ Romani parents as unwilling to provide official education for their children (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). This narrative is present in the literature review, in Hagatun's research, Lauritzen's meta-article, as well as in the research emerging from the NOU 2015 : 7, and may be identified as belonging to a master discourse about Roma and Romani's education. In the NIM report, it appears that 27% and 28% of the population think that Roma and Romani do not want to work and contribute to society. Since education is considered an essential part of the road to entering the labour market and contributing to society, the assumption in the question may be seen in correlation with this prejudice as well (NIM, 2022 p.). Few Roma have indeed finished high school in Norway, but what is not proven to be true is that the reason for this is that Roma take their children out of school. I have now identified the underlying statement in the question and further identified how this statement intersects with various master discourses. On account of this, how the informant answers this question will now be presented and analyzed regarding how she navigates and negotiates the identified master narratives.

Informant 1 starts her answer by stating; "not everyone takes their kids out of school" this sentence points to the fact that she does not recognize nor agree with the assumption in the question. She continues by pointing out that schooling is compulsory in Norway and says "*I really struggled with the fact that I had to wait until the end of June until she finished school to travel with her*" (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21). This may indicate that although it was difficult for her to wait until the end of the semester to travel with her child, she chose to wait for her child to complete the school semester in alignment with the traditional form of education in Norway, at the expense of what she highlights as important within her traditions and culture, as she further describes:

Travel is traditional within our culture. When I see the grass and the trees turn green, and the sun comes out, there is something in me that makes me have to get out of the house. I have an urge to get out in the camping wagon, to be outside with other Roma people and my family. Just open the door to the wagon in the morning and get out with my cup of coffee, greet everyone and chat, the children play in the playground, one washes the wagon and one cooks, this is a special feature amongst us." (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21)

This answer may be understood as a way to take control of the narrative by illustrating what is important for children's development within their culture and way of living, and thus may be understood as a way of talking back against othering (Miller, Liu, Ball, 2020). Furthermore, it may be seen as a step towards what Santos names sociology of emergences, in the sense that she shows agency by turning the narrative around and highlighting core values and practices that are important within Roma culture when it comes to raising children. Santos describes the sociology of emergences as the visibility of other ways of living and knowing that have been produced as absent on the other side of the abyssal line (Santos, 2014, p. 263).

From an outside perspective, as a *gadji/ gadjo* (non roma/romani), one might think that it is expedient that the children are away from school because it is important for the children to be in school. However, the informant explains how her ways of thinking and living are significantly and equally important, which in turn challenges the western traditional stories and perspectives that shape society to open the mind to the perspectives produced as excluded (Fage-Butler, 2021). This perspective may be seen as an example of what Hall means by 'contesting stereotypes'; turning the stereotype against itself, by increasing representation that serves resistance towards the dominant discourse (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, an important aspect is to look at who is considered to be the audience of this episode. As the TV- series is published on NRK- net- TV, the Norwegian states internet channel, the platform is a free streaming site available for everyone in Norway, thus the audience is the whole Norwegian population. This means that how the informant speaks back and operates with resistance towards the dominant discourse has the potential to reach out to a very large amount of the population, and may serve as effective to get people to engage with Roma's perspectives as opposed to the dominant stereotypes about them. Nevertheless, Hall points out that those that hold the master discourses may also think of their perspectives as resistance against the 'different' discourses that minorities may interject (Hall, 1997). There seems to be a fear amongst the people that hold the master discourses in focusing on a particular group, even though in the dominating discourse, there was already a specific group being centred and highlighted, which was presented as neutral and universal. This may be understood as to how it is especially difficult for Roma and Romani to come across with their perspectives and narratives as they have already been excluded from the discourses on themselves, as well as produced as an "other" in relation to the Norwegian population (Hall, 1997). This reasoning is in line with what Santos means by sociology of absences; that a marginalized group are actively made excluded and left out of the monoculture of knowledge and dominant scales due to colonial structures that are present in society (Santos, 2014: (Dale & Robertson, 2004, p. 18). As previously noted, step three of the three-staged approach

to Foucaultian discourse analysis suggests a discussion on what the constructs presented in the data achieve, What economic benefits or political utility may derive from their inclusion? Whose interests do they benefit? The informant negotiates between how she can have her child in school and still be able to give her child an upbringing within their culture. Furthermore, her narrative may benefit Norwegian Roma to better be understood by the majority belonging to the dominant discourses. To better understand the world from a Roma point of view, I will now attempt to emphasize and empower the perspectives of the informant further.

