


CULTURAL STEREOTYPES AND ROMA PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

The Romani people (gypsy people) come from India, have gone through diasporas and due to the misunderstanding of their history, trajectory and cultural habits, they suffer from social determinants that serve as an aggravation to the health conditions of an individual and an entire group, such as prejudice, exclusion, inequities and invisibility. In search of building cultural competence for the health team and students in the health area. A historical record was prepared from official publications and gray literature, as well as publications by their own voices about the cultural stereotypes experienced, even having repercussions on serious sanitary conditions during the world crisis, the SARS-Cov-2 (Covid 19) pandemic. Activities carried out in primary health care, especially psychosocial care for the gypsy population in urban situations in Rio de Janeiro, were listed, based on existing public policies. The relevance of the work of protecting traditional knowledge of gypsy ethnic origin was highlighted as a strategy to promote mental health and rescue the well-being of this population possessing strong and noble socio-moral, environmental and spiritual values, despite being faced with so many technological advances, in what is conventionally called the "digital age". However, it is inexorably perceived that man has not yet advanced as much as he should in terms of respect for nature, because, with the unbridled advance of environmental damage, even so, we understand that it is still possible to stop them and

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impose on these causes of environmental damage the appropriate legislative mechanisms to put an end to such socio-environmental disorder, for this purpose, in this brief essay, we brought to light a study on the institute of environmental civil liability contained in the Civil Code of 2022, which came into force one year after the law that instituted it, that is: Law No. 10. 406; whose validity of the aforementioned Codex took place from January 11, 2003, therefore, the institute in question completed 21 (twenty-one) years of validity on January 11, 2024, so that it has been a very useful and effective legal tool to combat excesses against nature caused by human action, mitigating the impacts with the application of the guiding environmental principles and corollaries of national environmental law.

Keywords: Protection of traditional gypsy ethnic knowledge, Psychosocial assistance to the urban gypsy population, Invisibility, Inequalities, Public policies.

INTRODUCTION

"To be a gypsy is to be strong in the face of adversity, knowing in advance that nothing is eternal in this life; and this includes the pain that is part of it. [...] It is to contemplate the vastness of the sky and to feel part of it; to look at the horizon of the earth, and to feel oneself walking with it, towards the infinite".
(Guerreiro, Antonio *apud* Costa, 1989).

Cultural stereotypes are preconceived ideas that group people or social groups into categories, standardizing their image and behavior. They are simplified generalizations that can be based on characteristics such as gender, race, age, sexual orientation, among others. Cultural stereotypes can be perpetuated through various means, such as the media, cultural traditions, social constructions, education, and personal experiences (IPHAN, 1989; UNESCO, 2003; PAHO, 2007).

During the First World Romani Congress held in Orpington, near the city of London, England, United Kingdom, between 8 and 12 April 1971, basic criteria were defined for the well-being of these peoples of Roma origin (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2002).

Five subcommittees were created to examine social issues, education, war crimes, language, and culture. Thus, the historic date April 8 officially commemorated the International Day of the Roma Ethnic Group. The word pilgrim itself derives from the word "Rome", the one who pilgrims (Hancock, 2002). The question then posed was translated into the demand to clarify why Roma had to be named Roma (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2002).

Identifying stereotypes and informing cultural aspects to deconstruct cultural stereotypes corresponds to the health education intervention essential for health promotion (WHO - OTTAWA, 1986) through the promotion of a more just, inclusive and sustainable society (Patel et al., 2018; BR, MS, 2015; 2016).

OBJECTIVES

Inform and deconstruct cultural stereotypes to mitigate the impact of prejudice and segregation on mental health.

METHODOLOGY

This is a literature review. The following descriptors were used: gypsies and history, Romani and history, gypsies in Brazil, and Roma in Brazil, using the PUBMed, PAHO, and

VHL platforms. Due to the scarcity of official data, it was also necessary to use theses, dissertations and books.

RESULTS

Historically, the Roma people come from India, having passed through diasporas over the centuries (Vacite, 2016; Vacite et al., 2022). Gypsies exiled from the Iberian Peninsula arrived in Brazil along with Jews and Arabs (De Luna et al., 2021; Borsato et al., 2021).

It is estimated that one million Roma lived in Europe before the war, and that between 200,000 and 500,000 of them were killed by the Germans. The Nazis considered the Roma to be "racially inferior" and in this they had the support of many Germans, not necessarily Nazis, who had social prejudice against that ethnic group. The German authorities subjected them to arbitrary imprisonment, slave labor, and mass murder, in different territories also outside Germany and in concentration camps (USHMM, 2022).

According to an international museum encyclopedia, almost half of the Roma died during the first months of imprisonment, due to lack of food, heating fuel, shelter and adequate medicine. After repeated rapes of imprisoned women, they committed mass exterminations of Roma women in the Auschwitz concentration camp for racial cleansing (USHMM, 2022).

Local Germans repeatedly complained about the camps, demanding the deportation of the Roma imprisoned there, in order to "protect" morality, public health, and safety. The local police used these complaints to officially appeal to SS chief Heinrich Himmler to resume deportations to Eastern Europe. In December 1942, he ordered the deportation of all Roma (USHMM, 2022).

There were exceptions for certain categories, including people of "pure Gypsy blood", as recorded since ancient times, Gypsies who were considered integrated into German society and therefore did not "behave like Gypsies", as well as people and their families who excelled in German military service. Between 5,000 and 15,000 people fit these exemptions, although local authorities often ignored the distinctions during captures. They even seized and deported Roma soldiers who served in the German armed forces, when they were on leave, in their homes (USHMM, 2022).

