

# ‘Neither bloody persecution nor well intended civilizing missions changed their nature or their number’: A Postcolonial Approach to Protestant ‘Zigeuner’ Missionary Efforts

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## Abstract

Christian missionaries played a major role in the process of Othering Sinti and Roma. This “Other” was – like the colonial subject – mainly viewed as primitive, uncivilized, superstitious, and heathen. From the early nineteenth century, Protestant missions were established in Germany to “civilize” and educate Sinti and Roma. This paper takes a critical stance on these Protestant missionary efforts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, highlighting the relevance of postcolonial studies for Romani studies. Firstly, I outline interconnections between stereotypes related to *Zigeuner* in the colonial metropole and “primitives” in the peripheral areas, which is then followed by an analysis of Protestant views on these two subordinate groups and the ways in which knowledge was transferred between Protestant missionaries across time and space. Finally, this analysis is followed by a methodological reflection on the benefits and limitations of postcolonial studies for critical Romani studies.

## Keywords

- Antigypsyism
- Colonialism
- Colonized
- Mission
- Protestantism
- Post-colonialism

## Introduction

This article contributes to broader discussions about how to bring perspectives from postcolonial studies to bear on issues pertaining to minorities and their relation to the majority.<sup>[1]</sup> By viewing the relation between Protestant *Zigeuner*<sup>[2]</sup> missionaries and Sinti and Roma through the prism of postcolonial studies, we are able to perceive how spheres of contact are reciprocal, rather than focusing only on the influence of the majority on the minority.<sup>[3][4]</sup> Metropole and periphery can thus be seen as existing in a state of entanglement. In 1978, the literary critic Edward W. Said published *Orientalism*, which is regarded as the foundational study in a diverse research approach called postcolonial studies. Employing Foucauldian discourse analysis and his own notion of the interrelation between knowledge and power, Said describes how dominant cultures, such as Western colonizers, represent and construct subordinate cultures, and thereby manifest relative power positions. Said argues that the “Orient” was not solely imaginary but also became an integral part of European material civilization and culture, such as through the creation of specific institutions, vocabularies, and bureaucracies (Castro Varela and Dhawan, 2015: 97). He concludes that “Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1979: 3). In German research on antigypsyism, similar strategies can be observed when analyzing this phenomenon (End, 2016; Maciejewski, 1994; 1996). The literary scholar Klaus-Michael Bogdal has clearly demonstrated that from the period of the European Enlightenment onwards, the discursive representation of *Zigeuner* evidenced striking similarities to the construction of the colonial Other (Bogdal, 2014: 148–174). Furthermore, Yvonne Robel has already produced a methodological reflection on the benefits of postcolonial and critical whiteness studies for research on antigypsyism (Robel, 2015).

The novel approach of this article is its specific focus on Protestant missionaries, who participated in colonial encounters on the African continent or in the social and geographic peripheries of their home countries, where they also conducted *Zigeuner* missions.<sup>[5]</sup> By focusing on this group of agents,

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1. The quote in the title is taken from a theological pocket dictionary from 1962. The German original entry on “Zigeuner” reads: “Weder blutige Verfolgung noch wohlgemeinte Gesittungsbestrebungen haben ihr Wesen verändern noch ihre Zahl vermindern können.” (N.a., Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Gegenwart, “Zigeuner”). I thank Dr. Frank Reuter, Ben Robbins, Nadine Blumer, and Elisabeth Luy for the constructive feedback on this paper.

2. The term “Zigeuner” is used here as a historical term that the majority of society used and still uses in German language to construct a group of Others and project stereotypes onto them. This constructed group does not align with the diverse groups of Sinti and Roma. The German term “Zigeuner” was chosen over the English term “gypsy” because of different connotations and implications in different regional contexts, as was discussed at the conference Critical Romani Studies.

3. The focus of this paper is on Protestant missionaries. There were also, of course, Catholic missionaries, in relation to which the research perspectives I present here could be enriching.

4. Yvonne Robel has already engaged in a similar reflection; her focus was not only on postcolonial studies but also critical whiteness studies. She conducted a general analysis of these research perspectives and their possible contributions to studies of antigypsyism, but she did not focus on specific groups of knowledge brokers and agents within colonial settings. See Robel, 2015.

5. In general, research on Protestantism and antigypsyism is very patchy and more empirical research needs to be conducted. See Meier, 2017.

striking similarities between the mechanism of Othering Sinti and Roma and colonial subjects become evident. This comparison also highlights what was distinct about the Protestant *Zigeuner* missions and the processes of Othering Sinti and Roma. Furthermore, this analysis reveals that these agents acted in a global discursive<sup>[6]</sup> and personal network, and were often familiar with missionary practices in the colonies, as well as in the peripheries of their home countries.

## 1. The Processes of Othering *Zigeuner* as *homines educandi*

One of the major points of relation between the stereotypes of *Zigeuner* and “Orientals” or African “primitives” is that these groups were regarded by majority society as culturally and intellectually backward. Through this discursive process of Othering, inferiority was ascribed to them and dominance was exerted over them, thereby legitimating “civilizing missions”. During the period of the Enlightenment, philosophers, anthropologists, cultural theorists, and other scholars broke with religiously grounded explanations for social phenomena and replaced pre-modern Christian *Zigeuner* stereotypes with scientific ones, which were, nevertheless, characterized by new and modern forms of antigypsyism (Wippermann, 2014: 120). In 1783 Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann wrote an influential study about “gypsies”. His work highlights intellectual points of connection between the stereotypes of the colonial or “Oriental” Other and *Zigeuner*: “*Zigeuner* are a people of the Orient and have an Oriental mindset. It is inherent to brutish people in general, and Orientals in particular, to cling to what they are accustomed” (Grellmann, 1783: 3).<sup>[7]</sup> Furthermore, Grellmann highlighted the unchanging nature and lack of development of this population: “A *Zigeuner* does not easily stop being whatever he is, according to their Oriental origin and the associated mindset” (Grellmann, 1783: 3).<sup>[8]</sup> Grellmann highlighted their dark skin, which clearly distinguished *Zigeuner* from other Europeans, and explained that experience had shown him that this color was the result of a certain kind of upbringing and lifestyle. He concluded that *Zigeuner* could be much less easily distinguished “if they were taken as a child in the first days of their lives from their unclean mothers and raised by much cleaner hands” (Grellmann, 1783: 31).<sup>[9]</sup> Grellmann propagated a sociographic understanding of the term *Zigeuner*. He discursively contrasts minorities with the majority by premodifying *Zigeuner*

6. Discourse is considered to be more than just written texts or oral speeches. It is viewed as a social practice that not only represents the world but also constitutes social realities, such as the exercise of power, domination, prejudice, and so on. On the other hand, discourse is also determined by social phenomena; as such, there is a bidirectional relationship and interdependence between discourse and society. Social identity, alterity, and Otherness, as well as stereotypes, can be regarded as dynamic, relational, and multilayered socio-cultural phenomena that emerge within social interaction rather than static and substantial social categories.

7. German original: “Die Zigeuner sind ein Volk des Orients, und haben eine orientalische Denkart. Rohen Menschen überhaupt, vorzüglich aber den Morgenländern ist es eigen, fest an dem zu hängen, wozu sie gewöhnt sind.”

8. German original: “[D]er Zigeuner hört, vermöge feines orientalischen Ursprungs und der damit verbundenen Denkart, nicht leicht auf zu sein, was er einmal ist.”

9. German original: “Wie viel weniger würde man Zigeuner erkennen, wenn er als Kind in den ersten Tagen seines Lebens, seiner unsauberen Mutter genommen und von reineren Händen erzogen würde.”

mothers as being “unclean”, suggesting that an upbringing by “much cleaner hands” – these belong to *pars pro toto* mothers from the majority or European societies in general – would lead to a less deviant lifestyle and change the outward appearance of *Zigeuner* children. Thus, Grellman described *Zigeuner* as *homines educandi* (Zimmermann, 1996), since he believed they could be assimilated into the majority were they to be educated in how to live in a way that was regarded as “proper”.

