

## **The Knowledge of the Identity of the Romani People as a Generator Element of the Socio-Cultural Integration Process**

**PhD Jesús M. Aparicio Gervás**

Profesor Titular

Departamento de Didáctica de las Ciencias Experimentales  
Sociales y de la Matemática de la  
Facultad de Educación y Trabajo Social de la  
Universidad de Valladolid (España)  
Campus “Miguel Delibes”, Paseo de Belén  
1. Valladolid 47011

**Magister: Charles David Tilley Bilbao**

Máster en Antropología de Iberoamérica

Universidad de Salamanca (España) C/Canga Argüelles  
Nº 15, 4 dcha. CP: 33202  
Gijón (España)

### **Abstract**

*Since the arrival of the Romani people to Spain and after more than five hundred years of shared history, there is still a great lack of knowledge of this ethnic minority. The existence of many prejudices and stereotypes against this population requires a change in the perception and knowledge of their cultural traits by the majority of the population. Change must occur through respect and understanding of their main features. And for that, the majority of the population needs to know the pillars that constitute their cultural identity, among which we highlight the value acquired by the family, respect for elders, the strength of the solidarity within the group against the “personal self”, the importance of the everyday and present time, the implementation of its unknown “Romani law”, the meaning of “the promise”, the religious beliefs. This knowledge is undoubtedly one of the mechanisms facilitating the process of sociocultural integration.*

**Keywords:** Romani people, identity, prejudices, stereotypes, solidarity, coexistence, education

### **1. Introduction**

Despite having coexisted for over five centuries, it is still difficult to eliminate, or at least overcome some of the racist conceptions, stereotypes and prejudices about the main ethnic minority in our country: the Romani ethnic minority. And Spain, since the arrival of democracy, hasn't done so badly in the integration process, like other European countries, in regards to integration policies of the Romani people, as Romani MEP Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia stated in one of his innumerable lectures he has taught throughout his long career. And it wasn't done so badly, when over the past thirty-five years, the illiteracy rate of the Romani population has fallen from 80 % to only 8.6% of the total population, meeting today's structural illiteracy percentages. Figures that even the most developed Europe couldn't reduce in such a short amount of time. Therefore, we insist that Spain hasn't done so badly in regards to integration policies. Indeed, it is not enough, but we have not gone astray, compared to our neighbor developed countries. Luckily, with the actual creation of the European Higher Education and the use of materials in some university degrees that enable more knowledge and understanding to the Romani community, will allow, in a short period of time, to stop these negative attitudes, which still exist in today's society. We are sure that if our educators had received adequate training in this regard, the situation now would be quite different.

At the time that this actually reaches the classroom and is transmitted in the context of intercultural education, those racist statements as well as prejudices and stereotypes, still very present in our society towards this ethnic minority, will begin to fade out. Education is and will remain the tool to enable the change and will stimulate the sociocultural integration process in Spain.

Let's not forget that our society, despite the improvement and the progress made in the field of education and knowledge, it is still quite racist, as noted above. Studies in the late sixties confirm this. Banton (1967), in his famous work "Race Relations" highlighted three dimensions of racism: ideological, racial prejudice and a third one connected with racial discrimination. Forty years later, we can see those same racist dimensions. Isn't our society generating continuous ethnic stereotypes? Isn't it true that even today, we still witness discriminatory collective behavior towards the Romani population, who constitute part of the social relations?

More recent research, conducted in the nineties by the anthropologist Teresa San Roman (1996), analyzes the racist attitudes from different positions. Thus, in the first part of his work, "The walls of separation", introduces a new approach to racist conception, to make an interesting discourse on "alterophobia". It is a conceptual analysis that introduces a new social dimension of the word.

The racist positions can pose obstacles to the development of social and educational activities. Activities that without any doubt are absolutely necessary to promote and generate stimuli that cause this sociocultural attitudes against discrimination of the Romani community. In some Spanish regions, fortunately, this situation has already been overcome and Romani associations have not only begun to pay off, but it is totally and fully consolidated in the society itself.