In general, the German police deported them from the Greater German Reich to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the camp authorities imprisoned them in a special complex

called the "Gypsy family camp." In total, about 23,000 Roma, Sintis and Lalleris were deported there. In the so-called gypsy complex, entire families lived together in tiny spaces (USHMM, 2022).

The poor conditions at the Roma compound at Auschwitz-Birkenau contributed to the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics – typhus, smallpox, and dysentery – which severely reduced the camp's population. SS leaders preferred not to confront the surviving Roma directly. After transferring some 3,000 Roma capable of work to Auschwitz I and other concentration camps in Germany in mid-1944, the SS turned against the remaining 2,898 prisoners, most of whom were sick, elderly, women and children, all murdered in the gas chambers of Birkenau on August 2, a painful event called: Porraimos (USHMM, 2022).

Next, they decided that "pure-blooded" "gypsies" were harmless; the "mestizos", regardless of the percentage of "mixing" of the blood, were dangerous and, therefore, subject to deportation. They were kept as slave laborers, or transported to Poland for forced labor or to be murdered. However, many died earlier, from starvation and brutal treatment by the Nazis and collaborators (USHMM, 2022).

Due to Germany's genetic improvement project, racial separation laws prohibited relations between Germans and "non-Aryans". According to this provision, anyone who had sexual relations with a German man or woman, or who approached them in any other inappropriate way, was punished with death by the Gestapo, which also encouraged civilians to participate in public spectacles of punishment, to serve as an example (USHMM, 2022).

There is a documentary about the ritual of public humiliation of a young couple in the region of annexed Poland, who had allegedly violated racial separation laws. The two paraded through the streets of the city barefoot and with their hands tied. They were forced to wear placards that read: "I am a German traitor" and "I am a Polish pig", having her hair cut, she was forced to set fire to the pile of hair, with the audience ecstatic, for the pleasure of public subjugation and collective oppression authorized and even incited by the executioners (USHMM, 2022).

SS medical researchers assigned to the Auschwitz complex, such as Captain Dr. Josef Mengele, were given permission to choose human guinea pigs from among the prisoners of the Auschwitz complex for pseudoscientific experiments with twins and dwarfs, some of them from the "gypsy family camp." About 3,500 Roma adults and adolescents

were prisoners of other concentration camps for the same purpose, Ravensbrück, Natzweiler-Struthof and Sachsenhausen or in nearby institutes (USHMM, 2022).

Planned, there were three categories of immoral experiments carried out during the Nazi Third Reich. The first was intended to facilitate the survival of the Axis military. At Dachau, doctors from the German air force and the German Experimental Aviation Institution conducted experiments on high-altitude reactions and freezing experiments, using the Roma prisoners as guinea pigs to discover an effective method of treatment for hypothermia. And to test various methods of transforming seawater into drinking water (USHMM, 2022).

The second category of experiments was aimed at developing and testing medicines, as well as methods of treatment for injuries and illnesses that the military and the German occupation team encountered in the camp. In the concentration camps, they tested immunizing agents and serums to prevent and treat contagious diseases such as malaria, typhus, tuberculosis, typhoid, yellow fever and infectious hepatitis, inoculating prisoners with these diseases. The Ravensbrueck camp was the site of cruel experiments on bone grafts, and where they tested the effectiveness of a newly developed drug, sulfa (sulfanilamide), at the expense of prisoners' lives. At Natzweiler and Sachsenhausen, prisoners were subjected to the dangerous phosgene and mustard gases, with the aim of testing possible antidotes (USHMM, 2022).

The third category of "medical" experiments sought to deepen the racial and ideological principles of the Nazi vision. The most infamous were the experiments carried out by Josef Mengele, in Auschwitz, who used twins, children and adults, in an inhuman way, and who also coordinated serological experiments on Roma, as did Werner Fischer, in Sachsenhausen, to determine how the different "races" resisted the various contagious diseases (Roelcke, 2021; USHMM, 2022).

Other disgusting experiments were aimed at facilitating Nazi racial goals, with a series of sterilization experiments, carried out mainly at Auschwitz and Ravensbrueck. There, they tested various methods, with the aim of developing an effective and inexpensive procedure for mass sterilization of Jews, Roma, and other groups considered by the Nazis to be racially or genetically undesirable (Roelcke, 2021; USHMM, 2022).

In Hitler's Monsters, Eric Kurlander analyzes the specific influence of supernatural ideas that rose and the consequences of Nazi ideology. He argues that the invocation and appropriation of esoteric, pseudoscientific, and religious popular beliefs helped Adolf Hitler's

party attract supporters, dehumanize its enemies, and pursue its imperial and racial ambitions. The supernatural imaginary was something integrated into politics and social theories in a much more direct and omnipresent way. Many of these esoteric figures went on to draw political conclusions based on these beliefs. For historian Ondřej Bělíček, these ideas have also taken root in a particular socio-political context that reproduces, if not on the same scale, also in our own present (Kurlander, 2022).

