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**Integration of the Roma into Swedish Society through the Medium of Primary  
Education:**

**The Case of Gothenburg**

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## **Declaration Form**

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the work in the dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

**Signed:** Sayali Patwardhan

**Date:** 27.05.2011

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out whether the Swedish primary education system reflects an effort to integrate the Roma into Swedish society from a human rights perspective. This study compares the situation in law, as stated in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (a Swedish national legislation), and the Swedish national policy on integration and multiculturalism, with the situation of education of the Roma in the city of Gothenburg.

This study investigates two things. The first, is whether municipal officials, school principals and teachers, consider education as a medium of integration of minority communities into mainstream society. And the second is whether these officials, principals and teachers look at the education of the Roma from a human rights perspective.

The scholarly work on the topics of integration of minorities, multiculturalism, segregation, and the role of education and the native language in the process of integration, forms the theoretical background of this study. The data used in this study has been collected in two ways, through documents and interviews. Interviews have been conducted with municipal officials, school principals and teachers. The methodology used to analyse the data is qualitative thematic analysis.

This study shows that in law, there can be seen a clear effort to integrate the Roma into Swedish society from a human rights perspective. However, the ground reality does not in all cases live up to this legal standard, and there are a variety of reasons why the situation is thus. Effectively, the result is that a law having a lot of potential is practically rendered of little use, thereby creating a great discrepancy between human rights in law and human rights in practice.

**Key Words:** Gothenburg, human rights, integration, minorities, minority rights, multiculturalism, primary education, Roma, schools, segregation, Sweden.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CESCR – Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Charter – European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

CoE – Council of Europe

CoM – Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Framework Convention – Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UN – United Nations



# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Formulation of Research Problem

International human rights law provides for the protection of minority rights. This protection is in the form of specific obligations on state parties towards the protection and promotion of the rights of minority groups. In addition to the United Nations (UN) human rights regime which applies to all state parties across the globe, within Europe, there has been developed an independent human rights regime specific to the continent. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Framework Convention) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Charter) are the two main legal instruments which provide for minority rights protection in Europe.

It has been generally accepted that the Roma constitute the single largest as well as the most discriminated minority group in Europe (European Parliament, 2011). The Roma have been recognized as one of the five national minorities in Sweden (Regeringskansliet, 2010), and it has been found that this group is particularly adversely affected by prejudice and discrimination (Riksdagstryckeriet, 2005). Since Sweden is a state party to the Framework Convention and the Charter, it has an obligation to uphold and protect the rights of its Roma population. There has been a discussion around Sweden being a moral superpower (Dahl, 2006), and a country that particularly endorses equality and justice (Runfors, 2009). Sweden has also been a consistently high-ranking country on the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2010). In light of this, Sweden becomes an interesting case to study as to how a country regarded as a well-performing state in the field of human rights, is addressing the rights of the Roma.

The Framework Convention and the Charter establish a firm connection between the integration of national minorities and the protection of their human rights. They make it clear that in order to safeguard the rights of minorities, their integration into mainstream society is essential. They advocate that state parties should have a general integration policy towards their minority populations and should respect the values of cultural pluralism and multilingualism<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Preambles to the Framework Convention and the Charter.

Sweden has a general official policy of integration and multiculturalism (Regeringskansliet, 2009), and with respect to minorities specifically, it has an integrated minorities policy (CoE, 2006). Education has been earmarked as an important medium of integration (Regeringskansliet, 2009), making it clear that Sweden considers education an important channel of integration.

In a modern society like Sweden, the place of education is one of the first institutionalized social spaces that an individual finds herself in during the course of life, when she is still only a child. Therefore, the opportunities that education presents for integration come early on in a person's life. Since not only is education considered an important medium of integration, but also since it is one of the first occasions that arise in a person's life where integration can take place, the education of the Roma in Sweden is selected as the theme in focus for this thesis.

## **1.2 Aim of Study, Research Questions, Delimitations and Expected Outcome**

### **Aim of the Study:**

The aim of the study is to find out whether the Swedish primary education system reflects an effort to integrate the Roma into Swedish society from a human rights perspective.

Note: It was not possible to cover all the levels of education, given the time and word limitations of this study. Therefore, one level of education had to be selected, and primary education is the level selected. A detailed explanation is provided under 1.2.1.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following two research questions:

1. How does the municipality of Gothenburg look at and work with the issue of primary education of the Roma? Does it have an integration perspective? Does it have a human rights perspective?
2. How do the schools in Gothenburg look at and work with the issue of primary education of the Roma? Do they have an integration perspective? Do they have a human rights perspective?

Note: It was not possible to cover all of Sweden, given the time and word limitations of this study. Therefore, one geographical location had to be selected, and Gothenburg is the location selected. A detailed explanation is provided under 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

## Delimitations

### 1.2.1 Level of Education

Given the time and word limitations of this study, it was not possible to cover all the levels in the Swedish education system, starting from preschool up to university. Therefore, one level had to be selected. Primary education is the only obligatory level of education in Sweden. With respect to this level, the Education Act 1985:1100 (Education Act) states that compulsory education is linked to the right to education. Therefore, primary education is the educational level selected. Primary education consists of schooling from grade 1 to 9, where the students' age ranges from years 7 to 16. The municipalities have the main responsibility for primary education with respect to the primary schools within their jurisdiction<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Geographical

Given the time limitation of this study, it was not possible to cover all of Sweden. Therefore, one geographical location had to be selected. Gothenburg is one of the three cities in Sweden having the largest Roma populations, and was therefore selected. Since I was based in Gothenburg during the period of this study, it became easier to collect data.

### 1.2.3 Time Frame

In this study, the interest has been to investigate the current state of affairs. Therefore, the present year 2011 is selected as the time period under consideration.

## Expected Outcome of this Study

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<sup>2</sup>Education Act 1985:1100, a Swedish national legislation

This study will show whether the Swedish primary education system is making an effort to integrate the Roma community into Swedish society from a human rights perspective, in accordance with Sweden's obligations under European minority rights law. This study will make appropriate recommendations according to the findings of the research.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework, Data Collection and Methodology**

#### Theoretical Framework

The scholarly work on integration and multiculturalism with respect to minorities, the role of education and the native language in the process of integration, the types of segregation, and the effects of segregation on marginalized groups, forms the theoretical background used to analyse the data collected. The scholarly work advocates for how integration should take place and what states' responsibilities should be, and points out certain important factors that should be borne in mind when integration is discussed.

#### Data Collection and Methodology

Two methods of data collection have been used in this study, documents and interviews. The documents used are the Framework Convention, the Charter, three documents of *Skolverket*<sup>3</sup>, and the Education Act. Interviews were conducted with municipal officials, school principals and teachers. The methodology used to analyse the data is qualitative thematic analysis.

### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis contains the following chapters in the same order as below.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

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<sup>3</sup>*Skolverket* is the National Agency for Education in Sweden.

This chapter details the theoretical background of this study. It presents the arguments of scholars on the issues of integration, multiculturalism, segregation, education, and the native language in the context of integration of minorities.

### Chapter 3 – Material Discussion and Methodology

This chapter has two parts. The first part describes the data used in this study and the method of data collection. The second part describes the methodology used to analyse the data.

### Chapter 4 – Analysis and Findings

This chapter contains the actual analysis of the data and the findings that emerge from the analysis.

### Chapter 5 – Conclusion, Areas for Further Research, and Recommendations

The last chapter of the thesis has three parts. The first part answers the aim and research questions of this study and reflects on the whole study in general. Reflection on the study and its limitations leads into the second part of the chapter, which presents areas for further research. The last part of the chapter makes recommendations for policy and practice.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this study. The framework used to analyse the data consists of scholarly discussion on the topics of integration of minorities, multiculturalism, segregation, and the place and role of education and the native language in these contexts. The scholarly work informs the study with arguments on how integration should be achieved, what the responsibilities and approach of states should be, the ways in which segregation exists in society, and how it can and should be overcome, the relevance of education as a medium of minorities' integration into mainstream society, and the importance of integration and multiculturalism in an endeavour towards a greater goal - the attainment of justice and equality for all.

The interactions that people have with one another make a deep impact on their identity. People's identities are not singular, they are a combination of multiple identities. A person may be affected by a multitude of influences, ranging from their family to their neighbourhood, through their ethnic group, religion, the fellow citizens of their country, and the universal concept of human rights (Taylor, 1991). Kjeldstadli's (2009) relational model of integration relates closely to the idea of relationships between people having a profound influence on their individual persons. This model looks at individuals as persons who exist in relation to other individuals and the relationships they enter into with them. These relationships may be of a personal, professional, or commercial nature. The model envisages an integrated society where everyone participates, and where there is a high degree of cooperation between people. The basic norm of this model is that people appreciate each other for their differences and similarities, and learn to live with others who have different cultures and traditions. The objective is to include everyone, and to ensure that society does not become segregated.

Taking forward the discussion on integration, Anderson (2010, p.116) states, that in its journey from total segregation to full integration, a society typically travels through four stages. These four stages are:

(1) Formal Desegregation

This stage signifies the cancellation of those laws and practices that impose racial segregation.

## (2) Spatial Integration

Spatial integration can be said to be achieved when a reasonably large number of people belonging to diverse races have equal access to public spaces and facilities.

## (3) Formal Social Integration

This stage has two hallmarks. The first is that people belonging to different racial groups cooperate with one another in the capacity of their respective institutionally-assigned roles in society. The second is that social roles are not racially distinguished, because people from all racial groups play all the roles in society in fairly large numbers.

## (4) Informal Social Integration

In this stage, people belonging to different races go beyond simply cooperating and interacting with one another. They establish social, friendly and even intimate relationships. This is the final stage of integration which all societies must strive to achieve.