One year later, in 1784, the German poet and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder published *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* and made the following remark in his chapter on “Foreign Nations in Europe”:

I pass over the Armenians, whom I consider only as travellers in our quarter of the globe; but then I perceive a numerous, foreign, heathen, subterranean people, the gipsies, in almost all the countries of Europe. Whence came they? How did the seven or eight hundred thousand persons, at which they have been estimated by their latest historiographers,<sup>[10]</sup> come hither? A reprobate indian [sic] caste, removed by birth from everything they esteem to be divine, honourable, and civil, and still remaining true to this degrading destination after the lapse of ages, for what in Europe are they fit, except for military discipline, that produces the most speedy changes in manner? (Herder, 1966: 486–487)<sup>[11]</sup>

Here, the author upholds the us-versus-them distinction very strongly. Firstly, the use of pronouns such as the possessive pronoun “our” in “our quarter of the globe” and the personal pronoun “they”, delineates clear boundaries between Europeans and *Zigeuner*. *Zigeuner* are depicted here as “foreign”, “heathen”, “subterranean”, and “reprobate”, which implies that Europeans were in contrast native, Christian, more highly developed, civilized, and endowed with good civic morals. Furthermore, Herder stressed that *Zigeuner* carry these traits from birth and can only be civilized through military discipline. The distinct aspects of stereotypes pertaining to *Zigeuner* in this process of Othering become evident when one compares this passage on *Zigeuner* with those describing other groups Herder names, for example, those who have “resided in our quarter of the globe for a more or less considerable space of time”, namely Arabs, Turks, and Jews (Herder, 1966: 485–487). The power structures within which Europeans and these other groups were situated play an important role in how these groups were depicted by Herder. In Herder’s depiction of all these groups and the process of Othering, a contribution to European culture is another important factor; he was only able to highlight scientific contributions to European culture by Arabs and Jews, whereas Turks were described as barbarians who had destroyed the cultural heritage of Europe (Herder, 1966: 485–486). Herder did not mention any cultural contribution that *Zigeuner* had made, but instead asked for “what in Europe [are] they ... fit?” (Herder, 1966: 487).

10. Here Herder refers back to Grellmann, 1783.

11. German original: “Ich übergehe de Armenier, die ich in unserem Welttheil nur als Reisende betrachte; sehe aber dagegen ein zahlreiches fremdes, heidnisches, unterirdisches Volk fast in allen Ländern Europas, die Zigeuner. Wie kommt es hierher? Wie kommen die sieben bis achttausend Köpfe hierher, die ihr neuster Geschichtsschreiber zählt? Eine verworfene indische Kaste, die von allem, was sich göttlich, anständig, und bürgerlich nennt, ihrer Geburt nach entfernt ist und dieser erniedrigen Bestimmung noch nach Jahrhunderten treu bleibt, wozu taugte sie in Europa als zur militärischen Zucht, die doch alles aufs schnellste diszipliniert?” See Herder, 1869: 101.

A temporal dimension is closely linked to a cultural one: Cultural status is conceptually linked to a civilizing progress over a course of time. Whereas the Europeans are portrayed as having achieved a civilizing and cultural progress other peoples such as *Zigeuner* are portrayed as being culturally backward in time in this civilizing progress. Turks are characterized here as “foreigners in Europe, who, after thousands of years have elapsed, are still resolutely Asiatic barbarians” (Herder, 1966: 486). *Zigeuner*, in contrast, are described as not being civilized at birth and “still remaining true to this degrading destination after ages have elapsed” and only being suitable for military discipline, which Herder considered to produce “the most speedy changes in manner” (Herder, 1966: 487). Consequently, the temporal dimension functions as a signifier for a possible or potentially impossible assimilation process, which takes the perceived development of European culture as a reference point (cf. Fabian, 2014).

These images of *Zigeuner* as being distinctively and “essentially” different had practical implications. Regulations relating to *Zigeuner* in the eighteenth century forced those people who were associated with *Zigeuner* stereotypes – among them Sinti and Roma – to remain in workhouses (*Arbeitshäuser*), prisons (*Spinnhäuser*), or penitentiaries (*Zuchthäuser*). The aim of theoretical thinking behind them and their practical implementation was to educate and civilize *Zigeuner* into becoming fit and economically “useful” citizens and proper Christians (Zimmermann, 1996: 56–57). Therefore, Protestant missionaries worked within a network of thinkers and practitioners who similarly regarded *Zigeuner* as dehumanized objects to be educated and assimilated.

## 2. The Beginnings of the Protestant “Zigeuner” Mission in the Peripheries of the Metropole

Very few publications have paid attention to the Protestant missionary societies in Germany that were involved in the *Zigeuner* mission (Exceptions include: Danckwortt, 1995; 2008; Gilsenbach, 1988; 1998; Margalit, 2000; Neumeister, 2008; Reuter, 2014: 346; Spohn, 2016: 54, 71–72, 277–278, 282–299; Zimmermann, 1989: 34; 1996: 58–59). There were two early contexts for the Protestant mission: The first of these was the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association (*Naumburger Missions-Hülf-Verein*), which was founded in 1829 and an offshoot of the Missionary Society in Berlin for the Advancement of Christianity among the Heathens (*Berlinische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Christentums unter den Heiden*) (Wippermann, 2014: 124–125). This association put its missionary efforts into practice in Friedrichslöhra in Prussia between 1830 and 1836. The second of these was the City Mission in Berlin (*Berliner Stadtmission*), which began to missionize “Zigeuner” from 1910 onwards (Thieme, 1927: 81–86).

The Prussian government had created the conditions for the impoverishment and criminalization of Sinti and other groups that were associated with the stereotype of *Zigeuner* through their harsh regulations. This included measures such as refusing to issue them trade certificates or prohibiting them from camping in forests and thereby, removing their means of earning a living (Danckwortt, 1995: 280–281). Baron Theobald von Wurmb, who encountered a group of Sinti in a forest in Friedrichslöhra on a hike in 1827 undertook initiatives to educate and assimilate them into the area (Danckwortt, 1995: 278). A newspaper

article from 2 December 1833 concerning the mission in Friedrichslohra describes the beginnings of these initiatives and reveals points of connection between the processes of Othering *Zigeuner* and “primitives” in Africa. The *Eisenbergische Nachrichtenblatt* depicted *Zigeuner* as a group of indisputably different and backward people who needed to be civilized: “In the time of the former kingdom of Westphalia, each citizen had to choose a particular place to live, and the largest part of this horde thus chose the Catholic village of Friedrichslohra. But they continued their old way of life,<sup>[12]</sup> as nobody took care of these savages” (Nützer, 1833: 385).<sup>[13]</sup> It is then stated that everything changed in 1829 when the first civilizing efforts took place. Furthermore, it makes the remark that the baron “now [1833] lives in the African Wupperthal, in the Horn of Africa, where he philanthropically looks after the unfortunate Hottentotts and bush men” (Nützer, 1833: 385).<sup>[14]</sup> This quote highlights two different aspects relating to Protestant missionaries: First, this group worked as colonial agents with a paternalistic mindset long before German colonial societies or governmental institutions acquired colonies (Gründer, 2008: 94–103).<sup>[15]</sup> In 1829, Theobald von Wurmb and his wife were sent with a group of missionaries to South Africa by the Rhenish Mission Society (*Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft*) in Barmen. There the missionaries founded the village of Wupperthal in 1830 but without having official permission from the mission society (Altena, 2003: 33–38; Bilbe, 2009). As men on the spot they were a driving motor for imperial forces. Second, the quote shows the personal and ideological interrelations between the Protestant mission in the distant colonies and the Protestant *Zigeuner* mission in the metropole. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that these Protestant missionaries and colonial agents were part of a global exchange and worked within a closely linked network.

Before setting off for South Africa, Baron Wurmb was a key figure in the missionary efforts in Friedrichslohra. After his hiking trip, during which he encountered impoverished Sinti around Friedrichslohra, he wrote a letter to the Missionary Society in Berlin for the Advancement of Christianity among the Heathens (*Berlinische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Christentums unter den Heiden*) and published an article in Basel’s missionary magazine (*Baseler Missionsmagazine*), in which he summarized his impressions (Danckwortt, 1995: 278). The baron’s publication had far-reaching practical consequences:

Now the Royal Prussian Ministry became aware of these savages and set up the government of Erfurt to carry out close investigations. They found that the *Zigeuner* certainly were brutish people but they were not heathens. Since this horde had become a subject within

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12. This old way of life is described by the author in the previous paragraphs; it includes primitive housing in huts and caves; swindling, begging, fortune-telling; and having genuinely different customs and outer appearances. The description of this lifestyle generates a frame in which the process of Othering is discursively carried out.

13. German original: “Zur Zeit des vormaligen Königreichs Westphalen mußte jeder Bewohner desselben sich einen bestimmten Wohnort wählen und der größte Theil der Horde wählte demnach das katholische Dörfchen Friedrichslohra, setzte aber übrigen, da sich weiter Niemand um diese Wildlinge kümmerte, die alte Lebensweise fort.”