Luckily the Spanish society has begun to realize the potential that holds the Romani community, which, even maintaining their own identity, has been adapting and integrating into the social majority, leading in many cities, provinces and autonomous communities, to a social mix that becomes increasingly more difficult to differentiate. Just looking at rural region of Andalucía, Extremadura and Catalonia, for instance, we see how the Romani and non-Romani children are perfectly integrated in the classroom, without any differentiation. Just a few years ago, we were still fighting the "ghetto school" and discriminatory education policies.

Let's not forget the structure of the Romani people. In a Spain where the low birth rate is something that must be fought, the Romani community has a birth rate that promotes generational change in the country. If at first birth rates Spaniards were "made-up" by the massive influx of immigrants, the crises experienced in recent years has put to an end to this birth growth.

However the Romani population still continues to maintain a rate of young people (31%), which is almost twice that of non-Romani population (18%) and the average age of the Romani population (28 years), is well below the average age of the non-Romani population (42 years), indexes that undoubtedly help to build the pyramid of Spanish population and contributes to the livelihoods of the welfare state, increasingly difficult to maintain. But to encourage integration and ultimately, coexistence, it is necessary that a two-way process of mutual knowledge and recognition occurs. And therein lies part of the problem. What do we know of the Romani? And if we know rather little, if anything, is it possible to have a harmonious coexistence? It is clear that without taking that first step, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the objective. Therefore, in our article, we want to give relevance of some of these factors, of course not all, but those who can somehow help us build that process. We are sure that this mutual knowledge and understanding, in which we begin to know, appreciate and respect their traditions and most significant habits, will promote attitudes of respect and tolerance, favoring undoubtedly the process of coexistence.

## ***2. Most Significant Traditions and Customs That Shape the Identity of the Romani People***

It is not our intention to analyze in these pages the traditions and customs of the Romani culture. We only wish to describe the most significant, in order to open the way to further investigation, for those who want to thoroughly know. Therefore, we will identify and disclose a summary of the traditions and customs that, in our view, are part of the identity of the Romani, as we'll see in this work.

### **2.1. Family and the Respect for Elders**

The family and the respect for elders are two of the pillars of the Romani culture. The individual is not recognized on a personal level, but by their status within the group. The group and specifically the family, define identity. The value acquired by the family group is shown even in the use of language itself.

Thus, words like "cousin" or "uncle" have different meanings when used outside the family context. The first refers to Romani of the same age and the second to older Romani. We share the same opinion as Rodriguez (2011), when he states that "The life of the Romani, the real and true, always occurs within the family, which becomes the main cognitive horizon".

Like any unwritten culture - and Romani is, the knowledge, the history, the use and assurance, the customs, are treasured by older people in the community. In this sense, the elder Romani, even today, support the weight of tradition, besides safeguarding the authority and be, as well, who advise and guide. And therein lies the respect and affection that the Romani community feel for their elders, whether or not family. The oral traditions, only survive thanks to a rooted genealogical memory; as noted by Yoors (2009): "memories do not go beyond four or at most five generations, which are reduced to those ancestors that a living person is still able to remember." They are the true "guardians" of the Romani identity.

## **2.2. The Value of Group Solidarity against the Personal Self**

By reviewing history, we note that any human group persecuted and mistreated, has tried to protect and shelter turning in on itself. But the Romani case is very peculiar. In the words of Gómez Alfaro (2010), it is interpreting the history of a people who did not write his own story. It will serve as a reminder the over eighty "Pragmatics Laws" issued throughout the history of Spain (Aparicio, 2006), from the Catholic Kings, until Carlos III; or review the genocide of more than five hundred thousand Romani (Kenrick and Puxon, 1997), who were martyred in the gas chambers of the Nazi army in Europe during World War II (Fings, Heuss and Sparing, 1999) to understand the reasons behind the auto protection. Some of these Romani are still alive today.