Elaborating on the process of integration, Parekh (2000) lays down a few things that ought to be considered as fundamental and inviolable. He asserts that since minorities are an equal part of society like everyone else, it must be accepted that their values and ways of thinking can potentially become those of society. The acceptance of such a possibility creates a space in which change can take place either way. He argues that one way by which it may be argued that something ought to be accepted by everyone, is through the means of interaction and negotiation between the minority and majority groups. The two sides can decide how things should be and can be. However, he warns that in such deliberations, the foundation has to be that *both* (emphasis added) sides need to adapt and change. It cannot be that only one side is required to change, because if that is the case, then such a process cannot be called integration. He states that in case no agreement is reached between the two sides, the state ought to stand up for the values of integration and inclusion, and the most effective way of achieving this, is by working *together with* (emphasis added) the members of the minority group in question, not by forcing them through penalization to accept these values.

The collective model of integration concentrates on the different groups whose integration is being discussed. Therefore, it lies close to Parekh's proposition of interaction between the minority and majority groups in order to achieve integration. The collective model's normative basis is multiculturalism. It regards every culture as equal and having the same rights. It therefore advocates that a state has to take affirmative action to promote the weaker cultures (Kjeldstadli, 2009).

The discussion around the state's duty to promote the weaker cultures brings up the role of education in the process of integration. Education is an important social aspect of inclusion. It equips individuals with the skills needed to participate in the job market, and improves their chances of securing more secure and better-paying jobs (Pihl, 2009). It thus allows them to lead better lives and take advantage of the many things society has to offer. If the necessary things are taken care of, schools can become effective channels of integration, but for this to happen, they must first be regarded as places of empowerment, as propounded by critical pedagogy (Weiler, 1992).

Schools can provide the opportunity to get to know and learn about different people and diversity in society. However, this cannot happen if schools are segregated, meaning that children from different groups attend different schools. If residential areas are segregated along group differences, children from different groups cannot go to school together. Having residential areas that are fragmented, where minority groups live detached from mainstream society, makes it very difficult to have students from the minority groups join schools where most of the students belong to the majority group (Anderson, 2010). Therefore, before schools can be thought of as places of integration, residential areas must first be desegregated.

Once this is done, the next step is to get children from all the different cultural and ethnic groups to attend school together (Kjeldstadli, 2009). Though this is an important step, efforts cannot stop here. This is because having all the children together (spatial integration) does not automatically result in social integration of students, the ultimate aim of integration. Students have to reach a stage where they cooperate with each other, are friendly towards one another, and establish informal relationships (Anderson, 2010). To make this possible, appropriate structural changes in education have to be made, keeping in mind the cultural diversity amongst the student body (Banks and Banks, 1995).



Making the curriculum representative of minority groups, by including knowledge about them, is an important structural change. For instance, the subject of history should discuss the history of minority groups as well (Nieto, 2000). Equally important is the participation of minorities in the creation of the curriculum that concerns minority issues, and affects their interests (Thornberry and Martin Estebanez, 2004). In addition to being a participatory process, this would also ensure that minority perspectives and accounts are presented in the curriculum and become known to all students.

Another important structural change is with respect to mother tongue instruction. Schools must provide for mother tongue instruction, assuming that a group of mother tongue users exists. The decision to provide such language instruction should not depend on the opinions of the members of the weaker cultures, because these may change from time to time, and may also vary from one person to another (Kjeldstadli, 2009).

Finally, we come to the discussion around integration and multiculturalism as tools to attain social justice and equality for all. According to multicultural theory, justice in society cannot be achieved without acknowledging cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 2006). Therefore, cultural diversity needs to be preserved. One scholar argues that since integration promotes justice, there can be no justice without integration (Lægaard, 2010). These two views affirm that both integration and multiculturalism are indispensable for justice to exist.

As forwarded by Calder and Ceva (2010), there are two approaches to achieve social justice, 'difference sensitive' and 'difference blindness'. These approaches assume contrasting positions with respect to cultural diversity. The first approach takes the view that in order to secure true justice for everyone in society, state policies and legislation have to take into account the cultural, social, religious, linguistic, and other differences that exist in society. The second approach states that since everyone is entitled to have the same rights, benefits and opportunities, the same policies and legislation should apply to everyone. Within Europe, the Framework Convention and the Charter provide for special protection of minority groups, taking into consideration their diverse cultures, languages, traditions, and other differences. Therefore, it can be said that European minority rights law is based on multiculturalism and takes the 'difference sensitive' approach to social justice.

Multiculturalism is founded on two basic principles, social equality and participation, and cultural recognition. The first principle states that if social equality is to be achieved, persons belonging to diverse cultures should be able to participate in all the social institutions existing in society, such as education and the job market. In order to have the participation of these distinct groups, two things are needed. The first is to have laws that protect against discrimination, and policies that guarantee equal rights and opportunities. The second is to empower the different groups, by enabling them to acquire cultural and human capital. Cultural capital means skills such as knowing the language of the dominant society, and having knowledge of the dominant culture. Human capital means resources such as education and vocational training, that allow a person to participate in society in a productive manner (Schierup, Hansen and Castles, 2006).

The second principle of multiculturalism is to have respect for differences. This principle acknowledges that in order to be able to continue practising one's own culture, to have protection against discrimination and exclusion, and to be able to enjoy group solidarity, culturally distinct groups need to have social and institutional cultural recognition. The principle states that minority groups should have the right to practice and develop their own culture, language and religion, and form communities and associations with other members of their group<sup>4</sup>.

The arguments and theories of different scholars on integration of minorities into mainstream society, the role of education as a means of empowering minorities and enabling their meaningful participation in society, the effect segregation has on minority groups by further disenfranchising them, and the advantages of having a multicultural approach to achieve social justice and equality, are used to analyse the data in this study.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

## Chapter Three: Material Discussion and Methodology

This chapter contains two parts. The first part describes the data used in this study and the method of data collection. The second part describes the methodology used to analyse the data.

### 3.1. Data Used and Method of Data Collection

In order to gather the necessary data, two methods of data collection have been used, documents and interviews.

#### 3.1.1 Documents

The following documents were collected as data.

##### 1) Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The Framework Convention and the Charter are the two main legal instruments concerning minority rights in Europe. After ratifying these two documents, Sweden recognized the Roma as a national minority (Regeringskansliet, 2010). The discussion about Roma rights in Sweden starts with these two documents. The Framework Convention and the Charter make Sweden responsible for protecting the rights of its minorities and hold it accountable for the implementation of their provisions. Like all state parties, Sweden also has to submit periodic reports to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the situation of minority rights protection within its territory<sup>5</sup>.

##### 2) Documents of *Skolverket*

The Swedish ministry of education is responsible for all matters concerning education in the country. Since integration and multiculturalism form a national policy, and Sweden recognizes education as an important medium of integration (Regeringskansliet, 2009), the ministry is also responsible for ensuring that education is indeed functioning as a channel of minorities' integration. *Skolverket* (National Agency for Education) is an agency under the

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<sup>5</sup>Articles 24 and 25 of the Framework Convention, and Article 15 of the Charter.

ministry of education, responsible for various issues concerning education, such as formulating the school syllabus and curriculum, and providing training programmes for school teachers (Skolverket, 2010a).

The following three documents of *Skolverket* have been used as data:

- I) Compulsory School Syllabuses (Skolverket, 2011a) – primary school curriculum.
- II) *Romer i skolan - en fördjupad studie* (Romany in School – an in-depth study) (Skolverket, 2010b) – a *Skolverket* report.
- III) *Kursplaner och betygskriterier* (Curriculum and Assessment Criteria) (Skolverket, 2011c) – the new primary school curriculum, due to come into force on 1 July, 2011.

### 3) Education Act 1985:1100

The Education Act governs all aspects concerning primary education in Sweden. This Act will cease to be in force on 30 June 2011. It will be replaced by Education Act 2009:25 (new Education Act) on 1 July 2011. Since the new Education Act will come into force after the conclusion of this study, and since it does not contain any provisions that potentially affect the present situation of Roma education, it has not been considered.

### Language Issues with Respect to Certain Documents

Some of the documents used were available only in Swedish. Since I am not fluent in Swedish, this posed a challenge. The documents had to be translated into English before they could be used. Hiring a translator was not possible, given the money constraints I was working within. Therefore, an alternative had to be found. I used Google Translate, the online translation service provided by Google, to translate the documents. The results produced by this service are not always flawless. However, the lack of precision did not prevent understanding the meaning of the text. Further, since this service is an embedded feature on the official website of the City of Gothenburg (Göteborgs Stad, 2011), a Swedish state authority, it increases the legitimacy of using this service.

### 3.1.2 Interviews

This section has five parts: (1) Selection of Interviewees, (2) Preparation of Interviewees Prior to Interviews, (3) Structure of Interviews, (4) Issues with Certain Interviews, and (5) Reflections on Interviews.

#### 1) Selection of Interviewees

Gothenburg is divided into 10 district administrations. The responsibility for primary education is shared by the district administrations and the municipality<sup>6</sup>. In order to answer the research questions of this study, four sets of individuals were interviewed:

- a) municipal officials responsible for human rights, integration, minorities and primary education (MO1, MO2, MO3 and MO4).
- b) district administration (DA) officials responsible for primary education (DO1, DO2, DO3 and DO4).
- c) principals of schools having Roma students (P1, P2 and P3).
- d) teachers in schools having Roma students (T1, T2 and T3).

Details of the interviews and the interviewees are given in the bibliography.