After the war, discrimination against the Roma continued throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The Federal Republic of Germany determined that all measures taken against Roma before 1943 were legitimate official measures against people who committed criminal acts, not the result of a policy driven by racial prejudice. This decision effectively closed the door to restitution to thousands of Roma victims who had been imprisoned, forcibly sterilized and deported without having committed any specific crime. The post-war Bavarian criminal police were tasked with watching over the Nazi regime's research archives, including the register of Roma residents in the Greater German Reich (USHMM, 2022).

It was only in late 1979 that the German West German Bundestag classified the Nazi persecution of the Roma as racially motivated, thus creating eligibility for most Roma to claim compensation for their suffering and losses under the Nazi regime. However, by this time, many of those who had become eligible to receive such payments had already passed away (USHMM, 2022).

The Lebensborn Program, created by Heinrich Himmler, was responsible for the abduction of half a million children throughout Europe. It was hoped that after they went through a process of "Germanization" they would become the next Aryan upper generation (Oelhafen; Tate, 2017).

"Lebensborn was responsible, among other things, for the abduction of foreign children for the purpose of Germanization. [...] Countless Czech, Polish, Yugoslav and Norwegian children were taken from their parents." Denunciation of the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, (Oelhafen; Tate, 2016)

Therefore, during the Nazi period, human qualities disappear (Langer, 2018 *apud* Aleotti, 1972), explaining all the horror perpetrated:

"[...] The Judeo-Christian creed with its ethic of effeminate compassion. If a people wants to become free, it will need [...] hatred, hatred, and, again, hatred. Brutality is respected. [...] The common man only respects brute force and brutality." (Langer, 2018 *apud* Aleotti, 1972)

With this contempt for what is part of humanization, sensitivity, affection or fragility such as pain, aging, solidarity, among others, the well-known jargon was born: "We break..." (everything that is an opponent), clearly expressed in the Hitler Youth Anthem:

"Rusty bones tremble
From the earth in the face of the sacred clash.
Throw away doubts and uncertainties!
By robbery! Win!
There is no more luminous and beautiful goal!
We will tear the world to pieces!
Today Germany belongs to us,
Tomorrow we will conquer the whole earth!"

Hino is Hitler Youth.
(Hans-Otto Borgmann, 1933 *apud* Aleotti, 1972).

This preamble brings the panorama discussed by Professor Douglas Sambati (2018): "The cruelty against the gypsy peoples in Europe was such during the period of the Second World War that, in the language used by a part of the gypsy population, they call the Holocaust Baro Porrajmos, which can be translated as the Great Consummation of human life. According to Ian Hancock, Porrajmos is a very harsh word, which can also mean rape."

In historiography, *Porrajmos* was and still is neglected in general. The mass execution of the Roma would take time to gain visibility. Among the reasons that led to this "forgetting" we can mention the different strategies of genocide that made it difficult to connect the stories, the Roma political-economic strength, which was much inferior to the Jewish one, and, perhaps most relevantly, the denial by the authorities on the victorious side that Roma were targeted because of their ethnic condition (Sambati, 2018).

It was claimed that the Romani population had been targeted because its members were "antisocial", because they were people who lived on the margins of society, surviving on petty crime and using witchcraft; in short, they used any and all other stereotypes that served to socially and culturally disqualify the group as a whole (Sambati, 2018).

The requalification of the memory of the *Porrajmos* at that time owes much to a Romani nationalist movement, which sought – and still seeks – the recognition of the peoples known as gypsies as a population that has its own culture and way of life. It is more of an idea that floats around various social movements, NGOs and government agencies that work against Roma economic and social exclusion and Antigypsyism (Sambati, 2018).

The concept of Roma as a nation is based on a common origin in what is now India, the sharing of a Romani culture and language, and the celebration of the memory of *Porrajmos* (Sambati, 2018).

For all these reasons, during the First World Romani Congress (1971) the green and blue flag of the 1933 conference of the General Association of Gypsies of Romania, embellished with the red sixteen-rayed "chakra", was reaffirmed as the national emblem of the Gypsy people and the song-lament "Djelem, Djelem" (I walked, I walked, which presents, remembers and warns about the Gypsy holocaust by the Nazis) was adopted as the international anthem Rome. As a result, the International Gypsy Committee (1965) was renamed the International Roma Committee (Hancock, 2002; COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2002).

Walked, walked long ways
I met fortunate Roma
Oh, Rome, where do they come from
with the tents and the hungry children?
Oh, Rome, where, rapazes!
He also had a large family
was murdered by the Black Legion
men and women were dismembered
among them also small children.
Oh, Rome, where, rapazes!
Open the dark doors, God,
so that I can see where my people are.
I will walk the paths again
and I will walk with the fortunate Rome.
Oh, Rome, where, rapazes!
Onward, Rome, now is the time,
Come with me, the Roma of the world
Of the dark face and the dark eyes
I like it as much as black grapes
Oh, Rome, where, rapazes!
I walked, I walked!
Hino International Romani. (Jarko Janovic In Andrade Júnior, 2013)

Therefore, the word "Rom" (UN, 1971) came to replace the word "tzigano" used as a pejorative term, thus seeking to avoid the ethnocentric, discriminatory and recurrently adopted view in Gypsyology. Therefore, "gypsy" is a term from outside the Roma culture, an exonym for *Roma* (singular: "*rom* or man"). The endonym "*rom*" was adopted by the "International Romani Union" and the UN (Costa, 1989). In Europe, these peoples, whose historical-geographical origin is Indian, have like the Romani / Romanese, share ethnic identity, and are subdivided into several groups:

- Romnichals, or Gypsies, mainly present in the United Kingdom, including British colonies, the United States and Australia. They are usually goldsmiths.
- Sinti or Manoush, found in Germany, and in German-speaking areas of Italy and France; They work with gold.
- Roma (singular) or Roma (plural) proper, present in east-central Europe (Eastern Europe) and the Balkan countries; from the nineteenth century onwards, also in other European countries and in the Americas. They are usually blacksmiths, artisans, circus performers.
- Caló/Calons, the Gitanos of the Iberian Peninsula, also present in other countries in Europe and America, including Brazil. They are usually artists, artisans, bailiffs.