As alluded to above, the informant shows agency in dealing with being placed inside a system where you are not allowed to be who you are. She explains how she is both adapting to the given framework in the Norwegian school system by having her child in school, and giving her child a Roma upbringing in alignment with their traditions and core values. An important aspect is that children's right to education does not have to be synonymous with education within a traditional western school framework. When talking about education, the main concern is often placed on the right *to* education, but what does not get as much attention is the rights *in* education. In this sense, rights in education raise questions around epistemic and cognitive justice (Abeb & Biswas, 2021, p.121). What constitutes the global knowledge order? Which knowledge is to count? Furthermore, what is seen as true knowledge and what is seen as othered knowledge?

A decolonial take on knowledge production recognises that modern/colonial knowledge tends to be proclaimed as universal when it really is Eurocentric, partial and situated albeit perceived as 'the right knowledge' (Eriksen, 2021; Kerr & Andreotti, 2017; Stein, 2016). In this context, a parallel can be drawn between the traditional western school framework, recognized as 'the right way to educate children' compatible with a 'universal form of education', and the way Roma urge to educate their children, are not recognized as the right way to do it. Following Santos's line of thought with the sociology of absences, Roma and Romani's knowledge and traditions get systematically erased by disqualifying them so that the western knowledge system can normalize itself and uphold the monopoly of true and false, by a totality of abyssal thinking (Santos, 2014, p. 119).

Furthermore, following Santos, people belonging to the other side of the abyssal line, Roma and Romani in this context, are produced as nonexistent with their practices, beliefs, and knowledge. With nonexistent, Santos refers to how one is produced as unintelligible, disqualified, rendered invisible, or irreversibly discardable. This is exemplified by how the informant is forced to

negotiate between education for her child and core values and practices that are important within Roma culture. The way the informant places value on the upbringing and cultural education of her child, as well as the effort she undertakes to adjust into the Norwegian school system, is not recognized by the dominant understanding of education and child-raising, but rather perceived as given by the school system and society at large (Hagatun, 2019, p. 19,20). When the way the informant urges to educate her child is not recognized as the right way to do it, her knowledge gets produced as nonexistent. On this note, one hegemonic criterion that may lead to producing Roma and Romani as nonexistent could be the understanding of Norwegian values manifested within the educational system in Norway. Hagatun points out that Norwegian values are perceived to be universal values (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). Hence, Norwegians look at themselves as a nation of equal individuals, whereas “the others” are recognized as those who own the impossible differences (Gressgård, 2007: Hagatun 2019, p. 25). Hagatun argues that the Norwegian school system is portrayed as universally inclusive, while Roma and Romani, or other people that find themselves not wanting to be included on these set premises, are understood to be excluding themselves. Furthermore, on this note, Roma are constructed as a problem unless they do not agree to be assimilated into the system (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). The Foucaultian tradition understands knowledge as a social construct, where what is considered ‘true’ knowledge is constructed on the grounds of unjust power relations (Foucault, 2013). Following Santos' line of thought, when the informant is forced to negotiate the education for her child within the framework of the western school system, she is adapting to a knowledge system that is more beneficial for the majority, where the western knowledge regime stands in a hegemonic position (Santos, 2014, p. 119). This can also be seen in relation to Gramsci's definition of power, described as getting people to think in a way that is more beneficial for a specific group (Lukes, 2004).

6. Discussion of the analyzed narratives and counter-narratives

In the previous sections I analyzed different narratives from Norwegian Roma and Romani, that reveal various approaches to navigating, negotiating and resisting master-discourses. The excerpts from the selected materials indicate that Roma and Romani, to different degrees, express counter-narratives. As mentioned above, I here understand counter-narrative as narratives that turn a stereotype against itself by offering resistance to the dominant cultural narratives (Hall, 1997: Fage-Butler, 2021). Furthermore, my analysis shows that in all the narratives presented, Roma and Romani navigate a position of an "other" (Hall, 1997). Moreover, they navigate this position in

various forms. In fact, the different contexts and formats in which their narratives appear, are crucial to take into account. I will now summarize the various narratives that have been analyzed and further identify possible counter-narratives.