Interviewees were selected using the method of snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008). The contacts of a few municipal officials were obtained from the municipality. These initial contacts provided further contacts of officials and a Roma activist, through whom the contacts of primary schools were obtained. Once the school contacts were obtained, the district administrations the schools are situated within were identified, and the relevant DA officials were contacted.

#### Anonymity of Interviewees

Although none of the interviewees asked to be kept anonymous, I have chosen to keep them anonymous for two reasons:

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

I) The interviewees have been considered strictly as representatives of their official positions. Their responses have been treated as reflective of their organizations' practices. This study is not interested in knowing the personal identities and views of the interviewees.

II) From a human rights perspective, the responses of the interviewees may appear as negative. If the interviewees' identities are disclosed, there is a risk that the 'negative' responses will be interpreted as the interviewees' personal opinions.

## 2) Preparation of Interviewees Prior to Interviews

When the interviewees were contacted, I introduced myself to them, explained to them the topic of this study, its purpose, and the reason I wished to interview them.

## 3) Structure of Interviews

Since the aim of the interviews was to find out the views, perspectives and practices of the interviewees, the interviews were qualitative in nature. Bryman's (2008) guide on qualitative interviewing was used for selecting an appropriate interview structure, creating the interview guides, and preparing for and conducting the interviews. As the focus of research was clear, and there were specific issues that had to be researched, the interviewees were asked questions that were quite specific. Since semi-structured interviewing allows for asking specific questions, while being flexible enough to allow interviews to be guided by the interviewees' responses, taking into account the things they highlight, elaborate on and reflect on, it was the interview structure used.

The two interview guides used for interviews with the officials, principals and teachers, are provided as appendices A and B. Some of the interview questions were standalone questions, since they were directed to investigate specific issues. Other questions were bigger, delving into broader topics, and containing smaller topics within their scope, that were used as pointers. If the interviewees did not address the smaller topics in their responses to the bigger questions, they were requested to do so.

## 4) Issues with Certain Interviews

This section presents four issues that arose with respect to certain interviews:

I) A municipal official working at *Center för Skolutveckling*<sup>7</sup> had time for an interview on a day too close to the submission date of this thesis. Therefore, it was not possible to interview him. An interview with him may have brought up important issues, since his office works on improving school policies and practices.

II) Although an interview was scheduled with DO1 as the only respondent, two of his colleagues (DO2 and DO3) also participated in the interview. Since the three of them supplemented each other's answers, more data could be collected.

III) With respect to interviews with the school teachers, I had no choice regarding which and how many teachers I could interview. The school principals decided the teachers I could talk to. This resulted in a lack of uniformity in the teachers' work profile, i.e. the grades they teach in, the subjects they teach, and their experience with Roma students. Each of the four teachers interviewed teach different subjects and in different grades. Their experience with Roma students varies. Three teachers have some experience, though in varying degrees and in different capacities. One teacher does not have any experience. At times, these factors affected their ability to give useful responses.

IV) On reaching one of the schools for conducting interviews, I learnt that one teacher did not speak English, and that the school had arranged for another teacher to be an interpreter. I informed the interpreter that he should interpret the teacher's responses verbatim. I informed the teacher that he should break up his responses into small parts, so that interpretation could be done accurately. Since both the teacher and the interpreter were very cooperative, this interview was not a big challenge. There were opportunities to seek clarifications on the responses given.

## 5) Reflections on Interviews

All interviews took place in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere without time pressures. The interviewees were approachable. It was easy to ask them questions, including follow-up questions.

## Informants

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<sup>7</sup>Center for School Development, a municipal agency.

Through MO1, Dr. Peter Johansson and Dr. Elisabeth Abiri, contact was established with two Roma activists, Bagir Kwiek (Activist 1) and Thereza Eriksson (Activist 2). These two activists have been the informants in this study. Their views provide some of the perspectives from within the Roma community, used to contextualize the interviewees' responses.

### **3.2. Methodology**

The methodology used to analyse the data collected is thematic qualitative analysis (Seale, 2004; Bryman, 2008). As the aim of this study has been to investigate whether the Swedish primary education system is working towards the integration of the Roma community into Swedish society from a human rights perspective, the study has required the examination of the *way in which* or the *manner in which* state officials, school principals and teachers look at and work with the issue of Roma education. Hence, the research has been of a qualitative nature.

On reading together the Framework Convention, the Charter, the literature available on the topic of this study, the relevant Swedish national laws, the Swedish national policy on integration and multiculturalism, the documents of *Skolverket*, and the interview transcripts, certain themes were identified as being the main issues involved in the process of integration of the Roma community through the medium of education. Although each theme is connected to each one of these sources, some themes emerged more prominently out of some sources, whereas other themes emerged more strongly out of the other sources. The themes of integration, multiculturalism, mother tongue instruction, and the Roma as a national minority, principally emerged out of the Framework Convention and the Charter. The themes of participation of the Roma in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies and school curriculum, and the discussion about the Roma and Roma issues in the curriculum and in the classroom, are issues that mainly arose from the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages 2009:724<sup>8</sup>, the primary school curriculum, and the interviews. Finally, the themes of discrimination, Roma cultural and traditional views on education, segregation, the newly-arrived Roma in Sweden, and the comparative situations in the three schools studied in this thesis, arose from the interviews conducted.

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<sup>8</sup>A Swedish national legislation.



The objective in this study has been to compare the ground reality at the local level, with the legal provisions in the European and Swedish minority rights law. Therefore, the methodology used for analysis has been to study the Framework Convention, the Charter, the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages, the Education Act, the school curriculum, the Swedish policy on integration and multiculturalism, and the scholarly work on the topic of this study on one hand, and the interviewees' responses on the other hand. After studying both sides individually, they have been studied in relation to each other, in order to understand the relationship between the legal provisions and their implementation in practice, and to find out whether the ground reality lives up to the legal provisions. The scholarly literature which contains arguments on how integration should be looked at and worked towards, how integration through the medium of education should take place, the role of the native language in the process of integration, and what the responsibilities of teachers and states are, informs the analysis with advice and suggestions on how better situations for all can and should be created, and with warnings about the things that have to be guarded against.

### Limitations of Using Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Although qualitative thematic analysis has been a useful methodology to use in this study, it has one major limitation. It does not provide a developed and definite technique of analysis, or specific tools that can be used (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, there were no specific guidelines or pointers that could be followed. In this situation, the process of analysis involved two steps. The first consisted of identifying the themes. The second consisted of examining how the issues within these themes were being worked with in actual practice, in comparison to the way they ought to be worked with, according to European and Swedish minority rights law.

## Chapter Four: Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the findings of this study. The process of analysis consisted of examining the provisions for the protection of minority rights in the Framework Convention, the Charter, the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages, the Swedish policy on integration and multiculturalism, and the school curriculum, in contrast to the examination of the real-life situation, as understood through the interviews made. The process of such examination brought up some themes, which are identified as the main issues with respect to integration of the Roma into Swedish society through the medium of primary education. The scholarly work on integration of minorities, multiculturalism, segregation, education and the native language, has been used to provide a deeper and wider context to discuss integration of the Roma. The analysis and findings are presented in this chapter under the different themes which emerged.

### 4.1 Integration and Multiculturalism

Many of the officials interviewed describe integration as a process, and define it with words like “equal participation”, “right to be a part of society”, “know your rights and duties”, “opportunity to develop oneself the way one wants, irrespective of one's background, colour or race”, “understand the society one lives in”, “exchange between people”, “respect each other's differences”, and “be who one is” (MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4 and DO1). One official was proud to say that Gothenburg is an international city, where people from different cultures can live and work together, and that the aim is to achieve integration and multiculturalism (MO2). He and another official (MO1 and MO2) believe that give and take between people is essential, and that integration cannot take place without multiculturalism, because if one culture is upheld as the only one, then there remains no scope for dialogue and exchange. From the way the officials describe integration and multiculturalism, it is clear that they lay stress on mutual understanding and respect between people, the right of every person to be a part of society and participate in it, the right of every person to be the way they are, and that everyone can live together. It can be said that this view of the officials relates very closely to Kjeldstadli's (2009) relational model of integration, which emphasizes the same qualities mentioned above, cooperation and respect between people, and appreciation towards

others who have different cultures and backgrounds. The views of the officials are also in consonance with the principles of integration and multiculturalism, an integral part of the Framework Convention and the Charter.

With respect to integration and education, education is considered an important medium of integration. It provides opportunities to establish social networks with people from other backgrounds, increases the prospects of securing better-paying and skilled jobs, makes it possible to learn about the ways to participate in and influence political decisions, and gives knowledge about other cultures and communities (MO2 and MO3). This shows that the officials' views on education are according to the Swedish national policy on integration, which recognizes education as an important channel of integration (Regeringskansliet, 2009). One official (MO2) indicated that education allows the dominant Swedish society to learn about minority cultures, which helps to reduce prejudice born out of ignorance. The Roma activists spoken to agree with this opinion and therefore feel that it is as important for non-Roma persons to learn about Roma culture and history, as it is for the Roma (Activist 1 and Activist 2).

It has been found that the Roma are a heterogeneous group, and that their group situation varies (Skolverket, 2010b). In the opinion of the officials, this variation in the circumstances of Roma families influences their integration through education. The officials assert that the success of integration depends a lot on the socio-economic conditions of the families (MO4, DO1 and DO4), and believe that it is easier to get Roma children to attend school where their families have a higher social status, and extremely difficult where they have a low social status (DO4). This view of the officials appears to indicate that for them, the factor that affects students' achievement at school is their social and family situation. This perspective, which claims that the home and family environment of students affects their achievement/non-achievement at school, is called the 'nurture' approach. It places the cause of failure on the students' deficient life situation (Darder, 1991). By taking this approach, the burden of integration is moved from the school to the students' family and life situation. Consequently, schools can give the excuse that since the students' family and life circumstances are not conducive, and do not allow the students to benefit from education, not much can be done. Instead of resigning in such a way, and abdicating responsibilities, schools should take into account the difficult socio-economic conditions of the students, and strive to

provide education within that context. For this, Swedish educational policies and practices have to change to become accommodative of the differing socio-economic conditions of students. Only then will the education system truly provide equal opportunities to all students.