In Brazil, Roma are found in the following subgroups (Brasil, 2007):

- Kalderash, some still nomads, working in the car trade, while women work in palmistry and cartomancy;
- Macwaia or Matchuai, coming basically from Serbia (former Yugoslavia), live sedentary in large cities, do not identify with gypsy clothing and, for the most part, survive on divinatory art activities.
- Horahane, of Turkish or Arab origin, with activities similar to the Matchuais. They live mainly in Rio de Janeiro and very few are still nomads.
- Lovaria, a group of a few people who engage in trade and horse breeding, are basically sedentary.
- Rudari, also in small numbers, dedicated to the handicrafts of gold and wood. Sedentary, they also live, basically, in Rio de Janeiro.

In Rio de Janeiro, in 1987, the Center for Gypsy Studies (CEC) was founded, the first in Latin America linked to the aforementioned international organizations, which aimed at the social promotion of gypsies and to carry out work of clarification on the gypsy reality in the country through events, lectures, book publications, interviews with newspapers and television programs (Costa, 1989).

In April 1987, the First Week of Gypsy Culture of Latin America took place, promoted at the Casa Rui Barbosa Foundation / Rio de Janeiro with lectures, videos and musical performances about the gypsy people, made by the gypsies themselves. In relation to those with a nomadic life, the CEC worked with the municipalities to free up land for the camps of

the gypsies on the move, also seeking to provide school and health infrastructure (Costa, 1989).

One of the ways for the gypsies to stay united, alive, and with their traditions preserved is the language universally spoken by them, Romani, which is their own and exclusive language. The transmission of teachings is oral, and illiteracy, common among the elderly, does not compromise this transmission of knowledge (Schepis, 1999). Due to the wide geographical dispersion of the subgroups, several dialects have emerged : Shelta, Scottish Cant, Catalan (Martinez, 1989), Chibi (Ferrari, 2010), and others.

Romani is an unwritten language, that is, it is a language without a written form. However, it is sonorous and a word may have more than one meaning according to the intonation. For its perpetuation, Romani relies only on oral transmission from one generation to another, from father to son. Most gypsies do not accept books that teach this language, since they do not even have a defined graphic presentation (Schepis, 1999).

All other teachings and knowledge of Roma culture and tradition depend exclusively on oral transmission. The elders teach the younger ones and children the knowledge of the past, as well as the thought and way of life inherited from the ancestors. Ancestry is present in them and is experienced in their daily lives (Schepis, 1999).

For Roma Roma, freedom and interaction with nature are goods of the highest value and esteem, which motivates them to obey a very strict code of ethics and morals. Nothing is more deceptive than judging them to be wanton, unruly or amoral. His love for his family, for the group and his conscience, which is his right course. Perhaps they were and are the way to preserve and perpetuate their origins and the people themselves (Schepis, 1999).

They are obedient to universal laws, such as not stealing and not killing. When a Gypsy or a Gypsy breaks the law, the Court of Justice or "*Kris-Romani*" is summoned, made up of elderly Gypsies or the most mature of the group, who judge the offenders seeking to exercise their role with the highest sense of responsibility and respect for those who have been at fault. *Kris-Romani* is spoken entirely in Romani, and in it only men can manifest themselves. In the case of the offender being a woman, a man speaks for her bringing his appeals and offering his explanations or justifications (Schepis, 1999).

However, needing to be evaluated in their conduct is a source of great shame for them, who are usually obedient to cultures and traditions (Schepis, 1999). The leaders are aware of the prejudice and discrimination that exist in face-to-face interaction and the

recurrent attempts at humiliation, online disqualification of people of Romani origin, especially aimed at women.

In Romani culture, it is known that in every gypsy clan, it is the elderly who deserve the highest esteem, respect and honor. By the accumulated life experience, they are seen and treated as the holders of wisdom. Their advice is heard by young people and mature adults as the voice of knowledge learned in the practice of life, in everyday life (Schepis, 1999).

Responsible for the oral transmission of traditions, they are considered wise, as "the living past present there". Gypsy tradition dictates that all younger people kiss their hands as a sign of respect. They have a prominent place in festivities and ceremonies, act as counselors and consultants (Schepis, 1999).

"Representatives of the Wisdom and Memory of the group, the elderly are cared for with care and treated with all dignity. This form of treatment makes them remain lucid until the end of their lives, because nothing is more unhealthy for an elderly person, from any society, than to be treated as a remnant, a useless and worthless person, a burden to be carried by the youngest". (Schepis, 1999).

For all these reasons and differences, gypsies are careful to break the barriers that separate them from other peoples, perhaps because they fear that if they open the limits of their camps to "gadjôs or non-gypsies", the mixture of peoples will be inevitable, traditions will lose their purity, customs and habits will be modified, principles and values may be modified in such a way that, gradually, they would end up destroying and killing the gypsy people (Schepis, 1999).