14. German original: “Baron v. Wurmb – der jetzt im afrikanischen Wupperthal, am Kap, sich der unglücklichen Hottentotten und Buschmänner so menschenfreundlich annimmt.”

15. Nicola Lauré al-Smarai (2008) argues differently in Weder “Fremde” noch “Ausländer” (94–103), positing that the foundation of the German nation-state in 1871 became a driving motor for processes of Othering. But this argument neglects the work of men on the ground, such as Protestant missionaries that had worked in this way long before.

public opinion, missionary students from Basel, Bremen, and Berlin arrived there. But they made them nervous and blocked their own way to the hearts of the *Zigeuner* by approaching them hastily, as well as by giving them harangues and penitential sermons (Nützer, 1833: 281).<sup>[16]</sup>

The stereotypes of the so-called backward or less educated Sinti are presented in this quote when they are described as “savages” and “brutish people”. However, this commission also reported that several of the children were able to read and write (Danckwortt, 1995: 281).

This closely linked network of agents and the points of connection between missions targeting “primitives” and *Zigeuner* is further highlighted by looking at additional writing on the mission in Friedrichslohra. Richard Pischel published “Contributions to Knowledge about German *Zigeuner*” in 1894 (Pischel, 1894: 5–19). Pischel, who was a professor of comparative linguistics and Indology, depicted *Zigeuner* as groups of people without a permanent settlement, who parasitically took over the religion of their hosts and generally tended towards lying and criminal activity (Pischel, 1894: 7–9). Before describing the Naumburg mission and their “efforts to benevolently bring the *Zigeuner* to an ordered lifestyle”, he explained how he gathered his sources on this topic (Pischel, 1894: 9). He named a network of people with whom he worked and who provided him with archival material and other sources. Among this group of people were the Reverend Johannes Spiecker, teacher at the Rhenish Missionary Society (*Rheinsche Missionsgesellschaft*), and the Reverend Gustav Warneck from Rothenschirmbach, who can be considered a founder of a systematic science of missionaries and had been an inspector for the Rhenish Missionary Society in Barmen, a teacher at missionary seminars, editor of the General Missionary Magazine, and, from 1896, professor of missionary science in Halle (Pischel, 1894: 9). This group of people evidences the close points of contact between Protestant missionaries in Africa and *Zigeuner* missionaries in the metropole; they are interdependent in terms of the forms of mission they pursue, but also possibly in regard to the transfer of knowledge between missionary practitioners and the leaders of missionary societies.

Furthermore, Pischel’s interest in this subject points to connections between the field of Protestant missions and other scientific disciplines, such as linguistics. Pischel concludes his article, after having mentioned all the difficulties missionaries faced in Friedrichslohra, by outlining the benefits this missionary project had for science. He gives the example of the school inspector Graffunder, who visited Friedrichslohra in the Erfurt government’s name in November 1834. According to Pischel, Graffunder was impressed by the Romani language and conducted further research upon his return to Erfurt. In 1835 he published his initial analysis of the “language of the *Zigeuner*”. In addition, the missionary named Wilhelm Blankenburg created a list of *Zigeuner* words on behalf of the inspector and Reverend Heinrich Eduard Schmieder from Schulpforta. After 1854, his list came into the possession of the linguist August

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16. German original: “Nun wurde das königl. Preußische Ministerium auf diese Wildlinge aufmerksam und beauftragte die Regierung zu Erfurt, genaue Untersuchungen anzustellen. Das Ergebnis derselben war, daß diese *Zigeuner* zwar durchaus rohe Menschen, aber doch keine Heiden waren. Da indessen die Herde nun einmal Gegenstand der Öffentlichkeit geworden war, langten bald nachher aus Basel, Bremen und Berlin Missionszöglinge an, sollen es aber durch hastiges Zufahren und durch Straf- und Bußpredigen versehen, die *Zigeuner* kopfscheu gemacht und sich so den Weg zu ihren Herzen versperrt haben.”

Friedrich Pott, who wrote a thorough linguistic analysis of Romani (Pischel, 1894: 17; Pott, 1844: 67). This excursus highlights how Protestant missionaries not only acted within a discursive network but also a personal one with other intellectuals and institutions that were also involved in the process of Othering.

Blankenburg, a former cobbler, was sent to Friedrichslohra by the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association (*Naumburger Missions-Hilfs-Verein*) as an “educator of the *Zigeuner*” in 1830 (Nützer, 1833: 386; Danckwortt, 1995: 284).<sup>[17]</sup> In a letter from 20 July 1830, Blankenburg reported on his first encounter with “black-brown children” and how his “heart inflamed with love” (Danckwortt, 1995: 285). From the beginning, Blankenburg and his wife, who arrived a little later, focused on educating children in the values of Protestantism and work: “At first, the honorable couple tried to accustom the savages to work. A difficult task to undertake, as the *Zigeuner* thought that they were not made for work” (Danckwortt, 1995: 285).<sup>[18]</sup> This first stage of instruction carried out by the missionaries become apparent in Pischel’s linguistic and anthropological article. The missionaries were to “guide the unfortunate *Zigeuner* in and around Friedrichslohra towards Christian morality through work and education, prayer and their example with the help of God” (Pischel, 1894: 11).<sup>[19]</sup> According to Pischel, Blankenburg told the adults that the children were to be educated and learn to work, “in order to make them useful members of the civic society” (Pischel, 1894: 12).<sup>[20]</sup> This stated aim is linked to the ideals contained in the previously quoted thoughts of Herder, who also posed the question of what *Zigeuner* were fit to do in society. Herder concluded that they were only fit for military discipline. This mission in Friedrichslohra was also an attempt to foster the assimilation of *Zigeuner*. Christian values and a Protestant work ethic served as a value framework for missionaries to conduct their “civilizing mission”.

In 1831 an educational institution (*Erziehungsanstalt*) and quarters for the re-education of adults (*Sittigungshaus*) was founded for students and their families in Friedrichslohra. Initially, parents were free to send their children to this school, but during the course of time the missionary efforts were strengthened and education was increasingly forced upon them. Children were no longer allowed to live with their parents, as this was believed to have a negative impact on the process of civilizing them and ensuring their assimilation. Furthermore, the missionaries also criticized the “uncivilized” behavior and poor work attitude of the parents and requested to have them put in workhouses, which was implemented by force in November 1833 by the government in Erfurt (Danckwortt, 1995: 288–292). On June 16, 1834, a decree signed by the Ministry of the Interior, the police, and the Ministry of Ecclesiastical, Educational, and Medical Affairs was issued by the governor. *Zigeuner* who could not prove that they were doing “proper” and regular work within four weeks were to be put into workhouses in Groß-Salze in the governmental district of Magdeburg.

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17. German original “Bildner der *Zigeuner*”.

18. German original: “Zunächst suchte das ehrenwerthe Paar die trägen Wildlinge an Arbeit zu gewöhnen. Ein schwieriges Unterfangen, da sie die Meinung hegten, zur Arbeit nicht geschaffen zu sein.”

19. German original: “Sie sind deshalb von dem Naumburger Missionsverein nach Friedrichslohra gesandt, damit Sie unter Gottes Beistand, durch Arbeit und Lehre, durch Gebet und Beispiel die unglücklichen *Zigeuner* in und um Friedrichslohra zur christlichen Sittigung führen sollen.”

20. German original: “Er [Blankenburg] hielt ihnen vor, ob sie nicht wünschten, dass ihre Kinder besser unterrichtet würden und dass sie arbeiten lernten, um nützliche Glieder der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft zu werden.”

Children under the age of 14 were to be put into the educational institution in Friedrichslohra, and children aged 14 or older were to be sent to the Marienstift in Erfurt (Danckwortt, 1995: 292).

Conflicts between parents and missionaries in Friedrichslohra increased when the former asked to have their children brought back so they could stay with them. They opposed the Protestant educational efforts and being separated from their children, and eventually asked the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II for help (Pischel, 1894: 125). On 20 April 1836, Franz Mettbach, who was Sinto, wrote a plea to the Prussian king that his six-year-old girl be removed from this institution, in which she was forcefully installed to be educated according to Protestant beliefs. The father highlighted his aim for his daughter to be educated, but in a way he agreed to. He stated the following:

[U]pon my arrival in Friedrichslohra, my one and only child was pried away from me and given to a certain teacher named Blankenburg, who was the director of an educational institution for children; these children were taken from their parents without their consent. I have never and will never refuse for my children to receive good education at school. But I wish to have them raised in the Catholic religion, which cannot be guaranteed by this Protestant teacher. I do not dare to put into words the pain parents feel when their child is forcefully taken from them. But I do dare to make this plea – out of deep grief – to His Royal Majesty with bended knee and humbly: Give me back my child through your most gracious words, while I faithfully pledge to send my child to school and church (cited in Danckwortt, 1995: 273–274).<sup>[21]</sup>

This plea highlights the agency of the oppressed and is a rare early document written by a member of the minority. It also shows that they were not silent and passive victims.