## 4.2 Discrimination

Discrimination Act 2008:567<sup>9</sup> forbids all forms of discrimination and provides for remedies to victims (Regeringskansliet, 2011). Thus, it officially makes the state mechanism non-discriminatory. However, even today, fearing discrimination, many Roma do not disclose their Roma identity, and distance themselves from their culture. There are also cases of those who have discontinued speaking their language, and have lost it as a result (MO1, MO2, MO4, Activist 1 and Activist 2). This shows that a lot remains to be done to attain the level of protection against discrimination granted to minorities in Art.6 of the Framework Convention. Sweden must take measures to combat discrimination, and promote Romani Chib (language of the Roma) and Roma culture, so that the language and the culture are not threatened due to the fear of discrimination.

One official (MO2) said that there are many Roma who hide their identity and completely disassociate themselves from their background. These individuals, having left behind their 'Roma-ness' do well for themselves in life, become a part of society, and are accepted into society, but unfortunately, since they do not identify themselves as Roma, and since no one knows them to be Roma, they do not become role models for the community. He said that the Roma need role models, especially the young generation, to be inspired, have hopes and believe that they too can succeed in life. He said that discrimination in society exists in the form of certain individuals, because the state system is non-discriminatory. However, since the experience of discrimination is true for a number of Roma individuals, there is a need to investigate the ways in which the Roma continue to experience discrimination, because as Nieto (2000) argues, discrimination is an institutionalized practice and hence, systems are discriminatory, not simply individuals alone.

## 4.3. Roma Cultural and Traditional Views on Education

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<sup>9</sup>A Swedish national legislation.

Some of the interviewees (MO4, P1, P2 and T4) think that the Roma do not consider education important. Gonzalez (2005) argues that such beliefs are not unusual, because often minority groups are blamed for not having an inclination to achieve academic success in schools, and teachers like to believe that the only factors responsible for students' lack of academic achievement, are their cultural characteristics (Nieto, 2000). However, in the case of the Roma, the matter is not simply one of cultural differences in the way of looking at education and schooling. Among the Roma, there is widespread distrust towards schools and state authorities. This is a result of their long painful history of discrimination, denial of access to education, taking away of Roma children from their families by state agencies, forced sterilization operations performed on Roma women, and similar other treatments meted out to them (Activist 1 and Activist 2).

It is this history that naturally has a deep influence on their present way of thinking and living<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, if integration is genuinely the goal, the approach to Roma education has to take into account their historical background. Educational policies and practices have to be tailored accordingly. However, it has been found that Swedish schools perform worst in the area of adapting teaching methods to the diverse conditions of students (Skolverket, 2010b). One principal (P2) acknowledged that in his school, teachers not adapting their teaching styles to the needs of their students could be a reason for the many difficulties students have with academic work. Therefore, teachers need to acquaint themselves with the backgrounds and cultures of their students (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005). This would help in understanding the diversity among the students, and make it possible for teachers to modify their teaching style so that it becomes relatable and relevant for their students (Ovando, et al., 2006 cited in Scott, et al., 2009, pg.36).

It has been found that a teaching strategy built around the students' culture, which affirms the students' ethnic identity and develops their self-esteem, and a teaching style compatible with the students' way of learning, positively impact the minority students' academic achievement. Another positive effect of such a teaching technique is that it builds a connection between the students' homes and their school (Hernandez Sheets, 1995). In the case of Roma students, such an approach would help to bridge the distance between Roma families and schools. There would be better cooperation between the two sides. Families would feel more secure to

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

send their children to school and to support their education. This would help to tackle the issues of high absenteeism and lack of motivation, considered as big problems (Skolverket, 2010b; MO2, MO4, DO4, P1, P2 and P3). To tackle high absenteeism, there should be collaboration between schools, social service agencies, and child and adolescent psychiatry services. However, it has been found that few municipalities have such facilities in place (Skolverket, 2010b). Having more Roma school staff would also help reduce absenteeism. Further, more Roma staff would serve as more Roma role models, which would help to overcome the third major problem, the lack of Roma role models for the younger generation. Therefore, more Roma should be hired in schools (CESCR, 2008; MO1, MO2, and P1).

#### 4.4 Segregation

Gothenburg is residentially a highly segregated city. Most of the Roma and immigrant communities reside in Bergsjon, Kortedala and Angered, the north-eastern part of the city, whereas areas like Torslanda and Askim have a majority ethnic Swedish population (DO1, DO2, DO3, P1, P2, P3 and T2). In terms of Anderson's (2010) four stages of integration, it can be said that 'spatial integration', the second stage of integration is yet to be achieved in Gothenburg. Spatially, the city is very segregated. Gothenburg is affected by segregation in primary schools also. Primary education in Sweden has become more segregated in recent years. Teachers tend to have higher expectations of students who are Swedish and whose parents have high educational qualifications, and students having similar social backgrounds have a tendency to attend school together (Skolverket, 2009).

Residential segregation has many negative consequences. It increases the possibilities of segregated education and is the primary cause of inequality between groups. The groups that are marginalized are denied access to social contacts, cultural capital, private and state resources, and political participation. Most importantly, segregation augments negative stereotypes about disenfranchised groups and fuels discrimination. (Anderson, 2010). Therefore, in order to tackle prejudice and discrimination, segregation must first be eradicated (Tilly, 2005). Estlund (2003) argues that tackling prejudice and stigmatization are better attainable in formal institutional settings like schools, than through chance social contact in

public spaces, and therefore, efforts need to be made to put an end to segregation in residential areas and in schools. As one principal (P1) said, “In Sweden, 20% of the population is from other countries, then the distribution should be 20% all over, not 98 and 0”. Another important reason why Sweden must strive to put an end to segregation, is that the Swedish educational policy clearly lays down that an important political aim is that schools must aid in reducing the impact of students' social backgrounds on their educational possibilities, and that it is every school's duty to ensure that every student receives equal educational opportunities (Skolverket, 2009).

#### 4.5 Mother Tongue Instruction

The Committee of Experts on the Charter has ascertained that the protection of Romani Chib is linked to the integration of the Roma (CoE, 2005). In accordance with this, the Swedish primary school curriculum includes mother tongue instruction as an integral part of education. It states that knowing the mother tongue helps to forge the personal and cultural identity of students, aids in their emotional and intellectual development, and strengthens their self-esteem, which ultimately enables students to understand their own life situation in a better way (Skolverket, 2011a). According to the Education Act, mother tongue instruction is supposed to be made available to all Roma students, if they so desire. In so far as the law and curriculum are concerned, the provisions for mother tongue instruction respect the Charter and Art.14 of the Framework Convention, which lay down that children from minorities should have the opportunity to study their own language. However, the interviews made present a different picture. One official said that they are able to satisfactorily arrange for mother language classes (MO4), whereas some others said that the situation of mother language classes is not according to the stipulations laid down in the Education Act and the curriculum (DO1, DO2 and DO3). Even in the schools, the situation with respect to mother tongue instruction varies greatly (P1, P2 and P3). Details of the situations in the schools are presented in 4.10. Therefore, it can be seen that though the law and the curriculum provide for mother tongue instruction in unequivocal terms, the reality does not reflect the legal ambition.

Another issue which the interviews brought up was the demand for mother language classes. Two interviewees (MO4 and P3) said that very few Roma students request for mother language classes. One of them (MO4) gave two possible explanations for why this may be so. The first explanation is that Roma students and families fear that if Romani Chib classes are taken, they would get identified as Roma, and may thereby become more vulnerable to discriminatory treatment, and that it is for this reason that they choose not to present themselves as Roma. That the demand for Romani Chib classes is low, means that many Roma children are not learning their own language, are losing touch with it, and are not participating in its development. Discrimination affects all issues concerning the Roma and is a vicious circle. The fear of discrimination is not allowing every member of the minority to participate in the development of their language, and to use it and learn it fearlessly, freedoms which are guaranteed by the Framework Convention. Sweden must make it a national goal to fight discrimination against this minority.

The second explanation provided for the low demand for Romani Chib classes is that since this language has many dialects, it can happen that the dialects of the students and the teacher are different, and if this happens, students are not inclined to take the classes. The Roma activists (Activist 1 and Activist 2) agree that the multiplicity of dialects is a problem, since it may not be possible to find teachers who speak the same dialect as the students. Further, even among the students, more than one dialect may be spoken. In collaboration with Roma individuals, *Skolverket* has recently begun preparing language teaching material in the different dialects in order to address the issue of multiple dialects (Skolverket, 2011b). This is a positive initiative which should continue and also include in its ambit the training of Roma individuals as language teachers.

A third explanation for the low demand for Romani Chib classes was given by an official of *Språkcentrum*<sup>11</sup>. The explanation is that within the Roma community, it is not popular to learn the mother tongue. There are differing opinions within the Roma community, on whether or not children should learn Romani Chib at school. Some think that it is important to learn it, whereas others think that learning the mother tongue is useless, and that children should instead concentrate on learning Swedish, which would help them in getting a job (Activist 1).

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<sup>11</sup>*Språkcentrum* is an agency of the district administration of Lundby. It is responsible for providing mother language teachers to all schools in Gothenburg on a demand-payment basis. *Språkcentrum* was contacted in order to obtain information on Romani Chib classes.