ROMANI PEOPLE IN BRAZIL

Rodrigo Corrêa Teixeira (2008), from the Center for Gypsy Studies of Recife, conducted a study on historical documentation in the period between 1808 and 1903. These almost one hundred years in focus have been investigated due to the primacy given to relations between Roma and the society that sheltered them. It provided a perspective that allowed us to perceive a relatively slow movement of transformation of the images and roles of the gypsies in society. The scarcity of documentation required that the time frames be so extended, because only in this way was it possible to understand certain evolutionary meanings of documentation.

The known documentation indicates that the history of the gypsies in Brazil began in 1574, when the gypsy João Torres, his wife and children were exiled to Brazil, deported

from Portugal, with an order to go to Bahia (Teixeira, 2008). Ramona Torres, who lived in Rio de Janeiro in 2011, reports that gypsies entered through Maranhão and Pernambuco, gradually spreading throughout Brazil. Later, they also worked as pioneers, opening roads throughout the country. Zarco Fernandes, established in Minas Gerais, says that through the bandeirante expeditions they conquered two-thirds of Latin America and actively participated in the cycle of pau-de-tinta - sugarcane - gold - the war of the rags, among others.

Such descriptions reaffirm the description of Teixeira (2008) based on the historical writings of Mello Moraes Filho:

"The crossing with the three existing races was carried out, with the gypsy being the weld that joined the three pieces of casting of the current miscegenation of Brazil". (Moraes Filho *apud* Teixeira, p. 27, 2008).

As for the arts, music is a natural gift of these people and this also includes singing and dancing. Music (and musicality) is integrated into the life of the people. Gypsy dance is considered a bodily expression in its entirety, but beyond that, it is a form of group identity construction, ensuring its communication (Costa, 1989).

"They had the habit of getting together and playing for themselves, reaffirming their culture in many squares, often in Largo do Machado (RJ) and Praça Júlio Mesquita (SP)". (Costa, 1989).

The gypsies express their territoriality as an "archipelago of small territories", that is, they take with them, in their symbols, artifacts, institutions and feelings, a portable space, conquered and domesticated in their own way (Teixeira, 1998, p. 60-1).

They elaborate their identity relationally and intensely, as they affirm similarity based on the deep experience of differences. Therefore, the key word for understanding nomadism, sometimes preferred by them, is "experience" (Fazito, 2006 *apud* Ferrari, 2010).

In order to understand the value of displacement for the construction of the identity and imagination of the gypsy community, we must realize that, in the manner of an "ethnicized" symbol, nomadism constitutes an ambiguous and pervasive element, experienced by the actors in specific contexts, where the structural homology of physical and social spaces is materialized in the asymmetrical relations and discourses of gypsies and non-gypsies. In other words, nomadism is neither a "natural" nor an immutable

category, but socially operative and largely performative in the construction of gypsy identity (Fazito, 2006 *apud* Ferrari, 2010).

The anthropologist from the University of São Paulo (USP), Florência Ferrari (2010) does not understand this as a cultural loss, but a way of surviving (in the face of discrimination).

"In Europe, in practically all countries, Roma are the most discriminated minority (Franz Moonen, 2012).

Florência Ferrari (2010), in her thesis, considered that without losing their particular meanings for the official language of the country in which they live, nor their contrasts in relation to habits, the interpretative spaces are where the true distance between the non-gypsy world and the Calon group studied resides. Therefore, within the same ethnicity, there are differences between groups, mainly due to geographic and social influence.

"We have to understand that they have another way of life, other values. They see themselves as a whole, not as individuals, for example. It is a possible society within ours. For them, the entity that is worth most is the family, not the state or the country." Gypsies adapt to the social condition in which they live, which can modify or make some customs more flexible. There is no static culture, because it is negotiated according to history. An Indian is no less an Indian because he wears slippers. However, defining a term or an expression will still not tell what it is to be a Rom. You have to experience the culture to know what this is." (Ferrari, 2010)

DISCUSSION

The gypsies knew how to subvert almost all the situations that the unfavorable context offered them. They adapted, penetrating the gaps that economic and social dynamics created. Adaptation to survival was the great asset of the gypsy condition. Even though they had an apparently fragile identity, they recreated it in the face of the most disparate circumstances. Survival was the most enduring achievement, the great event, of Gypsy history. That is why Angus Fraser, author of the best historiographical work on gypsies, writes on the first page of his book (Teixeira, 2008):

"When one considers the vicissitudes they encountered, because the story to be told now will be first of all a story of what was done by others to destroy their diversity, one must conclude that their main achievement was to have survived." (Angus Fraser *apud* Teixeira, 2008)

It is not legally allowed to encourage the recrudescence of crimes that have already been judged by the International Tribunal of Nuremberg and considered heinous crimes

against humanity, consequently intolerable in the Magna Law of Brazil (BR, 1988; 1990). Ignorance, lack of care, and lack of sobriety can be supporting factors in the responsibility for unfortunate outcomes, in the case of people who are in a condition of vulnerability and risk (Minayo, 2005; Buss; Pellegrini Filho, 2007; Mello; Gonçalves, 2010; Miguel, 2015) and without conditions to defend themselves in the face of oppressive and media taboos. Depravities about the people are disseminated by hate speech by perverse personalities, dragging the unwary and weak personalities, without discernment, who need to have someone to tell them how to think, not investigating whether they are fallacies to manipulate them or if they are truthful information (Andrade Júnior, 2013).