Finally, the educational institution that was run by the Naumburg mission was closed down by the government in 1837. The government in Erfurt instructed children to be returned to their parents once they had proved that they were residents and able to support their children. The Royal Government in Erfurt ordered that “those *Zigeuner* who can prove that they have settled, and are able to honestly nourish and support their children, were to be exempted from this institution” (n.a., n.d. [1939]).<sup>[22]</sup> This support from the Royal Government, however, contained implications of similar antigypsyist tendencies: they

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21. German original: “[N]ach meiner Ankunft in Friedrichslohra wurde mir mein einziges Kind [...] gewaltsam entrissen und einem gewissen Lehrer Blankenburg übergeben, welcher der Vorsteher einer Erziehungsanstalt ist für Kinder, die ihren Eltern [...] ohne Zustimmung derselben genommen sind. Ich habe mich nie geweigert und werde mich nie weigern, meinen Kindern guten Schulunterricht geben zu lassen; aber ich wünsche daß sie in der katholischen Religion erzogen werden, welches durch jenen evangelischen Lehrer nicht geschieht. Den Schmerz der Eltern, welchen eine gewaltsame Trennung von ihrem einzigen Kinde erzeugen muss, [...] wage ich nicht mit Worten zu schildern, aber ich wage es im Gefühle des tiefsten Schmerzes, der Verzweiflung nahe, Ew. Königliche Majestät fußfälligst und unterthänigst zu bitten: mir mein einziges Kind durch Ihr Allergnädigstes Wort wieder zu geben, wogegen ich mich verpflichte auf das Gewissenhafteste mein Kind zur Schule und Kirche zu schicken.”

22. German original: “Jetzt hat nun die Königl. Regierung zu Erfurt verfügt, daß diejenigen Zigeuner, welche nachweisen, daß sie sich ansäßig gemacht haben, redlich ernähren und ihre Kinder zu unterhalten imstande sind, diese aus der Anstalt zurückhalten sollen.”

restricted this order to *Zigeuner* whom they regarded as partly assimilated. The missionaries justified the termination of their work by referring to the inability of the *Zigeuner* to adapt to the civic ideals, norms, and lifestyle of the majority. In their eyes, this inability was partly explained by their nature and a deep-rooted inability to live a lifestyle that was perceived as “civilized”. Consequently, attempts from the minority to speak out against the “civilizing missions” of the Protestants were countered with additional acts of stereotyping and strategies of Othering that permanently fixed perceived differences by highlighting a certain inherent *Zigeuner* inability to adapt. Once they were permitted to return to their parents, the number of children shrank in the educational institution, which was then eventually closed down (n.a., n.d. [1939]: 295).

Deficit-oriented *Zigeuner* stereotypes and paternalistic attitudes characterized the missionary efforts of not just the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association but also of the City Mission in Berlin. There were similar elements in their “civilizing mission”, and strategies of Othering are also present in the writings by representatives of the *Zigeunermission* of the City Mission in Berlin. In the Berlin City Mission’s first publication from 1910, Maria Knak stated that *Zigeuner* were “stealing and lying”, “brutish, reluctant to work, immoral, superstitious, and very dirty” (Knak, 1910: 65; cf. Zimmermann, 1996: 58–59). The work aspect played a major role for missionaries in the African colonies as well as in the metropole when missionizing Sinti and Roma and other groups of people associated with “*Zigeuner*” (Maciejewski, 1996: 23; Hund, 1999; Robel, 2015: 192). In both processes of Othering, the Other was perceived as “reluctant to work”. A specific element of the image of the *Zigeuner* image was the link to perceived criminal activity as a means to sustain oneself. Walther Thieme, director of the City Mission in Berlin, gathered together many different *Zigeuner* stereotypes in his article from 1927, published upon the 50-year anniversary of the City Mission in Berlin:

Yes, there might indeed be some romantic aspects, when one sits outside – at the periphery of the city, where the trees of the Tegel forests greet you and where autumn mist rises at dusk – by the campfire, sees the brown fellows and the passionate eyes of the women with their red and yellow garments, and observes these travelling people with their foreign customs and gestures. But come closer to them? No. Not only because of the dirt. Their fortune-telling and stealing, their casualness and sluggishness do not give one any confidence in permanent change (Thieme, 1927: 81–86, here 82).<sup>[23]</sup>

Thieme lists romantic stereotypes that suggest a lifestyle of closeness to nature and characterizes *Zigeuner* women as the exotic Other. He also describes this group as being genuinely different in nature and culture, and sees no hope for assimilation as he concludes that stealing, fortune-telling, and the lack of a work ethic seem to be inherently fixed character traits among this group. He also marks them as different

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23. German original: “Ja, etwas Romantisches mag es ja haben, draußen an der Peripherie der Stadt, wo die Bäume des Tegler Waldes herüber grüßen und die Herbstnebel bei Abenddämmerung aufsteigen, am flackernden Feuer zu sitzen, die braunen Gesellen und die leidenschaftlichen Augen der Frauen mit ihren roten und gelben Gewändern zu sehen und das fahrende Volk in seinen fremdländischen Sitten und Gesten zu beobachten. Aber ihnen zu nahe kommen? Nein. Nicht nur um des Schmutzes willen. Ihr Wahrsagen und Stehlen, ihr Schlendrian und ihre Trägheit lassen so gar keine Zuversicht auf dauerhafte Umänderung.”

by ascribing a brown skin color to them, a strategy of Othering that was also conducted by Blankenburg when he described his first encounter with “black-brown children” in Friedrichslohra (Thieme, 1927: 85). Benjamin Niederhauser, a member of the Swiss *Zigeuner* mission, wrote an article after his visit to the *Zigeuner* mission in Berlin in the magazine *The Friend of the Zigeuner* (*Der Freund der Zigeuner*), which was published by the Swiss Committee of the *Zigeuner* Mission in 1929, where he also referred to *Zigeuner* as his “brown friends” (Niederhauser, 1929: 3).<sup>[24]</sup> Again, these quoted examples of similar strategies for discursively Othering Sinti and Roma by ascribing a dark skin color to them shed light on the broader entanglements of these missionary agents across the borders of nation states.

When one looks at the documents produced by these Protestant missionaries in relation to *Zigeuner* missions, another aspect becomes evident: their representation of *Zigeuner* varies depending on the addressee, and the function and context of the written text. In 1914, Maria Knak, a missionary at the *Zigeuner* City Mission in Berlin, published a pamphlet on *The Gospel among Zigeuner in Berlin* (*Evangelium unter den Zigeunern Berlins*). She portrayed *Zigeuner* as a people who were really different, followed heathen cults and customs, and did not know that God watches over all people and that Jesus would bring salvation to everyone, including *Zigeuner* (Knak, 1914: 12, 14). Knak described *Zigeuner* as a part of the Christian community that was treated equally by God. She then explained in different passages how she read stories from the Bible to adult Sinti and Roma. She describes two individuals: Muschurka, who – according to Knak – could not stop lying when he was doing business, although he knew that it was a sin, and an elderly woman, who was a fortune-teller. Knak reported how she read an excerpt from the Bible to her, in which it stated that fortune-telling is to be punished with death. In her report, Knak continued to describe how this woman was surprised that no one had ever told her this before; Knak made reference to the Bible again, specifically where it is written that lying and stealing are forbidden and that God sees and hears everything the woman does (Knak, 1914: 14–15). These two Sinti in Knak’s publication function as figures in a parable. They demonstrate through their actions, with the context of Knak’s lecture to the reader, that God’s commandments need to be adhered to and that he is omniscient. Knak ends the chapter and the pamphlet with the following appeal: “But we want to – with the help of Jesus’ power of love – serve, since He loved and served us in the first place. So, come let us bring His Gospel to the waiting *Zigeuner*!” (Knak, 1914: 15).<sup>[25]</sup> Once again, *Zigeuner* are described as backward here, not in their own development, but in having not received the Gospel. It also becomes evident that Knak is inferring that the missionaries and their Protestant readers have already received the Gospel and now need to work on the advancement of the *Zigeuner*. She asks her readers to be part of this “civilizing mission”, but does not clearly state what their contribution could be. This is expressed more clearly in a postcard from the same mission that shows a picture of the missionary Kurt Süßkind who was part of the mission from 1930 to 1940 (Vorstand der Berliner Stadtmission, 1941). This postcard asked the Christian community for material help for the *Zigeuner*, and it showed the missionary with a group of children, who the missionaries considered to be *Zigeuner*. The poem under the photograph reads as follows:

24. German original: “braune Freunde.”

25. German original: “Wir aber wollen dienen in Jesu heiliger Liebeskraft, nachdem er uns zuerst geliebt und gedient hat. Komm mit uns, bring’ sein Evangelium den wartenden Zigeunern!”