As one scholar argues, that while it may be that persons belonging to minorities learn the language of the mainstream society for economic reasons, schools have a responsibility to preserve minority languages as part of the cultural heritage (Spring, 2009). Bearing this in mind, Sweden must strive to create an atmosphere in which the Roma would not only be fearless, but also would feel proud and eager to learn and develop their language.

As two interviewees and the Roma activists (MO2, P1, Activist 1 and Activist 2) informed, there is a lack of trained and qualified Roma persons who can work as mother language teachers. Therefore, there is an urgent need to educate more Roma individuals so that they can assume the role of teachers. *Agnesbergs folkhögskola*, the only Roma adult school in the country, is an institution that is encouraging its students to become teachers (Activist 2). Eriksson (Activist 2) works at this school. She said that one of the main aims of the school is to educate adult Roma individuals so that they can go on to become teachers, not just language teachers, but regular school teachers.

#### 4.6 Newly-Arrived Roma

There are few Roma residents in the district administration where officials DO1, DO2 and DO3 work, and most of them are recently-arrived refugee families (DO1, DO2 and DO3). One official (DO1) said, “Integration is up to the individuals in most senses”. By “individuals” he meant the Roma refugee families. He elaborated on this statement and said that families are provided with a place to stay and they are supposed to attend the refugee introduction programme, and that beyond this, there are no specific arrangements made. Family members may register at the employment office and participate in a local sports club, and sometimes they may be included in an employment project. About these arrangements he said, “We are not proud of everything we do, but that is how it is done. If you come as a refugee, you take what you get”. He said that though at his office they would like to use European human rights documents to guide their work, they are not sure how they can use them. As there is no political or legal prohibition on using these documents at the local level (DO1, DO2 and DO3), a possibility which would be highly beneficial, is the provision of education and training for local authorities in the use of international legal instruments. The central government or the municipality can work to create and conduct such educational

courses. In this manner, international legal instruments ratified by Sweden could be used by local authorities directly, in addition to the directives in the international documents reaching them through the central government in the form of laws and policies.

In the view of the officials (DO1, DO2 and DO3), integration of Roma children through school has been successful and without problems<sup>12</sup>. They think that it has been a good thing that the refugee families were received in their district administration, an area having mainly ethnic Swedish residents, instead of in some other area like Bergsjon (having mostly immigrant residents), because this has made it easier for the families to mix with and become a part of Swedish society. This reflection of the officials once again points to the segregated nature of the city of Gothenburg.

The officials (DO1, DO2 and DO3) said, that now-a-days the aim is to transfer children from the refugee introduction programme to regular schools as early as possible, so that they get an early opportunity to enter Swedish society. They argued that even if the children are not fluent in Swedish at the time of such a shift, it does not matter, as they can continue learning the language even afterwards. The opinion of one school principal (P2) is diametrically opposite to this view of the officials. This principal said that in his school, due to the insufficiency of resources, it is not possible to let the refugee children complete the introduction programme, and the children have to join the regular school after only 6 months of the introduction programme. Since these children are not fluent in Swedish, they have a lot of difficulties with school work, which causes further problems like losing motivation in studies and confidence in themselves, remaining absent, and not achieving the educational goals laid down in the curriculum. He believes that ideally the children should be able to complete the introduction programme before they join regular school. These two contrasting views on the introduction of refugee children into regular school show the inconsistency in ideology and practice, and the absence of a common policy on this issue. Irrespective of where in the country or in a city refugees are received, the same policy and practices must apply to all of them.

Another point of inconsistency arose when the officials (DO1, DO2, DO3) said that if there were a larger Roma community in their district administration, they could have organized an educational programme for the officials to gain knowledge about Roma culture and issues.

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<sup>12</sup>Since schools in this district administration were not a part of this study, it was not possible to study the actual school situation in this part of the city.

They said that since there are few Roma in their area, they prefer integrating them into the larger system. Such distinction in looking at and treating the issue of integration based on the number of minority community members, goes against the Framework Convention and the Charter, neither of which suggests that differentiated policies and practices should apply to a minority group within the same country. The same policy and practices ought to apply to the Roma throughout Sweden. Merely because they are present in a smaller number in a particular area, does not warrant a differentiated approach. In the present instance, the officials gaining knowledge about the Roma must not be a matter of discretion. Every official in the country must be educated about the Roma and all the national minorities. Only when this is done, will having a national policy of integration and multiculturalism make a real difference in the actual functioning of the state mechanism, thereby acquiring a true meaning. Otherwise, it will be a policy existing only on paper.

#### 4.7 Participation of the Roma in the Development and Monitoring of Educational Policies and School Curriculum

Persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have the right to participate in the national-level decisions concerning the minority they belong to<sup>13</sup>. The participation of minorities is not limited to politics, but includes the larger areas of public and social life. The Framework Convention lays down that minorities should be able to participate in all matters that affect them. With respect to education, there should be participation of minorities in the formulation of the educational curriculum that affects minority interests. And therefore, the absence of such participation would not be in compliance with the Framework Convention (Thornberry and Martin Estebanez, 2004).

The CoM has recommended that in the design, implementation and monitoring of educational policies for the Roma, states should promote the involvement of Roma families and organizations along with school authorities and the ministry of education (CoE: CoM, 2000). A Swedish national legislation lays down that national minorities must be given the opportunity to influence matters that affect them, and as far as possible, the representatives of

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<sup>13</sup>Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992

national minorities must be consulted<sup>14</sup>. Since this legislation does not limit minority participation to particular areas, it can be read so as to include the field of education. Therefore, it can be stated that at the European level and the national level in Sweden, there is a clear guideline that there should be minority participation in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies and school curriculum. In reality however, the situation does not live up to these affirmations. In Sweden, there is no mechanism at the national level or at the local level, through which the Roma can participate in the formulation and monitoring of education policies and school curriculum (MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, DO1, DO4, P1, P2, P3, T1 and T2).

That there are not many educated Roma individuals, is cited as a problem in involving the Roma in these activities (MO2). Although this may be the case, education of the Roma and their involvement in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies have to take place simultaneously, otherwise, states could wait for a long time till a reasonably large number of Roma individuals are educated. Such a strategy would cause unreasonable delay and maintain the status quo. State authorities should begin working with the Roma individuals with whom they already have established contacts.

#### 4.8 Discussion about the Roma and Roma Issues in the Curriculum and in the Classroom

Art.12 of the Framework Convention states that educational curriculum should include knowledge about minorities. The CoM has ascertained that a curriculum must include knowledge about the different cultures, histories and languages of the students, and that it should be relevant to the students' lives and experiences. It has determined that students who do not belong to minority groups should learn about the minorities' cultures, histories and languages (CoE: CoM, 2000). The Swedish primary school curriculum does include knowledge about the national minorities, including the Roma, but it fails to achieve the objective of increasing knowledge and awareness about national minorities among the students. Below is the description of how this happens.

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<sup>14</sup>Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages 2009:724

To indicate what teachers should teach and discuss in class, the curriculum contains phrases like “...have knowledge about the national minorities' cultures, languages, religions and histories” (Skolverket, 2011a). However, such phrases provide only a framework, they do not specify any details. The new curriculum, which will come into force on 1 July 2011, provides some more hints than the current curriculum, but continues to lack details. It contains phrases like “..historical perspective on the Sami and the other national minorities in Sweden” and “what the special status of the minorities means for them in terms of their rights” (Skolverket, 2011c). The word 'Roma', however, does not appear even once in either the current or the new curriculum. Since both curricula lack details, they are incapable of guiding teachers on what exactly they should teach and discuss in class. This makes the curricula open for interpretation and makes it possible for teachers to pick and choose what to teach, according to what they think is important, necessary and appropriate. The paragraphs below describe the consequences of having a curriculum that lacks details.

The primary cause of differences in teaching about the Roma and Roma issues, is the lack of a detailed curriculum. It has been found that though schools have the responsibility to teach about national minorities, they do not always fulfill this duty, and that there are differences in teaching between schools and also within the same school (Skolinspektionen, 2010). It has also been found that in many cases, Roma issues are not discussed at all (The Living History Forum, 2011). *Skolverket* has shown that primary school curriculum is not sufficiently representative of the Roma community, and it urges that necessary changes need to be made in order to ensure that the curriculum includes knowledge and discussion about this minority group (Skolverket, 2010b).

The following accounts of a school teacher (T2) and a principal (P3) show how the lack of a detailed curriculum fails to provide necessary guidance to teachers, which results in the teachers deciding for themselves what they should teach and discuss in class. One teacher (T2) said that in his class, the Roma are discussed in the context of two topics. The first is World War II, where the Roma are discussed as being victims of the Holocaust, and the second is religions of the world, where the Roma are discussed as a group having many religions. He said that besides this, the Roma are not discussed. “The Roma are not a big topic

at the school”, he said. By this he meant that at his school, there is not much debate on the Roma. He reasoned that since this is the case, he does not feel the need to teach about this minority group.

The opinion of this teacher suggests that for him, choosing this topic for classroom discussion depends on whether it is polemic or not. He does not think that Roma issues need to be discussed more, or that the curriculum should contain more information on the Roma. His views present the discussion on Roma issues as a matter of choice, rather than being an integral part of the curriculum. The discussion about the Roma appears as an 'add – on' to the core curriculum, something which can be taught and discussed as and when felt necessary and appropriate. Roma issues come across as a 'frill' to the core curriculum, as something which is not related to the main curriculum, the same way in which multicultural education is often treated (Nieto, 2000, p.14). Including minority issues in the curriculum, or having a multicultural approach to education, should not be looked at piecemeal. As the CoM has advised, minority issues should be made a part and parcel of the basic curriculum, and looked at holistically (CoE, CoM: 2000), because it is only when such an approach is taken, that true and meaningful integration can take place .