The clearest counter-narratives emerge from the informant in the TV- series "don't ask about it." It is also crucial to emphasize that the format of the series facilitates counter-narratives to emerge in response to the prejudiced questions that are asked in the show. A counter-narrative that emerges clearly from this material is the *counter-narrative that is about insisting on the intrinsic value of the traveling culture*. This counter-narrative emerges clearly when the informant emphasizes how traveling is important for children's development within their culture and way of living. In that way, she shows agency by turning the narrative around and highlighting core values and practices important within Roma culture when raising children (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21). This counter-narrative offers resistance to the identified master discourse *Roma/ Romani parents are perceived as unwilling to provide official education for their children* (Hagatun, 2019, p. 25). Another counter-narrative that emerges from the informant in this material is; *opposition to education within a traditional western school framework as the only good alternative to education*. This is expressed when she illustrates what is considered valuable within their culture. For example, when she says: *"Many times, I regretted putting her in school because traveling is a natural and essential part of our life."* (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21). This statement can be understood as how providing education for her child through a traveling lifestyle may serve as a good education. Hence, education within a traditional western system does not have to be the only way to do it. This may be seen as a step in the direction of what Santos names the *sociology of emergences*, recognizing that the knowledge that emerges from the core values and practices of a traveling lifestyle is significantly and equally important, when it comes to raising children within Roma culture (Santos, 2014, p. 263).

The three remaining narratives deriving from the other materials point to the fact that there is a great focus on stories of oppression and suffering, suggesting that this may take up space in their identity, which is an unavoidable presence in identity work. Nevertheless, there are also approaches to resistance in these narratives. For example, in the narrative emerging from Article 1: "Gina (21) lost her language in foster care: - Went into identity crisis", Gina expresses her sadness related to her identity loss when forcibly separated from her Romaculture. Her narrative emphasizes how it can cause mental harm to separate a child from their culture. Furthermore, in the article "Mother and father in shock - A child of Tater- origins are forcibly adopted away", the narrative emerging

from Line is characterized by how she expresses their experience with encountering racism, assimilation and oppression in their meeting with the child welfare service. This may point to how the parents experience being made absent with not being recognized as good parents. In this sense they may experience the *coloniality of being*, becoming dehumanized as a result of that ethnic affiliation being used as an argument by the child welfare service when their child is forcibly placed in a foster home (Santos 2014; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

In the narrative from the article “We want education and work! | Nine Roma- and Romani women write”, the headline and the content of the excerpts offer an approach to resistance expressing how the Roma and Romani women want education and work. However they illustrate how this is difficult due to a lack of trust in the authorities and institutions like the school. In addition to historical reasons, they experience antiziganism in society today, which leaves them with an experience of being stuck in systems where they are not allowed to be who they are (Pettersen et al., 2015). A follow-up question that becomes relevant to ask is; should anti-racism be about including Roma and Romani into the already established systems? Or should it be about challenging how the established systems frame people in ways that are limiting? This tension is clearly present between the narratives deriving from “We want education and work! | Nine Roma- and Romani women write” and the counter-narrative from “don't ask about it”. In the first article, the stories revolve around a desire to ensure that everyone gets into school and work within the already established systems in Norway. To the contrary, the narrative from “don't ask about it” operates with a counter-narrative more in a direction towards making space for alternative ways of knowing and existing in society that break with established norms and institutions, compatible with the *sociology of emergences* (Santos, 2014). Such as that schooling does not have to take place within the framework of institutionalized Norwegian/Western schooling. This counter-narrative is in line with Santos' take on what the decolonial project desires to promote (Santos, 2014).

7. Summary and concluding remarks

As a reminder, the research questions of this thesis is:

1. What characterizes the stories told by Roma and Romani, in the public mass media discourse?
2. In what ways do the personal narratives of Roma and Romani express experiences of being rendered absent as knowledge producers?

3. In what ways do Roma and Romani negotiate dominant discourses about them through counter-storytelling?

To answer these questions, I have utilized counter-narratives as methodological framing within a decolonial and Foucaultian narrative tradition as an approach to CDA. The aim of this approach has been to shed light on the experiences of Roma and Romani whose stories are mostly omitted. Moreover, my aim was to highlight their voices to illustrate the false dominating narratives about them that create and uphold antiziganism and dehumanizing views (Miller, Liu, Ball, 2020). I have applied the “*sociology of absences*” as a theoretical tool to exert CDA of dominant discourses about Roma and Romani, and I applied the “*sociology of emergences*” to promote their counter-narratives.