Without God, without home and bread  
Hit by a hard life,  
They often suffer great distress  
In the poor *Zigeuner* wagon.  
We bear the light of faith  
Into the suffering of children  
And you? You're not helping us?  
Come, help us, and be ready!

And send what you want to contribute  
in the form of clothes, food, and toys  
to Kurt Süßkind, Berlin Stadtmission  
[...] (*Zigeuner Mission der Berliner  
Stadtmission, n.d.*).

Finally, it can be concluded that Protestant missionaries were governed by a paternalistic or maternalistic attitude toward Sinti and Roma, seeing them predominantly as *homines educandi*. Nevertheless, their representations of *Zigeuner* varied depending on the writing's context, function, and addressee. Furthermore, Protestant missionaries acted within a global network of people who dealt with *Zigeuner* and/or colonial subjects. I have observed this in both missionary settings (Friedrichslohra and Berlin), but the writings from the mission in Friedrichslohra, where representations of *Zigeuner* became increasingly negative when missionary efforts failed, were passed on and altered during the National Socialist period.

### 3. Transferring Knowledge: The Protestant *Zigeuner* Mission during the National Socialist Regime and after 1945

Although the *Zigeuner* mission in Friedrichslohra in the 1830s was brought to an end after several years due to external factors, it still had a great impact: writings produced there demonstrate that the knowledge gained in the institution was transferred down throughout subsequent generations. This can be observed in the dissertation of Eva Justin, a medical professional, who worked with Dr. Robert Ritter at the Racial Hygiene Research Unit (*Rassenhygienische Forschungsstelle*) from 1936. Together, they conducted anthropological and genealogical research on *Zigeuner* and worked in close collaboration with the police. Their classifications were the basis for subsequent deportations of Sinti and Roma. On

5 November 1943, Justin was awarded a doctoral degree by the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin for her thesis *Life Fates of Zigeuner Children and Their Descendants Who Were Raised by Different Races* (*Lebensschicksale artfremd erzogener Zigeunerkinder und ihrer Nachkommen*). In her thesis, Justin also referred to the "attempt to educate" (*Erziehungsversuch*) *Zigeuner* in Friedrichslohra. She bases her observations primarily on archival sources from the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association in Berlin and Naumburg, as well as an article by Pischel, the linguist, which was published in 1894, but she also refers to Carl Heister (Justin, 1943: 20, 25).

The archival material from the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association was given to the Racial Hygiene Research Unit on 7 March 1939 (Hermann, 1940; 1941). The latter did not return the material until at least March 1942, although the record office of the Missionary Society in Berlin for the Advancement of Christianity among the Heathens (*Berlinische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Christentums unter den Heiden*) – the mother association of the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association – kept asking for its return (Hermann, 1941).<sup>[26]</sup> Upon being asked to lend these sources and send the material to the Racial Hygiene Research Unit on 7 March 1939, the Missionary Society in Berlin contacted Dr. Ritter again. One day later, the representative from the Record Office wrote in a letter to the director of the Racial Hygiene Research Unit that a further source had been found, which might be of interest to his institution: "On the assumption that this document – newly found by the Record Office and penned by the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association – concerning the termination of their work might interest you, you will find enclosed a transcript thereof" (Hermann, 1939).<sup>[27]</sup> This letter clearly shows the initiative and effort taken by the Missionary Society in Berlin in order to provide the Racial Hygiene Research Unit with more material, although they were not specifically asked to hand over more sources. Furthermore, the content of these sources – particularly the concluding statement – from the Record Office of the Missionary Society in Berlin is important as these writings became a reference point for Justin.

The committee of the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association stated in this justification and conclusive comments on the termination of its work that its intention had been "not only to train the children of *Zigeuner*, but also these [parents] themselves to realize a Christian, civilized, and hardworking life" (Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association, n.d. [1939]).<sup>[28]</sup> This aim, however, had to be renounced because of "insurmountable difficulties, partly due to a deep-rooted disposition among this people to lead a roaming and wanton life, to a degree attributable to the resistance of neighboring Catholic priests and their followers" (Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association, n.d. [1939]).<sup>[29]</sup> This piece of writing further states that the adults resisted these missionary efforts and the

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26. The last request by the Missionary Society in Berlin can be found in a letter from the record office to the Racial Hygiene Research Unit from 22 March, 1941.

27. German original: "In der Annahme, daß Sie ein von der Registratur noch gefundenes Schreiben vom Missionshilfsverein Naumburg betr. Abschluß der Zigeunermission interessiert, lassen wir Ihnen selbiges in Abschrift anliegen zugehen."

28. German original: "nicht bloß die Kinder der Zigeuner, sondern auch diese selbst zu einem christlichen, gesitteten und arbeitsamen Leben heranzubilden."

29. German original: "eine unüberwindliche Schwierigkeit, teils in dem tief eingewurzelttem Hang dieses Volkes zu einem herumschweifenden, liederlichen Leben, teils in den Widerstrebungen der benachbarten katholischen Priester und ihrer Anhänger."

education of their children by the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association: “They regarded the placement, diet, and upbringing of their children in this institution as an intrusion on their right to rear the children according to their nature, namely in jugglery, begging, stealing, and a vagrant life” (Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association, n.d. [1939]).<sup>[30]</sup> These images of *Zigeuner*, contained in the writing by the committee of the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association, were predominantly negative. One reason for this negative depiction might be that both writings were made within the context of failed attempts to “civilize” and impose an education and way of life on *Zigeuner*, which was perceived by missionaries as the right thing to do but was taken by the affected group as a violation of their rights. Justin mainly referred to this concluding statement from the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association when explaining why the missionary efforts failed. In agreement with the Missionary Assistance Association’s statement, which was also sent to the Racial Hygiene Research Unit by the Missionary Society on 8 March 1939, Justin explained in her thesis that the reason for the failure of the mission in Friedrichslohra had been the “natural inability to improve” the *Zigeuner* (Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association, n.d. [1939]; Justin, 1943: 25). To contrast with this view, Justin highlighted that Pischel and Heister viewed the forced separation of this group into a specific educational institution as the reason for the failure of these missionary efforts.

Justin’s description of the mission in Friedrichslohra is neither a direct copy of what she found in the archival material from the Missionary Society in Berlin nor of what she found in Pischel’s or Heister’s publications. Instead, she alters their perspectives by making reference to genealogical and racial-biological explanations. Such explanations are a clear break with the Enlightened ideas of seeing *Zigeuner* as *homines educandi* as well as the paternalistic mindset of the Protestant missionaries. The aim of Justin’s dissertation is to answer the question of “whether it is really not possible to [...] raise *Zigeuner* children – who frequently reveal themselves to be cheerful, lively, smart, and often very clever – out of their primitive *Zigeuner* life through German schooling and education and usefully deploy them according to their nature” (Justin, 1943: 7).<sup>[31]</sup> Justin analyzed reports by teachers in Friedrichslohra over a time span of seven months in 1835, during which 20 children were educated in the institution. According to these reports, steady “improvement” after the third month of the investigated period could be observed but the accomplishments of the children fluctuated. Progress was much more evident in “civil education” rather than in its “Christian” variant (Justin, 1943: 21–22). These reports also demonstrated that none of the children were uneducable (Justin, 1943: 24). Justin argued that these observations are further supported when one turns to the scientific field of genealogy:

Were one to chart the clan-like relationships of the 90 families (including their children) and collect their biographical data from the sources, as well as the success of their education, one can observe that both complement each other and that there were markedly gifted families,

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30. German original: “Dabei hielten sie die Aufnahme, Ernährung und Erziehung ihrer Kinder in der Anstalt für einen Eingriff in ihr Recht, diese Kinder nach ihrer Art selbst, das heißt zu Gaukeleien, Betteln, Stehlen und vagabundierendem Leben zu erziehen.”