The case of the second school: Almost all of the students of this school have foreign nationalities and backgrounds. In addition to the lack of a detailed curriculum being a reason for differences in teaching Roma issues, the account of the school's principal (P3) presents another reason for why this school's teachers do not discuss the Roma and topics related to cultural and ethnic differences in society. The principal said, “Bringing up topics like national minorities and ethnicities is dangerous”. He said that when such topics are brought up in class, the students, and especially the Roma students, become very awkward, and name-calling and teasing among the students begin the moment such topics are introduced by the teacher. He explained that it is to avoid such tense and difficult situations in the classroom, that the school has found a solution in not discussing such topics altogether.

Not discussing topics about differences does not mean that cultural and ethnic differences do not exist in society. In fact, avoiding discussion on these topics means that the school is not carrying out its duty to teach students about and make them aware of the diverse cultures, communities and ethnicities that are a part of society. Since it is true that in the case of this school, discussing such topics is a challenging prospect, such a solution needs to be found that would allow the school to teach about and have discussions about national minorities and other cultures and communities without bringing about tense and hostile situations in the classroom.

Some of the scholarly work on the topic of multicultural education can be looked at for ideas to work out an adequate solution. Some scholars have reasoned that in a multicultural class, where students have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the curriculum should reflect the diversity amongst the student body. They say that such teaching methods should be used that encourage pupils to bring to class their personal, cultural and familial experiences. They reason that doing this would help in spreading knowledge about the different cultures and communities that society is made up of, and that such increase in knowledge would help to reduce prejudice and to boost mutual understanding between students (Kaser & Short, 1998; Greene, 1993; Tatum, 1992; Copenhaver-Johnson, Bowman & Johnson Rietschlin, 2009). Taking cue from these suggestions made by the scholars, a solution for schools could be to teach about not only the national minorities, but also the other communities, cultures and ethnic groups that are present in society. In this way, no particular group would be singled out and students would not feel as though there is something special or peculiar about certain groups. They would understand that society has diverse groups and communities, and that each one is different and should be respected. Importantly, students would feel that discussions are relevant to them and include them.

#### 4.9 Position of the Roma as a National Minority

All the interviewees believe that it is every individual's right to have equal opportunities to education. However, their opinions concerning the education of the Roma are divided, in that some interviewees (MO4, P1, P2, T3 and T4) believe that the Roma enjoy the same rights as everyone else in society, whereas others (MO1, MO2, MO3, DO1, P3 and T1) opine that since the Roma are recognized as a national minority, their position is special vis-a-vis other nationalities and ethnic groups that are not recognized as national minorities, and that therefore, measures that specifically address Roma education have to be taken. Regarding knowledge about European minority rights law, some of the interviewees (MO2, DO1, DO2, DO3, P2, P3 and T1) are aware of the legal instruments, whereas some others (MO3, MO4, DO4, P1, T2, T3 and T4) are not.

One official (DO4) said that he does not have a human rights perspective on the issue of Roma education. He said that his job is to ensure that children attend school regularly and obtain good grades, and that if there are issues such as high absenteeism, dropping out of school, lack of motivation among students, and non-achievement of the educational goals, these are problems that have to be solved. He described his view thus, "I look at it like this, that there is a problem of attendance at school, and the Roma is one group that has low attendance".

By looking at all the responses, it can be seen that there are differences in the level of knowledge about minority rights, and in the human rights perspective on the issue. Differences in perspectives also result in differences in working with the issues. According to the Framework Convention and the Charter, practices should not differ from one place to another within the same country. There should be uniformity in the way in which all state officials look at and work with minority issues. Sweden needs to take measures to develop a uniform national perspective on national minorities which reflects in the practices of state officials across the country. Also, efforts should be made to educate local authorities about European minority rights law.



In the case of the three schools, despite the fact that not all three principals believe that the Roma do not enjoy some special rights vis-a-vis other groups who are not national minorities, the accounts of the principals and the teachers show why in practice, their ways of working with the Roma students do not differ in a significant way. There is one main reason for this. Most of the students (75-99%) studying in the three schools have nationalities and backgrounds other than ethnic Swedish. Issues like high absenteeism, non-achievement of academic goals, and difficulty in having contact and good cooperation with the students' parents, are not applicable only to the Roma students. These are issues which apply to all students in general. And since the schools have to address these issues common to all students, they do not take special measures to address the Roma students as such. As one principal (P1) said, her school does not have the time to concentrate specially on Roma students' issues, because the same issues apply to other students too.

#### 4.10 Comparing the Situations in the Three Schools

Chapter 1 Section 2 of the Education Act states that every school across the country should have an equal standard of education. A few of the officials (MO2, MO4 and DO4) said that the aim of the city government is to achieve more equitable conditions across the city's schools, and that at present, the main issue is precisely this, to create similar conditions. However, it has been found that the conditions across the three schools vary a lot. There are vast differences in the teaching practices concerning Roma students and the teaching of Roma issues. Also, the facilities that the schools have, to support the education of Roma pupils, vary greatly.

The first school has a Roma school assistant (T1) who teaches Romani Chib to the Roma students in the school. He is also responsible for ensuring that Roma children attend school regularly. For this, he visits the students' homes, talks to their families to convince them to send their children to school, and at times when it is felt that some children are likely to

remain absent, he picks up these children from their homes and brings them to school. According to the school's principal (P1), having him has brought about two important positive changes. The first is that the Roma students' attendance has improved. The second is that since this school assistant teaches Romani Chib, it has become possible for the school to provide mother language classes, because earlier, the school was unable to find a mother language teacher and was therefore not in a position to provide these language classes. The school's principal believes that since the school assistant is Roma himself, he is able to reach out to the families in a way the school is not able to. She said that for the school, the school assistant is an important person, because without him, neither would the school be able to get the Roma pupils to attend school, nor would it be able to provide mother language classes.

The case of this school is an example of how mutual understanding improves when the teacher's and the students' cultural background is the same. Sharing a common culture has a positive impact on the students, on their and their families' perception of schooling, and on the students' academic achievements. For all these reasons, there should be more teachers in schools who share the cultural backgrounds of the different students (Nieto, 2000). Going by the positive experience of this school, other schools should follow this example and recruit more Roma school staff. This would help to improve the relations between schools and Roma families, which in turn would better the educational opportunities and the schooling experiences of Roma children.

The second school had a shortage of funds until this year. For this reason, it was not able to provide support to its Roma students. However, this year it has received more funds and therefore plans to start *studiehandledning* (study guide), which would be a project through which Roma students would be able to receive support in Romani Chib for homework, preparations for tests and schoolwork. *Studiehandledling* is a project specific to the school. With respect to mother language classes, this school has a Romani Chib teacher hired through *Språkcentrum* (P2).

The main issue the third school is dealing with, is high absenteeism among its Roma pupils. In order to improve its Roma pupils' attendance, the school started a Roma school coordinator project in collaboration with its district administration in the spring of 2010. This project has been running for one year. The school coordinator's main task is to help improve the Roma pupils' attendance. For this, the coordinator has been visiting the students' homes to try to convince their families to support their children's education and send them to school. According to the school's principal (P3), the project has been largely unsuccessful. He said that the students in his school are in the age group of 14 to 16 years, and that by the time the children reach their teenage years, it is too late to intervene and bring them back to school. He explained that intervention needs to be made when the children are younger. He said that another school, where the same school coordinator project has been running, has had better results than his school, because the students there are younger.

Although the principal feels that the project has not brought any significant positive changes, he also says that efforts like this project need more time to show results, and that more time has to pass before one can say something conclusively. He informed that though his school and the district administration want the project to continue this year, this will not be possible due to a lack of funding. With respect to mother language classes, he said that though the school is in a position to provide mother tongue instruction, none of the Roma students have made a request for mother language classes.

As can be seen, the facilities and capacities of all three schools are different. Two of the schools' principals have also said that a lack of funds is a constraining factor, which has not allowed them to do certain activities that they could have undertaken otherwise. Facilities and capacities across schools need to be brought at an equitable level and necessary efforts need to be made at the national level to ensure that similar conditions prevail all over the country.

#### **4.11 Summary of the Findings of this Study**

## 1) Knowledge about the Roma and European Minority Rights Law

The culture and history of the Roma are not taken into account when educational policies are formulated and when schools and the municipality work with Roma education. Not all of the interviewees are aware of European minority rights law. Educational policies and practices do not reflect the provisions of the Framework Convention and the Charter. This is primarily due to a lack of knowledge among the principals, teachers and the municipal and district administration officials. The main reason for this is the absence of an institutionalized mechanism through which officials and educators can be educated about national minorities, minority rights law, and minority issues. This results in a huge variation in the way in which officials, school principals and teachers look at and work with Roma integration and educational issues. This shows that having ratified the Framework Convention and the Charter, and having established a national policy of integration, does not mean that the principles of integration of national minorities are implemented at the local level.

The solution is not to carry out periodic educational programmes for state officials, school principals and teachers, because it is not the specific interviewees who lack the necessary knowledge and the minority rights perspective which is built on acquiring that knowledge. The interviewees are only representative of the broader spectrum of the officials, principals and teachers in Gothenburg and elsewhere in Sweden. Although the findings of this study are specific to the municipality of Gothenburg and the three schools, it can be said that the condition in Gothenburg would be similar to the conditions in the rest of the country. Therefore, educating specific officials is not the answer. The lack of knowledge is a structural problem and has to be recognized as one.