However, as an unexpected side effect of this type of discourse, the waves that drag in whirlwinds, provoke reflections and positions taken by society itself, which does not allow itself to accept that this happens to any Brazilian citizen, rejecting the fact that it is also subjected to anthropophagy and civilizational regression, as already discussed by Andrade Júnior (2013). It is the malaise of Freudian civilization, or the Lacanian *sinthoma* of segments of society, a malaise that tries to impact different cultural groups due to the difficulty of recognizing the other, of recognizing the autonomy and self-direction of those who are different from them. This has a cost in the humanistic aspect for everyone. Also in the economic and social aspect, since the contemporary capitalist world increasingly adopts the passport with the "digital nomad" identity.

In the country's history, Brazil has already had a president of gypsy ethnicity, Juscelino Kubitschek. In Rio de Janeiro, there is a historical-legislative protagonism, since the Batuli family brought a valuable contribution through public actions that favored the implementation of public policies. The first Romni lawyer of the Hoharano subgroup, Miriam Stanescon Batuli, pointed out about a past that is still very recent, traumatic and alive in the memory of many, Roma and non-Roma (Stanescon, 2007; 2016):

"During the Nazi persecution the horses of the Roma were shot dead and the captured women were sterilized. Their children were brutally taken from their families and handed over to non-Roma families. Names were changed, hence it is not uncommon to find gypsies with non-gypsy names, "Gadjes", some of them even unaware of their Roma origin. A practice that remained in force in Switzerland until 1973". (Stanescon, 2007; 2016).

"Gypsy", on the other hand, is a word without definition in the dictionary and officially does not exist. However, it has meaning; For the gypsies, it is almost a synonym for being alive. It is putting traditions into practice, something that, like most other aspects related to

these peoples, has no consensus. Some say they live gypsiness at home, so as not to suffer prejudice. Others prefer to show it to the world, even though it is a constant challenge. Therefore, the term gypsiness encompasses language, music, dance, clothing, behavior. More than seen, gypsiness can be felt (Queiroz, 2013).

As for perception and sensation, as is well known, dance is born with man. In the caves, he beat his feet and hands to keep warm and communicate. In all civilizations, dancing is done and for various reasons: joy, mourning, honoring gods and chiefs, training warriors, educating citizens (Bogéa, 2002). Gypsies have reports of musical and dance associations with blacks (Ramanush, 2012; Ramanush; Ramanush, 2014). Nicolas Ramanush and Ingrid Ramanush (2014) also reflect on the characterization of the expression "free as a gypsy", as it reproduces non-gypsy Western stereotypes, since this concept "gypsy" does not exist culturally within the Roma groups themselves.

The freedom felt by non-gypsies when they watch the actual performance of the gypsy dance comes from the strength of spirit and cultural understanding with which the gypsy performs the dance. On the other hand, these emotions and expressions are communicated by complex body language, facial expressions and hand gestures. It is a dance that transcends the value of freedom (Ramanush; Ramanush, 2014).

They also point out that the true practices of gypsy dances and music are taught at home, within the family itself and in gypsy communities. The occupation of the gypsy body in the geographical space is very clear, when it moves, during the performance of its domestic and professional activities that require amplitude: when it lands to rest in nature and celebrates through its musicality and its dancing, the emotion of music running through its body (Ramanush; Ramanush, 2014).

"They carry out activities linked to the soil, but many more linked to the ground. And on this ground, the recreation of situations, and the elaboration of the historical trajectory of an entire people".
(Ramanush; Ramanush, 2014).

In the gypsy milieu, differences predominate: language/dialect, religion, housing. However, the Traditions are respected, maintained or adapted. The communities, once very protected, are opening up to the present. Many exchange canvas tents for brick houses, children begin to attend school for longer and, above all, it is the time to be aware of fundamental rights (Queiroz, 2013).

What still persists is prejudice, due to stereotyped ideas and classifications. They cast a foreign gaze on the group that normally does not belong to any of these categories. The reason for the mystery is simple: general ignorance. But now, the gypsies want visibility (Queiroz, 2013).

Following the example of Europe and the world, there is in Brazil, the Institute for the Defense of the Rights of the Gypsy Ethnicity, which intends to bring together Gypsies and non-Gypsies in an ethical and solidary way in the understanding of enforcing the rights and guarantees pertaining to the Gypsy People, wishing to peacefully and legally combat discrimination, prejudice, etc. (Stanescon, 2007). As well as promoting better communication and knowledge about culture, claiming benefits and rights in general. In addition to Gypsies born in Brazil having all the rights guaranteed by the Federal Constitution of 1988 to other Brazilian citizens, as an ethnic minority, other rights are also guaranteed. The gypsy from another country who is naturalized Brazilian or even if he is a foreigner, is supported by Law 6.815 of 8/19/1980 (Stanescon, 2016).

Among several contributions left by this Counselor of the Human Rights Commission of the Brazilian Bar Association in Rio de Janeiro (OAB/RJ), two of them are directly related to psychosocial care to reduce the inequities of its people and to make explicit rights. In a sensitive and insightful way, he guaranteed a space for celebration of Santa Sara and for open-air fraternization between gypsies and non-gypsies (official tourist route of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro); He established the date of Gypsy Day in Brazil; Together with his lawyer daughter, he prepared audiovisual booklets for Roma who are not yet literate or visually impaired: "Human Rights Thematic Rights Booklets: Gypsy People, the right in their hands" (Stanescon, 2016).