31. German original: “[O]b es denn wirklich nicht möglich sei, Zigeuner Kinder, die [...] sich meist als aufgeweckt, lebhaft, schlau und oft als recht anständig und hilfsbereit erweisen, durch deutsche Schulung und Erziehung ihrem ‘primitiven Zigeunerleben’ zu entziehen und – wenn auch artentsprechend – nützlich einzusetzen.”

as well as significantly inferior and unremarkably ordinary ones, most of whom had 'fled' (Justin, 1943: 23).<sup>[32]</sup>

Justin concluded that the educational and missionary efforts failed and that the group's descendants still live as their uneducated ancestors in Friedrichslohra did. Possible descendants of these families were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, as indicated in the entries in lists for the *Zigeunerlager* (State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1993). Among the key grounds for deportation were the classifications Justin and her colleagues made at the Racial Hygiene Research Unit.

The *Zigeuner* mission at the City Mission in Berlin continued under the National Socialist regime; I dealt with the writings produced there in the previous section of this article. Kurt Süßkind was a missionary there from 1930 until 1940, at which point the consistory decided that this branch was no longer needed (Vorstand der Berliner Stadtmission, 1941). He and Frieda Zeller-Plinzner worked as the main missionaries in collaboration with Lovari Jaja Sattler, who translated the Gospel of John into Romani and thereby did the groundwork for further *Zigeuner* missions, and was a contribution that was internationally acknowledged by linguists and other missionaries (Miskow, 1931; Ackerley, 1931).<sup>[33]</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, this *Zigeuner* mission worked in close collaboration with the Mission for South-East Europe (*Mission für Süd-Osteuropa* – MSOE) and was on a personal and intellectual level connected to other missions and societies, such as the Gypsy Lore Society, which was founded in Great Britain in 1888 and was took an interest in gypsy and traveler studies.<sup>[34]</sup> Georg Althaus, who was pastor of various parishes around Brunswick in Germany, also had a close relationship with Zeller-Plinzner and the *Zigeuner* mission in Berlin. He worked with Sinti during the National Socialist regime, an activity which intensified after the war when he founded the Ministry in the Service of Israel and the *Zigeuner* (*Pfarramt für den Dienst an Israel und den Zigeunern*), which was officially recognized years later in 1957 by the Evangelical Church.<sup>[35]</sup> Althaus played an instrumental role in Justin's trial in 1960, in which the mistaken identification of Zellner-Plinzner as Justin was also discussed (Spohn, 2016: 284–285, 292–294).

Zeller-Plinzner retired early after the Sinti and Roma of Berlin were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau at the end of February 1943; among them was Jaja Sattler and his family, including children who were

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32. German original: "Zeichnet man sich nämlich die sippenmäßigen Zusammenhänge der damaligen 90 Zigeuner (einschließlich ihrer Kinder) auf und trägt die lebensgeschichtlichen Daten, die aus den Akten zusammen getragen wurden, und die Erziehungserfolge der einzelnen ein, so sieht man, daß sich beides ergänzt und daß es ausgesprochen begabte Familien, ebenso deutlich minderwertige und unauffällige mittelmäßige meist 'geflüchtete' Sippen gab."

33. Editions of the Gypsy Lore Society Journal from 1888 to 1999 are available online through the HathiTrust Digital Library. For the Miskow and Ackerley editions, see <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000105045276;view=1up;seq=1> Accessed: 10-09-2017.

34. See the homepage of the Gypsy Lore Society: <http://www.gypsyloresociety.org> Accessed: 10-09-2017.

35. For more information on this Ministry, see later in the article. The Ministry in the Service of Israel and the *Zigeuner* (*Pfarramt für den Dienst an Israel und den Zigeunern*) was created after 1945 as an attempt to help survivors of the National Socialist genocide of the Jews as well as Sinti and Roma. Similarly, there was an aid center for those were persecuted for their race (*Hilfsstelle für Rasseverfolgte*) overseen by Minister Majer-Leonhard in Stuttgart. See Evangelisches Zentralarchiv (EZA), 2, 14290.

going to be educated by the Protestant missionaries (Spohn, 2016: 292–294). The possible involvement of missionaries such as Süßkind, Zeller-Plinzner, as well as Sattler, in the creation of lists of all the Sinti and Roma families, which later fell into the hands of the local police and served as deportation lists, is extensively described in a work on missions during the National Socialist regime by the Protestant theologian, missiologist, and historian Elmar Spohn (Spohn, 2016: 292–294). According to Spohn, the missionaries at the *Zigeuner* mission in Berlin underestimated National Socialist policies of discrimination, which eventually culminated in exterminatory actions against all people who had been declared *Zigeuner* (Spohn, 2016: 285). Spohn analyzed the extent of action taken by missionaries and highlighted, in his concluding statements, their passivity, singling out Zeller-Plinzner in particular: “The ‘*Zigeuner* friendship’ propagated in the missionary reports did not develop into political solidarity with Sinti and Roma or even subversive forces of resistance” (Spohn, 2016: 299).<sup>[36]</sup>

Additional continuities in the thinking on the process of “civilizing” Sinti and Roma and transfers of knowledge down the generations can be seen in the writings of the aforementioned pastor Althaus, who made use of similar stereotypes in the 1950s and 1960s, as was observed in the earlier writings of the Naumburg Missionary Assistance Association or the City Mission in Berlin. He not only remarked that they “maintained the legacies of antiquity alongside their tendency toward a Catholic popular piety”, but also highlighted their backwardness in a cultural sense: “Gypsies live on a different cultural level than us. Generally, they are foragers, not only gatherers, but foragers, who acquire with trickery and skillfulness whatever they discover and regard as needed” (cited in Margalit, 2000: 63).<sup>[37]</sup> Althaus also propagated similar stereotypes to the hegemonic discourse on “gypsies”. For instance, the Brockhaus Encyclopedia entry on gypsies from 1957 reads as follows: “They have preserved their specific character everywhere [in the places where they live], in particular they follow a primitive, unsettled lifestyle, and are closed off from the host nation, whose culture they reject. [...] The women scavenge for their basic upkeep through door-to-door selling, begging, and ‘finding’ food” (n.a., 1957).<sup>[38]</sup> In his newspaper article “Give Centers to the *Zigeuner!*” (“*Gebt den Zigeunern Mittelpunkt!*”), Althaus described the long history of persecution of *Zigeuner* by the majority, which culminated in the “attempts at extermination by the Nazis [...], [which mark] the climax and termination of this epoch” (Althaus, 1960).<sup>[39]</sup> He also mentions the “civilizing” efforts in Friedrichslohra and explains that they failed due to violence and the little financial aid given to support

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36. German original: “Die in den Missionsberichten propagierte ‘Zigeunerfreundschaft’ hatte keine politische Solidarität mit Sinti und Roma oder gar subversive-widerständische Kräfte entwickeln können.”

37. German original: “Im Allgemeinen ist die Neigung zu einer katholischen Volksfömmigkeit [...] geblieben, daneben haben die Zigeuner ihre alten, aus dem Altertum stammenden Erbtümer beibehalten.” [...] Die Zigeuner leben auf einer anderen Kulturstufe als wir. Grundsätzlich sind sie Wildbeuter, nicht nur Sammler, sondern Wildbeuter, die sich mit List und Geschicklichkeit das aneignen, was sie entdecken und zu brauchen zu können meinen.”

38. German original: “Es hat seine Eigenart überall bewahrt, bes. die ganz primitive, unstete Lebensweise, Abschließung vom Gastvolk, dessen Kultur es anlehnt. [...] Den dürftigen Unterhalt ergattern die Frauen durch Hausieren, Betteln und ‘Finden’ von Lebensmitteln.”