## 2) Segregation

Segregation is a major cause of inequality and makes the situation of minority communities worse, by denying them several basic opportunities and benefits which they would gain if they had contact with the mainstream society. Gothenburg is a highly segregated city, both in terms of residential areas and schools. Though at the municipal level it is said that Gothenburg is an international city which has a place for everyone to live and work together, segregation impedes this political vision and ideal. Residential segregation fuels segregation in schools and therefore, residential segregation has to be removed.

There is a close connection between discrimination and segregation. Segregation aids in the breeding of prejudice and stigmatization. It keeps a distance between the mainstream society and marginalized communities, and prevents the two sides from getting to know and gaining knowledge about each other. According to Anderson's (2010) stages of integration, it can be said that Gothenburg has passed the first stage of 'formal desegregation', but is yet to fulfill the requirements of the second stage, 'spatial integration'. In order to complete the second stage, residential areas have to have mixed populations of people belonging to different cultural groups, ethnic groups and nationalities. The same has to be done with respect to schools.

### 3) Discrimination

Art.6 of the Framework Convention states that states must strive to combat discrimination against minorities. There is also the Discrimination Act in Sweden, which prohibits discrimination and provides remedies to victims. Despite there being both these legal instruments to combat discrimination, many Roma fear discrimination and as a result hide their Roma identity. Hiding their identity has many adverse consequences for the minority group. First of all, though many Roma do well for themselves in life, they cannot serve as role models for their community since they are not known as and do not identify themselves as Roma. Secondly, although there is a provision for mother language classes in schools, the demand for these classes is very low. Instead of feeling proud of and wanting to speak, learn and perpetuate their language, many Roma families choose not to do so, and do not encourage their children to learn the language at school. This means that many Roma children are not learning their language and are not participating in its development. This also means that as a result, many children are losing contact with their linguistic and cultural roots. Such a situation could become drastic for the future of Romani Chib and the Roma culture.

Since one of the main reasons for many Roma not learning the language is the fear of discrimination, to fight discrimination against the Roma must be made a top priority in Sweden. All efforts should be directed towards eradicating discrimination. In fact, since all issues concerning the Roma are intrinsically connected to discrimination, efforts have to be made on all fronts to tackle discrimination adequately. This has to be achieved via consistent

and simultaneous work in the areas of raising the level of knowledge in society about the Roma, and desegregating housing and education.

#### 4) Educational Policies and School Curriculum

There is no involvement of the Roma in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies. This situation is in violation of the stipulations of the Framework Convention, which provides that minorities should be involved in all matters that affect them. It is also in violation of the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages 2009:724, which states that national minorities should be able to influence matters that affect them, and the recommendations of the CoM, which state that there should be involvement of the Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of educational policies (CoE: CoM, 2000). This situation has to change with immediate effect and the Roma have to be involved in all of these activities.

With respect to formulation of the school curriculum, the situation is the same. There is no involvement of the Roma community. This also has to be changed with immediate effect. As long as there is no involvement of the Roma, the status quo will be maintained. The perspectives, views and accounts of the Roma community will not find a place in the curriculum, meaning that students will not hear the accounts of this minority group. With respect to efforts being made to include the Roma in the preparation of the school curriculum, the work of *Skolverket* in preparing teaching materials in Romani Chib in conjunction with Roma individuals, is a positive and appreciable initiative. However, this initiative is limited to involvement in the preparation of mother language teaching material, not in the preparation of the basic school curriculum as such, and therefore, it is not enough. The example of *Skolverket* should be extended, by involving the Roma in the preparation of the school curriculum that concerns and affects them and their issues.

Another major issue with respect to the curriculum is its structure. The curriculum lays down only a framework. It lacks details, and this has severe consequences for teaching and the dissemination of knowledge. Though the intention of the school curriculum is to teach children and impart to them knowledge about the national minorities, the curriculum fails to achieve this goal. This is a situation where the intention is good, but the result fails to match up to this intention. Therefore, in effect, having a good intention is practically rendered

useless. The lack of a detailed curriculum results in the violation of Art.12 of the Framework Convention, which states that minorities must be discussed in the curriculum. Therefore, if the curriculum is made detailed, it would become possible to comply with this stipulation of the Framework Convention.

A further issue related to education is with respect to having Roma teachers. It has been said that there are not many qualified Roma persons, which makes it difficult to hire them as teachers. In this context, the example of *Agnesbergs folkhögskola* should be followed. More such initiatives of adult schools should be taken up, which would help to decrease the gap between the need for Roma teachers and the supply of Roma teachers.

The situations in the three schools show that many of the problems related to schooling and education are not limited to the Roma, they are problems affecting other groups as well. Many other cultural and ethnic groups and nationalities have the same issues as the Roma. This brings up new dimensions to the issues being studied. These findings suggest that there is a need to improve the possibilities for all groups, whether they are officially recognized as national minorities or not. Just because some groups are not national minorities, does not mean that their issues are less important, or that the state does not have a duty to protect and promote their human rights.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion, Areas for Further Research and Recommendations**

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part presents the conclusion of this study. It answers the aim and the research questions of this study and reflects back on the whole study in general. The reflections on the study and its limitations lead to the second part of this chapter, which presents the areas for further research. The last part of this chapter provides recommendations for policy and practice to improve the current state of affairs.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The aim of this study has been to find out whether the Swedish primary education system reflects an effort to integrate the Roma into Swedish society from a human rights perspective. In order to fulfill this aim, I have answered two research questions. The first research question is: How does the municipality of Gothenburg look at and work with the issue of primary education of the Roma? Does it have an integration perspective? Does it have a human rights perspective? My research has shown that the municipality of Gothenburg does not have a uniform or consistent way of looking at or working with the issue of primary education of the Roma. There are differences in the perspectives of the municipal and district administration officials. On one hand, for some officials, the issue of primary education of the Roma is a human rights issue, and education is an important medium of integration of the Roma into Swedish society. On the other hand, there is a view that primary education of the Roma is merely an issue which needs to be looked at as one within the context of ensuring that all children attend compulsory school and achieve the educational goals set out in the curriculum. With respect to this second perspective, human rights is not a topic that is considered relevant.

The second research question is: How do the schools in Gothenburg look at and work with the issue of primary education of the Roma? Do they have an integration perspective? Do they have a human rights perspective? My research has shown that the schools have an integration perspective on the issue of primary education of the Roma. With respect to a human rights perspective, the opinions of the school principals and teachers are divided. Though all the



principals and teachers believe that it is the right of every child to receive education and to have the same educational opportunities, whether the child be Roma, or of any other nationality, cultural or ethnic background, there is also a view not shared by all, that since the Roma are a national minority in Sweden, they have special rights as compared to other groups and nationalities that are not recognized as national minorities.

Returning to the aim of this study, I would argue that in order to have a human rights perspective on the integration of national minorities through the medium of primary education, and to be able to work in this direction, it is indispensable that those working with the issue of primary education have knowledge about the national minorities and minority rights. However, not all of the individuals responsible have the necessary knowledge, which makes it impossible for them to develop a human rights perspective on the issues of national minorities, and to appreciate what it means in practice for a group which is recognized as a national minority. The lack of knowledge and the resultant lack of perspective means that minority education is not looked at from a minority rights approach, the way it ought to be, according to the Framework Convention and the Charter.

Segregation being one of the first obstacles in the path towards integration, has to be overcome at an initial stage. The highly segregated nature of primary education means that integration through the medium of education is being discussed only *after* children join school, not at the first step itself, which is *when* children join school. It is highly insufficient and consequently much less effective if integration is discussed after children have joined schools. Integration has to be pursued from the first step, at the time when children join school, to ensure that children from minority communities and the mainstream society attend school together. Not tackling segregation means skipping the first step of integration altogether. As a result, integration, which is recognized in the Framework Convention, the Charter, and Swedish national laws and the policy on integration as a prime factor in ensuring the protection and promotion of the human rights of minorities, is not fully explored and applied. Therefore, primary schools do not in the fullest sense reflect an effort to integrate the Roma from a human rights perspective.

This study has shown that segregation and integration issues are not limited to the Roma alone, they are applicable to other groups and communities as well. Therefore, in the domain

of education, as in other areas also, efforts need to be made to integrate all groups, not only the Roma and the other national minorities. For instance, strictly adhering to minority rights law and discussing only the Roma and the other national minorities in the school curriculum and in the classroom, would bring about a negative effect of human rights implementation, because other groups who are affected by similar circumstances as the Roma, are not addressed at all in such a process. Therefore, all groups and communities should be represented in the curriculum and discussed in schools.

Although the groups and communities that are not recognized as national minorities do not have a special protection as the national minorities, it does not mean that a state can shirk away its responsibility to protect their rights and interests. The issues of these groups are as important as those of the national minorities. Therefore, there is a need to take care of the rights and interests of all groups and communities, irrespective of whether they are national minorities or not.

The Roma are not involved in the preparation of educational policies and school curriculum. This shows that Sweden fails to live up to the requirements of the Framework Convention, the Law on National Minorities and National Minority Languages 2009:724, and the recommendations of the CoM (CoE: CoM, 2000) regarding the involvement of the Roma in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies and the school curriculum. This means that this important aspect of integration of the Roma into Swedish society through the medium of primary education is not being fulfilled.

Finally, it can be said that in law, there can be seen an effort to integrate the Roma into Swedish society through the medium of primary education from a human rights perspective. However, this effort is not reflected in actual practice. As a result, though the law has a lot of potential and is appreciable, it does not amount to much.

## **5.2 Areas for Further Research**

This study has had its share of limitations, which have not made it possible to delve into some important issues that came up during the process of data collection and analysis. These are

areas which need to be researched, and are therefore presented here as areas for further research.