Leaving the sphere of historical psychosocial illness, ethnicity and society due to segregation (Amarante, 2010), the most prevalent clinical diseases, in the scarce literature found, are similar to those cited for indigenous people, possibly due to similar socio-cultural-environmental issues (Brasil, 2007; 2015; 2016; Varricchio, 2017).

Therefore, as a common trajectory to the gypsy subgroups, oral tradition and respectful reverence for the elders are identified. Groups, trajectories, and their cultures were even more severely impacted in the Covid19 pandemic and initially more underprivileged than the general population in actions, interventions, and physical and mental health care in the period (Varricchio, 2020).

Thus, the voices of Roma leaders and their representatives in urban territory brought strong clues about how they experienced the phenomenon of the pandemic at the time, and some that seem to perpetuate themselves - as evidenced in national media - with the unspeakable, continuous challenges of invasions and effective protection of peoples' health. Indescribable images of suffering for citizens, committed to the land and nature on which they depend to live in the peripheries. Suffering for their culture, as they preserve the oral history of life (Varricchio, 2020; 2023).

In the approximation of significant contents to these ethnic groups in urban situations, in addition to the challenges and perspectives, interfaces were established in the transdisciplinarity of the health-disease process in collective health (Luz, 2009; Helman, 2009), bioethics of the interethnic and intercultural clinic (Beauchamp; Childress, 2002; Kottow, 2011; Gonçalves et al., 2020), ethnomedicine, and in the sense of in-depth anamnesis addressing the complexity and uniqueness of the individual from an ethnic group, ethnopsychiatry (Varricchio, 2023).

The IBGE pointed out that indigenous people in urban situations corresponded to 38% of its total (IBGE 2010). It is currently higher, but even after the last census (2022) the exact percentage is still not known. Gypsies, on the other hand, corresponded to about 500 thousand to 1 million in Brazil. However, they are also in greater number, unknown. The XIII General Census of Brazil, better known as the 2022 Census, was the 13th census operation carried out in Brazilian territory with difficulties in obtaining data.

Faced with this situation, the Federal Senate (Brasil, 2022) attributed as the main reason for the lack of information about these two peoples, the fear of them being identified, due to the growing stigma, prejudice and segregation. Both ethnicities suffer, but the gypsies are those most impacted by invisibility and inequity. Many Roma groups prefer to remain invisible. Other Roma groups, on the other hand, claim visibility, so that they can conquer public policies and clearly obtain the rights and duties of their people (Brasil, 2022).

As for the variable estimates of their presence, it can be considered that they occur because these peoples are of movement, with a distinct spatial notion and because they belong to the vast forests and peripheries. As for the context of residence in urban, if the conditions are very adverse, they do not hesitate to change. They understand that although they belong to a certain ethnic subgroup, their ethnic representation is of national scope

and, for this reason, can be carried out in any unit of the Federation. In this way, they transit, invisible (Frente pela Vida, 2020; Brazil, 2022).

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ROMA ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN BRAZIL

DEMANDS OF THE COVID19 PANDEMIC: GYPSY VOICES

"To be from a traditional people is to be proud of this ancestry." (Rogeres *In* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

The scars of the pandemic infiltrate Brazil's cultural and geographical pluralities in different ways. The production of hatred, wide open in the pandemic, is fostered by the lack of data and understanding of the peoples who make Brazil Brazil (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

The gypsies brought an immense sense of unprotection in the face of the Covid19 pandemic period. As observed in the interview conducted by Almeida (2022), two years into the pandemic, Roma Roma peoples, thrown into neglect and non-existence, had to create, in the face of yet another threat to life, survival strategies with their own hands.

They are people, peoples, traditional communities that have been screaming for centuries in search of being recognized as people, but who listens to them? Outside of the censuses of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and a complete mapping, the Roma Gypsy population, which has been in the country for more than 400 years, still appears timidly in some official government statistics (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

According to the IBGE's Survey of Basic Municipal Information (MUNIC), nothing is said about sedentary communities – with fixed residence – which are the most numerous. According to information from the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), which brings data from 2018 on the Unified Registry, we have another territorial landscape that indicates that gypsy/Romani peoples are present in all states of the Federation (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

The scenario of access to health during the pandemic period for Roma Roma peoples revealed the neglect that is shown in the precarious relationship between the Public Health System of Brazil and traditional communities. As a result of a wave of dismantling of health, the Secretariat for Strategic and Participatory Management (SGEP), of the Ministry of Health, in force since 2007, was extinguished, it was

responsible for thinking about actions with training and promotion of health education specific to work with each social group, such as gypsy/Romani peoples, quilombolas, rural peoples, of the forest and others (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

In 2013, the Guide to Public Policies for Gypsy Peoples was launched, coordinated by the Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR), under the management of Luiza Bairos, a black woman. Through this guide, Roma people were included as a group of attention, not only to affirmative action, but also to the quota policy and fair health policies. Such legal frameworks were ignored in these two years of the pandemic (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Thrown into historical oblivion, the Roma population, in the months of March and April 2020, suffered the reinforcement of stereotypes. By imposing, once again, the racist, gypsophobic and contempt for plurality vision rooted in the history of Brazil, several families in the south of the country were expelled from their camps for being taxed as vectors of transmission of Covid-19. In this confrontation, Roma gypsy associations, research groups, activists and researchers published a public note repudiating the act, which directly violates human rights (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Marcilânia Alcântara, a Calin gypsy, a basic education teacher in the municipality of Sousa, Paraíba, counselor at the National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality (CONAPIR) and member of the Gypsy Collective, points out: "There was a time when everything closed, there were decrees and this caused the community to go through a lot of suffocation on this issue of the basics, which is food. We ourselves in the community helped each other" (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