39. German original: “Furchtbaren Ausrottungsversuche der Nazis [...], [die] den Höhepunkt und Abschluß dieser Epoche [bedeuteten].”

the mission, but most importantly as a result of the missionaries’ “failure to caringly understand the *Zigeuner*’s special nature and to develop methods that align with it” (Althaus, 1960).<sup>[40]</sup> Althaus then continues to explain that the contemporary moment – post-1945 – is a turning point, and he offers methods that seem more fruitful to him. He first describes their special nature by employing familiar stereotypes, such as being family-oriented and having a mobile lifestyle, and then elaborates on his ideas for how to civilize *Zigeuner*. A central idea of his is to establish community centers at the sites where they rest or settle, which would ideally have a room for church services, prayers, Bible readings, and lectures, as well as a room for sewing, another room for a kindergarten where “the lovely *Zigeunerwildlinge* [little *Zigeuner* brutes] can gather and be kept busy by hardworking and happy female educators” (Althaus, 1960).<sup>[41]</sup> He concludes that these missionary efforts will be successful if the *Zigeuner* are met with complete dedication and regarded as brothers and sisters of distinctive character. While he emphasizes a certain degree of unity at the end, he also calls them *Fremdsoziale* (foreign social elements) when he contrasts them with antisocial people (Althaus, 1960). He thus engages in a process of Othering a group of people characterized as *Zigeuner* in order to justify the need for a civilizing mission. He uses various tropes as a way of Othering this group of people and relies on stereotypes that have been passed down over centuries. His writings clearly demonstrate a benevolent and paternalistic undertone to his depiction of *Zigeuner*, whom he views as *homines educandi*.

While, on the one hand, Althaus assisted Sinti and Roma by helping to provide them with supplies, such as clothing, as well as to gain official recognition as victims of the National Socialist regime, he also made clear antigypsyist remarks in his depiction of *Zigeuner* in his public writing. His writing that was addressed to a smaller, private audience, such as his piece to the Inner Mission and the Aid Organization of the Evangelical Church in Germany (*Innere Mission und das Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*) from 5 October 1960, reveals less negative antigypsyist stereotypes, but his depiction of the “fosterlings” seems intended to gain sympathy and pity for them from the institution from which he was asking for financial and material help: “Yet, my Polish *Zigeuner* – not enough clothes for the men – were in some cases arriving in such deplorable clothing that anyone would take pity on them. The worst of all were the children. It was not possible to look upon how pitifully they were dressed” (Althaus, 1960).<sup>[42]</sup> Consequently, when one considers how minorities were depicted by Protestant missionaries one needs to clearly differentiate between the different contexts for the writing, and its purpose as well as its audience.

Furthermore, as an individual and in his writings, Althaus links the colonial context to the missions targeted at Sinti and Roma in Germany. Althaus was born in 1898 in Mamba, German East Africa, where his father

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40. German original: “Unvermögen, die Zigeuner in ihrer besonderen Eigenart liebevoll zu verstehen und Methoden zu entwickeln, die dieser Eigenart entsprächen.”

41. German original: “in dem die leiben Zigeunerwildlinge von tüchtigen, fröhlichen Kindergärtnerinnen gesammelt und beschäftigt werden.”

42. German original: “Dabei liefen meine polnischen Zigeuner – nicht genug für die Männer – z.T. in so erbärmlichen Zeuge einher, dass es einen erbarmen musste. Am allerschlimmsten waren die Kinder daran. Es war einfach nicht anzusehen, wie erbärmlich gekleidet sie waren.” Althaus then continued to describe the women’s clothing, depicting it as extravagantly rendered in delicate fabrics.

and mother worked as missionaries for the society in Leipzig and Christianized Wachagga (Althaus, 1960: 59–60). In an entry on the *Zigeuner* mission from a Protestant church encyclopedia from 1959, Althaus himself wrote that the *Ministry in the Service of Israel and the Zigeuner* worked according to the “role model of the Lutheran heathen mission” (Althaus, 1962; Margalit, 2000: 65). Three years earlier, he had published an essay titled “Thoughts on the Education of *Zigeuner*”, where he argued that the education system should be built according to the mission targeting “primitive and exotic peoples” (Margalit, 2000: 65). Gilad Margalit wrote an article on Althaus that analyzed his amalgamation of *Zigeuner* stereotypes and how these influenced his work. Margalit’s aim was to reveal the motives behind Althaus’s early commitment to this marginalized group after the Second World War and reveals the ambivalence in such attempts to provide support. Margalit also has a strong focus on discourse analysis and examines the images of *Zigeuner* deployed by this minister, contrasting them with images from the hegemonic discourse in the Federal Republic of Germany. Margalit highlights that there were not only negative but also positive images illustrating their equal status “in the eyes of God” or romanticized views of *Zigeuner* music (Margalit, 2000: 64). This fruitful biographical approach, which fuses a critical discourse analysis of a minister’s or missionary’s writings with their social practice, is still lacking for other missionaries from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but critical Romani studies would benefit from further research in this area.

This section has shown that there are clear ideological and personal connections between the mission in the African colonies and the *Zigeuner* mission in the heart of the metropole, as well as a transference of knowledge across time and space between missionaries in addition to other intellectuals such as linguists, anthropologists, and genealogists. When knowledge was passed on, it was mostly altered depending on the writing’s context, its purpose, and its audience, as well as the overall dominant discourse and political situation. In the following section, I will outline a methodological reflection on what needs to be considered when one analyzes *Zigeuner* missions from a postcolonial perspective.

## 4. Methodological Reflection

One could argue that stereotypes pertaining to the colonial Other and *Zigeuner* reveal similarities since both are linked within a “system of representation” or “conceptual map” (Hall, 1997: 17–18). This link is established through the function of both as a concept that stands in opposition (alterity) to the social identity that is created by the dominant group(s). There are also several similarities within the deeper structures of meaning for both processes of Othering, which can be found in the categories power, space, time, and education. At the heart of both images of the Other lie unequal power relations that are constituted and manifested through discourse, as well as violent practices by the dominant group. Both, the colonial subject, as well as Sinti and Roma and other groups that fell under the category *Zigeuner*, were regarded as “primitive” by the majority. This conceptualization is closely linked to a perceived backwardness, lack of development over time, and the state of remaining in an unchanged “primeval” state that is close to nature. The dominant group positions itself at the other side of this regression–progression relational construct, with the connotation that this group has become “civilized” and gone through a long process of development over time (Antliff and Leighton, 2003: 217). Norms and values, as well as cultural achievements, are closely linked to this notion. The analysis of Herder’s image of *Zigeuner* at the beginning of this article showed that these aspects played a major part in his cultural rankings.

Herder described *Zigeuner* as “foreign”, “heathen”, and “removed by birth from everything [...] civil”, yet “still remaining true to this degrading destination after ages have elapsed”, to the extent that only strict military discipline will help them to adjust to European culture and enable them to contribute to societies (Herder, 1966: 486–487). Similar attitudes can be found in the writings of Reverend Althaus during the 1950s and 1960s, such as when he stated that gypsies lived on a “different cultural level” or “maintained the legacies of antiquity” (cited in Margalit, 2000: 63). Consequently, education was considered a fundamental instrument in civilizing “primitives” and assisting them through cultural improvement, in which a deficit-oriented educational approach was taken that dated back to the Enlightenment (Barth and Osterhammel, 2005; Osterhammel, 2005). In Friedrichslohra, one major goal was to “make [*Zigeuner*] useful members of civil society’ (Pischel, 1894: 12). Missionaries and publications aligned with the hegemonic discourse portrayed *Zigeuner*, as well as colonial subjects, as not pursuing “proper” work. Here the concept of “work” had cultural and moral valence. A characteristic of the *Zigeuner* stereotype was that the group was often portrayed by the dominant discourse as earning a living through theft and trickery, whereas colonial subjects were predominantly represented as lazy. Missionary efforts were therefore focused on Christianization but with a particularly heavy emphasis on cultural and moral dimensions. This ideological mixture can be seen in the instructions that were given to Protestant missionaries in Friedrichslohra, who were to “guide the unfortunate *Zigeuner* [...] towards Christian morality through work and education, prayer and their example with the help of God” (Pischel, 1894: 11). Finally, the analytical category of space is crucial for both Othering processes. From a geographical perspective, spatial similarities between both images in the process of Othering do not seem particularly evident, as the African continent is a distant place, whereas Sinti and Roma communities live within German society. Nevertheless, the writings on *Zigeuner* settlements by the missionaries and other intellectuals reveal a rigid and distinct understanding of culture and the idea that these settlements were impermeable entities. As a result, the majority and dominant discourse regarded *Zigeuner* and different African ethnic groups each as an enclosed entity and fundamentally different from what was perceived as German culture. Furthermore, emotional distance was created by using different pronouns in the process of constructing identity and alterity, such as “us”, signifying closeness, and “them”, signifying distance. Space was also a relevant category in terms of perceiving the influence of these groups on the dominant society. In some public writings, missionaries portrayed *Zigeuner* as “parasitical”, “criminal”, and “a threat” to the surrounding people in order to justify the need for civilizing missions.