1) This study was limited in terms of the geographical area under consideration. A further area of research would be to conduct a similar study in other parts of Sweden in order to get a better idea about the situation across the whole country. Further, such a study would also make it possible to learn about good practice examples which could be replicated all over the country.

2) As this study could not cover all the levels of education, a further area of research would be to study other levels of education. It is especially important to research more about the conditions at the pre-school level, since it is the first level of education in Sweden. It is of importance to study how integration of the Roma from a human rights perspective is looked at and worked with at the pre-school level.

3) The issues related to the newly-arrived Roma refugee families that arose as part of collecting the empirical data, could not be gone into in detail, since the situation of the Roma refugees specifically was not the focus of this study. The case of Roma refugee families is unique, in that not only are they refugees, but are also recognized national minorities in Sweden. Therefore, they are subject to two kinds of protection, that of international and national refugee law, and also minority rights law. The research is important to study if this group is being protected under both types of law that are applicable to them, and how their integration is being dealt with.

4) This study has shown that integration and segregation issues are not limited to the Roma community, but are applicable to other groups and communities as well. Research needs to be made to study how Sweden fares in taking care of the rights and interests of those communities and groups that are not recognized by it as national minorities, and further, to study if a mechanism can be worked out by which the issues of these groups can be dealt with in a similar way as those of national minorities.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This section provides recommendations for practice and policy to improve the protection of human rights of the Roma, and their integration into Swedish society. The recommendations are presented according to the different topics they relate to.

With respect to knowledge about national minorities, European minority rights law, and other nationalities, and cultural and ethnic groups in the country

For state officials

i. There should be instituted a state mechanism that is responsible for educating all the state officials in the country about the national minorities, European minority rights law, and all the other nationalities, and cultural and ethnic groups that are a part of society. This education should contain details about the culture, history, languages, religions and traditions of the national minorities and the other groups. Members of the national minorities and the other groups should be involved in the formulation of the curriculum for this education. The education should also instruct officials on how they should look at and work with the issues that concern the national minorities and other groups. Every time there are changes at the European or at the national level, whether in law or in policy, concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of the national minorities or the other groups, this education should be repeated in order to update the knowledge of the officials.

ii. The individuals who train to become future officials should have as an integral part of their education and training, the knowledge about the national minorities, European minority rights law, and all the other nationalities, and ethnic and cultural groups that are a part of society. The process of formulation of the curriculum for this education, the content of the curriculum, as well as the terms and conditions of this education should be the same as in the case of the education for the individuals who are already working as state officials (as detailed in the paragraph above).

For school principals and teachers

i. There should be instituted a state mechanism that is responsible for educating all school principals and teachers in the country about the national minorities, European minority rights law, and all the other nationalities, and cultural and ethnic groups that are a part of society. This education should contain details about the culture, history, languages, religions and

traditions of the national minorities and the other groups. Members of the national minorities and the other groups should be involved in the formulation of the curriculum for this education. The education should also instruct principals and teachers on how they should look at and work with issues concerning the national minorities and other groups. Every time there are changes at the European or at the national level, whether in law or in policy, concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of the national minorities or the other groups, this education should be repeated in order to update the knowledge of the principals and teachers.

ii. The individuals who study to become school teachers should have as an integral part of their education and training, the knowledge about the national minorities, European minority rights law, and all the other nationalities, and ethnic and cultural groups that are a part of society. The process of formulation of the curriculum for this education, the content of the curriculum, as well as the terms and conditions of this education should be the same as in the case of the education for the individuals who are already working as principals and teachers (as detailed in the paragraph above).

#### With respect to primary school curriculum

The part of the primary school curriculum that discusses national minorities and diversity in society, has to be made detailed. The curriculum should be made in such a way that it leaves no room for any confusion or interpretation regarding what is to be taught. It has to be clear and precise, detailing what exactly is supposed to be taught and discussed by teachers. The curriculum should contain the details not only about the history, culture, languages and religions of the national minorities, but also of the other groups in society that are not officially recognized as national minorities. The curriculum should contain knowledge about all the different groups in society.

The Roma community should be involved in the preparation of the curriculum. Members of the communities and groups that are not recognized as national minorities should also be involved in this process, so that knowledge about these communities and groups also becomes a part of the curriculum.

#### With respect to Roma school staff

There should be a national level policy which directs primary schools to appoint Roma school staff. Even if presently there are not many educated Roma who can become teachers, they can still be recruited in other capacities in schools, including as school assistants and non-teaching staff. In order to have more and more educated Roma individuals and Roma teachers, initiatives such as *Agnesbergs folkhögskola* should be taken up all over the country.

With respect to segregation

The state should work to prevent segregation in cities and towns. For this, it should be ensured that affordable housing options are available in all parts of cities and towns, so that people belonging to all groups and communities are able to afford living in any part. The goal should be to have people belonging to diverse groups to be able to live in any part of cities and towns. When decisions have to be made about providing housing to refugee families and individuals, these persons should be accommodated in different parts of cities and towns, not only in areas that have predominantly immigrant or minority communities. Segregation in schools should also be actively targeted. Schools should have students that represent all the groups and communities in society.

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## Interviewees

### I) Municipal Officials

Pseudonym	Interview Date
MO1	16/03/11
MO2	17/03/11
MO3	05/04/11
MO4	06/04/11

MO1 is a politician. MO2, MO3 and MO4 are bureaucrats.

### II) District Administration Officials

Pseudonym	Interview Date
DO1	24/03/11
DO2	24/03/11
DO3	24/03/11
DO4	02/04/11

DO1, DO2 and DO3 were respondents together for the interview arranged with DO1.

### III) School Principals

Pseudonym	Interview Date
P1	03/03/11
P2	21/03/11

P3	24/03/11
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#### IV) School Teachers

Pseudonym	Interview Date
T1	03/03/11
T2	03/03/11
T3	21/03/11
T4	24/03/11

T1 and T2 are teachers in the school whose vice-principal is P1.

T3 is a teacher in the school whose principal is P2.

T4 is a teacher in the school whose principal is P3.

The interviews took place in the interviewees' places of work.

# Appendices – Interview Guides

## Appendix A

Interview Guide for Interviews with Municipal and District Administration Officials

Your Name:

Your Designation:

1. What is the policy of Sweden towards the Roma?

- Integration, Multiculturalism

2. Define ‘Integration’.

3. What are the means of integration in Sweden?

4. Is education a medium?

- How so?

5. Does the municipality give instructions to district administrations?

6. Does your office give instructions to schools?

- Is this stated in some law / policy / action plan / other document?

- How are schools monitored?

7. Where does your office get instructions from?

- Is this stated in some law / policy / action plan / other document?

8. What is the relationship between your office and the ministry of education?

9. What is the relationship between your office and *Skolverket*?

10. What is the relationship between your office and the/other district administrations?

11. What is the relationship between your office and schools?

12. What are the problems with integration of the Roma through education?

13. Are you aware of European level law on minorities?

- Do you work with this law directly? If not, how does it reach you?

14. Do you have a human rights perspective on the issue of the integration of the Roma through the medium of education?

15. In the design, implementation and monitoring of education policies for the Roma, are the ministry of education, school authorities, Roma families and organizations involved?

## **Appendix B**

### Interview Guide for Interviews with School Principals and Teachers

Name:

Designation:

Name of School:

District Administration:

Grade(s) you teach in:

Subject(s) you teach:

### **General Questions**

1. Are there Roma students in your school?
2. How many Roma students are there?
3. Are there Roma students in the grade(s) you teach in?
4. Do the Roma students study with the other children?
5. Are the Roma students and the other students treated the same?
  - \* Do the Roma students study in a different language?
  - \* Is there any difference with respect to education of the Roma students?

- \* When teachers know that there are Roma students in the class, do they change their conduct in some way: behaviour, language, take any particular care, etc.?
6. Are the Roma students fluent in Swedish?
    - \* Do they speak Swedish at home?
    - \* Which language do they speak at home?
  7. Do the Roma students have any difficulties in learning?
    - \* Causes?
  8. Do they have any difficulties due to language?
  9. How did you find out that they have difficulties?
    - \* By seeing their academic performance?
    - \* You spoke to the student(s) / parents?
    - \* The student(s) / parents told you?
  10. Do the Roma students receive any help from school?
    - \* Details of the help given: e.g. whether extra classes, content of the classes, who is/are the teacher(s), frequency of classes, duration of classes, venue of classes, attendance of students in these classes?
    - \* Is this stated in some place that the school has to provide such help? e.g. in the school's constitution / other document?
    - \* Does your school always fulfill this duty to provide help?
    - \* Are you happy with the facilities for providing help?
    - \* If there is no help provided by the school, why is it so?
    - \* Is there any monitoring to check that schools fulfill the duty to provide help? How does it work?

11. Has the help provided made any difference?

\* Have the students' difficulties reduced?

\* Are they more comfortable with Swedish?

### **Attendance**

12. Do Roma students attend school regularly? Define regularly.

\* If not, why?

\* What is the school's response to the attendance of the Roma students?

\* Is anything done about it? What?

\* If nothing is done about it, why not?

\* Are any efforts made to find out why their attendance is low?

### **Curriculum**

13. Does the curriculum represent the Roma?

\* How does it represent them? Does it have details about their culture, history, traditions, religions, language, etc.?

\* If the curriculum does not represent the Roma, are there any efforts being made to change it?

14. Does the curriculum have anything that is objectionable or discriminatory towards the Roma?

15. Are you aware of European level law on minorities?

16. Do you have a human rights perspective on the issue of education of the Roma?

17. In the design, implementation and monitoring of education policies for the Roma, are the ministry of education, school authorities, Roma families and organizations involved?