"If we were already invisible to society, with the pandemic we became even more invisible, because the focus was directed to the virus and it is as if the Roma population did not even exist.
[...] There were many looks of contempt and a lack of attention to customs."
(Alcântara *In* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Far from the city center, the community of Sousa has no basic sanitation and access to water is very scarce. If washing your hands means, rather, having access to water continuously, as a way to prevent Covid-19, in Sousa, where water arrives once a week, such a need is disputed. Every time the water arrives, it is stored for use in the next few days, which generates another aggravating factor: the proliferation of Dengue (Alcântara *apud* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

As it is a traditional community, with its own customs, they were left unassisted without directed work on prevention and what this virus really was. It was the gypsy/Romani youth themselves who organized themselves and carried out this work from house to house, advising, especially, on the social isolation of older people, a cultural challenge (Alcântara *apud* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

"It is a very united and united people, with a lot of love and affection".
(Alcântara *In* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

The teacher points out when remembering how much common living, the viola circles and the dynamic joy of the community were affected:

"We had many cases of covid.
And another thing I saw was mental health, because we are always together and suddenly everyone stayed in their homes, there was no longer that issue of talking, sharing the day to day, and it greatly harmed the health of young people and children". (Alcântara *In* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

The mourning ritual has also been changed:

"[...] Without the possibility of collective farewell, something that was previously carried out for a few days, this tradition started to be done quickly and out of customs".
(Alcântara *In* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Respect for tradition is, historically, a barrier when it comes to health. The effectiveness of the specific plan of care for the Roma population, which already exists as a National Policy for Comprehensive Health Care for the Roma Roma People by the SUS, still fails when it adapts to how the communities are culturally organized. Points taken into account by the guidance of the Secretariat of Primary Health Care, which also aim at the performance of the SUS in reducing and combating Romaniphobia (Alcântara *apud* Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Journalist Calon, Professor in Information and Communication in Health Aluísio de Azevedo, advisor for Science and Communication of the State Association of Gypsy Ethnicities of Mato Grosso (AEEC-MT) says that, guided by the oral memory of his family, the vast majority of Roma Roma came from Egypt, then arrived in Turkey, Europe, around 1,200 – 1,300 and in Portugal in 1,400 – 1,500. Then they dispersed in several migratory waves around the world. One of these migratory causes was the Nazi

massacre that killed about 500 thousand Roma gypsies in concentration camps (Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022; USHMM, 2022).

"It's a painful memory, a memory that has been broken."
(In Almeida; De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

Most came exiled from Portugal, many arrived in the galleys – slave labor – and arriving here they already had orders such as: do not let the language speak, do not let it be in packs, do not let luck be read. When you see, for example, "profanity", the Portuguese mean that they were words in Calon. They are calling the gypsy language profanity. In Brazil, Sintó, Romanese and Chibi or Caló circulate, languages that adapt to the needs of each people, but always linked to the importance of maintaining the millennial oral culture. With no documented historical record in writing, the Romani gypsy diaspora crosses the millennia until it arrived in 1574 in the northeast of Brazil (De Azevedo *apud* Almeida; AEEC, 2022):

Each community present in Brazil - Calon, Sinti, Roma - is organized differently, with languages taken as agraphs and used among relatives. With festivities, skills and perceptions of the world pertinent to each cultural practice, whether in its itinerant, sedentary or semi-nomadic form, which expresses the gypsy/Romani plurality and their ways of life (De Azevedo, Almeida *In* AEEC, 2022).

"The whole process of racism and violence towards communities and their knowledge affects the self-esteem of youth. In traditional communities, in general, the rate of depression is very high, especially among young people. Because he is faced with a tradition that is being threatened all the time, in the face of the exclusion of a society that does not accept it, and there this young person is at this crossroads." (De Azevedo; AEEC, 2022).

For these Romani communicators, keeping the tradition of Roma peoples alive and moving is also a way of taking care of the health of this population (De Azevedo, Almeida *In* AEEC, 2022).

"It is the traditional peoples who are going to save the world, because they are the ones who can have a harmonious interaction with nature."
(De Azevedo; Almeida; AEEC, 2022).

LIMITS

Due to the scarcity of official sources publishing on the historicity of the theme, it was also necessary to resort to gray literature.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The present review study contributed to the decolonization of education in general and to mitigate the social violence expressed through information from gypsy voices and scholars in the area in Brazil through the maintenance of stereotypes, prejudice and segregation, structured in Brazilian society (Lima; Flair; Santos, 2016; Ianni, 2016), as a strategy to promote mental health in a psychosocial care mode (Varricchio, 2020; 2023).

CONCLUSION

The present review was presented here as a proposal based on the Humanization and Psychosocial Care Policy (BR, MS, 2014) through health education in mental health, also to health teams, building cultural competence, aiming at mitigating this psychic and moral suffering triggered by this lament among Roma families, at a global level, maintaining the memory of segregation and history of persecution by the Anthem, psychic pain very present in the gypsies with whom we had contact in Rio de Janeiro.

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