Even after the Second World War, such negative stereotypes and discrimination against Sinti and Roma continued. In a handbook for theology from 1962, the entry on *Zigeuner*, with regard to missionary efforts, read as follows: “Neither bloody persecution nor well-intended civilizing missions changed their nature or their number” (n.a., 1962).<sup>[43]</sup> A transfer of knowledge becomes evident in the public writings of missionaries, as similar tropes and stereotypes in the depiction of *Zigeuner* were used across a wider time span. Reinhart Koselleck’s metaphor of layers of time (*Zeitschichten*) seems fitting to describe this transfer of knowledge. He argues that there is a simultaneity of the non-simultaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) and that several layers of time of different lengths and origins are always present and

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43. German original: “Weder blutige Verfolgung noch wohlgemeinte Gesittungsbestrebungen haben ihr Wesen verändern noch ihre Zahl vermindern können.”

effective at the same time (Koselleck, 2000: 9). The same is true for these ideas and stereotypes about the Other, which were constructed during different time periods but remain present as layers in collective memory and are altered depending on the context.

The study of antigypsyism, however, should not be reduced to a mere analysis of images in the writings of missionaries and other intellectuals over time. A closer look at different types of writing reveals that textually produced *Zigeuner* stereotypes not only varied depending on the time they were written, but also on other factors, such as different purposes and the addressees of the writing, even within the work of one author. Furthermore, the close network of agents, such as missionaries and other intellectuals in the metropole, as well as men on the ground in peripheral areas, needs to be analyzed more extensively. In terms of missionaries, studying their path of education might provide further insights. Spohn pointed out that the *Zigeuner* missionaries of the City Mission in Berlin were mainly driven by a Christian sense of duty but had little theoretical background in the field (cf. Spohn, 2016), whereas the missionaries in Friedrichslohra had been specifically trained by institutions and probably teachers that also trained missionaries for service in the colonies.

Missionaries and their specific antigypsyist stereotypes need to be analyzed in greater depth, for example through a comparative analysis with other agents that voiced antigypsyist tendencies or took action against gypsies, such as the police, medical professionals, or civic society. In an anniversary publication of the City Mission in Berlin from 1927, the principal missionary in the city, Thieme, highlighted different antigypsyist attitudes by two other groups of people: civic society in general and the police:

A distant person often too quickly reaches their judgment on the nature of this people. Indolence, adversity to work, mischievousness, crudeness, and a happy-go-lucky nature are undeniably the character traits that are initially observable. A person who is closer is more likely to add the following traits: modesty, good-naturedness, cheerfulness. The *Zigeuner* are a primitive people at an underdeveloped stage in nature, and the locals' strict rejection of this foreign element and excessive regulations by the police force these people that are driven out again and again into new vices (Thieme, 1927: 82).<sup>[44]</sup>

It could be argued that each group – missionaries, police, and the general population – has a specific perspective on Sinti and Roma, and therefore uses slightly different Othering methods in relation to *Zigeuner*. The feminist theorist Donna Haraway calls these partial perspectives “situated knowledges” and highlights that the object of knowledge should also be regarded as an active agent in relation to the knowledge producers, and not only as the surface of the latter's projection (Haraway, 1988). In relation to antigypsyism research and Romani studies, this not only means that the heterogenous group of people

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44. German original: “Der Fernstehende ist oft zu schnell mit seinem Urteil über den Charakter dieses Volkes fertig. Trägheit, Arbeitsscheu, Verschmitztheit, Rohheit, Leichtlebigkeit sind ja unleugbar die oft zuerst sichtbaren Seiten. Der Näherstehende ergänzt dann aber wohl diese Beurteilung und fügt noch hinzu: Genügsamkeit, Gutmütigkeit, Frohsinn. Die *Zigeuner* sind ein primitives Volk auf unentwickelter Naturstufe, und die rigorose Abkehr der Einheimischen gegen diesen Fremdkörper, die überaus scharfen Polizeiverordnungen drängen die Hinausgestoßenen immer von neuen in die Untugenden hinein.”

that fall under the construct *Zigeuner* or the ethnic groups Sinti or Roma must be diversified, but so too must the majority population who conducts the process of Othering. The binary of majority versus minority, however, no longer seems like a productive one for future research on antigypsyism. Instead, one should take a closer look at diverse groups within the majority and minority, and their relation to each other, as a more fruitful method of establishing the constituent elements of the multifaceted phenomenon of antigypsyism and avoiding binary black-and-white thinking.

When using a postcolonial approach for the study of Protestant *Zigeuner* missionaries and the images of *Zigeuner* they construct, one has to bear in mind the complexity of social realities across time and try to reconstruct their fine nuances rather than perpetuating binary oppositions. In terms of the colonial context, Catherine Hall highlights the agency of colonial subjects in speaking against this pattern for establishing positions. She makes the clear remark that “[t]he framework of them/us, or what is absolutely the same versus what is absolutely other, will not do. It is not possible to make sense of empire either theoretically or empirically through a binary lens: we need the dislocation of that binary and more elaborate, cross-cutting ways of thinking” (Hall 2002: 16). Hall also refers to different colonial experiences, that is, to those that depend on class and gender, and thereby she highlights intersectional modes of oppression, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak conceptualized with the term “subaltern” in relation to the oppression of the female colonized (Hall 2002: 15–16; Spivak, 1988). Furthermore, one needs to take into account the perspective researchers bring to analyses of the process of Othering. They mainly draw on previous sources and take on the perspective of the dominant groups; as a result, groups that are represented in images of the Other are not given a voice. Social reality is more complex and thus, reciprocity between subject and object plays a significant part; these are aspects that are omitted when one simply makes reference to one kind of source (Richardson, 2000: 210). In relation to German Protestant missionaries on the African continent, for example, Altena points out, that,

The mission was never a one-way street that was delivered by an ‘active’ missionary to a ‘passive’ person who was to be missionized. Instead, agents from both sides found themselves in a situation of cultural encounter as parts of a specific transcultural constellation, which was influenced by mutual acquisitions, deformations, or entirely new definitions of cultural elements and had reciprocal effects on all participants (Altena, 2003: 3).

Reciprocity is thus highly relevant when one analyzes images of the Other. Altena clearly demonstrated that direct contact over a long period of time leads to more nuanced and objective writings from missionaries on the ground about the colonial subject, which correlates with studies of prejudice in social psychology. Research on antigypsyism would therefore profit from a more differentiated and nuanced view if it took reciprocity into account. Spivak asked whether the subaltern could speak, concluding that they were not heard, and that their speech acts were flouted by male-dominated society. Nevertheless, the oppressed do have a voice, but they are repeatedly silenced by the majority; academia has helped to perpetuate this by focusing on binary oppositions and pursuing an approach based on monodirectional contact. The inclusion of sources from the oppressed groups themselves, which have their own perspectives on such encounters, could make a key contribution in this regard.

## Conclusion

This paper's empirical analysis and methodological reflection have demonstrated the important contribution that a postcolonial framework can make to critical Romani studies and research on antigypsyism more generally. First of all, the encounters between majority and minority or colonizer and colonized should be analyzed as bidirectional relationships that take into account the reciprocal influence of each group on the other. In order to do this, we need to consider the voices of the oppressed and highlight the extent of their actions.

By focusing on a specific group of “men on the spot” – that is, Protestant missionaries – I have highlighted the similar strategies of Othering Sinti and Roma as well as the colonized that were employed among these agents. Missionaries were predominantly driven by a paternalistic aim of “civilizing the primitives”, whom they regarded as *homines educandi*, both in the colonies and the socially and geographically peripheral areas at home. These agents were not only connected by the similar ideological frameworks they adopted, but they also came into close contact with each other. Although the writings these missionaries produced varied greatly according to its purpose and addressees, there was a clear transfer of knowledge across time and space, and between intellectuals within the majority. Within this transference, the image of the *Zigeuner* was altered, most obviously in Justin's racial-biological explanations for the failure of the civilizing mission in Friedrichslohra.

Finally, this article highlighted that antigypsyism is not a monolithic phenomenon within a homogenous majority or a dominant society. Different agents voiced different kinds of antigypsyist attitudes. Additional comparative studies could productively organize specific forms of antigypsyism according to the different groups that held these views and compare Protestant missionaries with the police, medical professionals, or members of civic society. A genre analysis of different kinds of discourse, such as those from religion, arts and popular culture, or medicine, would also be beneficial here. The example of Friedrichslohra also showed that the Protestant mission was conducted in an ecclesiastical context too. As such, a deeper analysis of the Protestant mission in relation to the Catholic *Zigeuner* mission might provide important insights for Critical Romani Studies and processes of colonization more broadly.

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