Two comprehensive findings that emerged when I collected my data and searched for narratives of Roma and Romani were; 1. There are few narratives emerging from Roma and Romani in the mass media, ergo, their participation in shaping the discourse on themselves is very limited, meaning that they are mostly excluded from the discourses on themselves. Nevertheless, this may also be rooted in that they are not interested in/ not confident in this sphere for identity work, and that they rather have their own preferable arenas. 2. Racism/ antiziganism is constantly addressed in various forms, either explicitly or implicitly, in every space they are given to say something about themselves in the mass-media. This has led me to consider antiziganism as an overall umbrella-theme within this research. And furthermore points to how talking back against antiziganism characterizes the stories told by Roma and Romani, in the public mass media discourse, as an answer referring to question 1. To the contrary, as alluded to above, it might be that they do not want to seek out mass-media, because they rather have other and separate arenas for identity work.

Furthermore, the two most repetitive themes that emerged from their narratives beyond the focus on racism were; that many Roma and Romani are afraid of the child welfare service and the school system, and that many have to constantly navigate and negotiate when encountering the child welfare service, as well as with the school system. Furthermore, one master discourse that is pervasive in both their relationship with the school, as well as their relation with the child welfare service is: *that cultural explanations are used as an argument for considering that their child-rearing is insufficient*. This in turn, creates a clear distinction between us and them, and, as an ultimate consequence, may lead to assimilation. I argue that this builds on an underlying notion that it is better to be Norwegian. Thus, the Norwegian exceptionalism discourse emerges clearly as an

intersecting master discourse Roma and Romani are forced to negotiate with (Eriksen & Stein, 2021).

My literature review revealed that both Roma and Romani are highly represented in the child welfare service (Sviggum, 2023). The large proportion of Roma and Romani children who appear to be under the care of child welfare services also presumably in itself poses a danger of assimilation (Muižnieks, 2015). Moreover, my literature review and analysis revealed that ethnic affiliation is still used as an argument by the child welfare service when Romani children are forcibly placed in foster homes (Øyhovden, 2019: Lauritzen 2022, p. 134). This points to how children are taken from their parents as a result of abyssal thinking in the child welfare service.

My analysis further finds in both of the articles that address adoption that the children in question have been denied access to their native language and culture. These can be seen as examples of how they have been produced as absent with Roma knowledge, beliefs, practices, etc. (Santos 2014, p. 118). It also emerges that education has been used in the past, but also recently, as a way to assimilate the Roma people (Lauritzen, 2018, p. 67). All these findings point to how Roma and Romani are made absent with their ways of knowing and their ways of being in the world through dominant discourses about them (Santos, 2014). In line with what Maldonado-Torres (2007) refers to as the *coloniality of being*. The core of the *coloniality of being* is to deny the humanity of certain bodies. In this sense, Roma and Romani are silenced and made invisible (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

As stated above, the clearest counter-narratives emerge from the informant in the TV-series "don't ask about it," where she brings forth a counter-narrative that is about insisting on the intrinsic value of the traveling culture. Additionally, she provides a counter-narrative that stands in opposition to education within a traditional western school framework as the only good alternative to education (Haugen, 2021 8.03- 9.21). The informant takes ownership of defining what constitutes good education and child-rearing from her perspective, and I have reason to believe that these perspectives have something to offer the understanding of education in the formal traditional system. This may be understood as seeking the coexistence of alternative ways of knowing and scientific knowledge, recognized as the dominant knowledge. This is what Santos means by the sociology of emergences: Placing emphasis on engaging with ways of knowing that have been othered and excluded through abyssal thinking (Santos, 2018: Smith, 2021, p. 270). As previously emphasized, research that engages with, as well as advocates for Roma and Romani's ways of knowing is limited. I, therefore, encourage future research on this theme, specifically in terms of

conducting research focused on the counter-narratives from Roma and Romani's experiences with the child welfare service. Researcher on Roma studies Solvor Lauritzen points out that there is a need for establishing the term antiziganism in Norway, as the racism directed towards Roma and Romani is not sufficiently recognized or named in Norway yet (Lauritzen, 2022, p. 140). A further recommendation for future research could therefore be to conduct a study on how Roma and Romani encounter and experience antiziganism.

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