The value awarded to the group as a protective element takes precedence over the individual, completely vulnerable throughout history. Therefore, it is still common that Romani people prioritize the benefit of the community and especially the family, versus the individual. It is likely that time will dilute this identity reference, but it is still very common among all members of the international Romani community.

## **2.3. Daily Life and the Immediate Becomes the Priority**

Like any nomadic people, as Romani people have been, survival was the reason to exist. And in this sense, immediacy in obtaining answers and achieving objectives is a very common cultural constant throughout its history. The unwritten culture and the initial nomadic life, gave priority to the "immediate" on some aspects of life, which today and for the non-Romani society are hardly important. This influences the prioritization of different values and among them the education, that we all know, is a value that requires very long-term projection. Perhaps this is one of the factors that didn't initially motivate the Romani, but fortunately today, at least in Spain, has already overcome. We cannot say the same for Romani settled in Romania, Bulgaria, or in Latin America.

## **2.4. The Relationships and Marriage in the Romani Family**

There are no differences in relationships between Romani and non-Romani, as these respond to feelings and stimuli that depend on the human being. But when the relationships are institutionalized, significant differences occur. For instance, premarital sexual relations, so frequent in the non-Romani society, usually are not well accepted within the Romani community. Divorces and separations are not comparable in number to those that occur in non-Romani population, as well as remarriage.

Young Romani are still getting married at an early age, despite the age of marriage has risen in the late years. The Romani rite of virginity implies that premarital relationships are discouraged and, consequently, marriages between Romani occur below the average age of the main society. Lately a major change is occurring and more and more Romani marry at similar ages to those of the non-Romani population.

### **2.4.1. Romani Wedding**

When two young Romani wish to get married, they ask the consent of their parents ("proposal"), as usually occurs in the main society. Once this has been done and with the parental agreement, the rite of wedding takes place. We will describe hereby the most significant features.

During the wedding celebration, men dance with the bride, lifting her in their arms. Next, during the banquet, the guests give their presents to the grooms (usually money) who offer carnation in exchange. After the banquet, the ritual "el yeli" begins.

The “juntadora” (a woman), accompanied by a group of older women, check the virginity of the bride to be, with a tissue. The handkerchief, arranged in three folds, is introduced into the vagina with a sharp instrument. The blood caused by the rupture of the hymen, spot the three folds, which is known as the "tres rosas" (three roses). The “juntadora” shows the tissue to a group of men in order to demonstrate and to attest what has just taken place. It is common for men to rip the shirt and to raise the couple on their shoulders as they sing, dance, throw almonds at them (symbol of fertility) and sweets. The songs that are sung are "Alboreás", meaning ode to daughter in law. From this moment on the party begins. The wedding lasts two days and the highlight, as noted above, is the test of the handkerchief, rite in which the purity of the bride is checked. Certainly, and also in the words of Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, "*Virginity and Romani wedding are two concepts inextricably linked*". In fact, if the virginity of the women cannot be proven, she may be rejected.

#### **2.4.2. The "Rapto" or Escape of Fiancées**

This occurs when the couple has not obtained the consent of their parents, or the woman does not want to perform the ritual of handkerchief. In this case, simply for the fact that the couple will spend the night at a recognized standing Romani, the Romani community considers them as married. During the night, the bride and groom will not sleep together.

When a couple arrives at the home of a Romani man, he must accept them and immediately notify the father of the bride. He will then need to take care of the preparation of the celebration, as well as taking the bride to her parents' house the next day, acquiring a great responsibility, and the guarantor of her integrity (Ramírez Heredia, 2005).

Such marriages, accepted by the Romani community, are not registered in any administrative document, which may cause loss of rights and subsidies to which is entitled any other marriage (widow's pensions, social benefits, for instance). This situation has remained so until the Strasbourg Court has issued a ruling in favor of recognition. Today, Romani are getting married at older ages and there are many single Romani women attending family planning, and delaying their wedding. This change is occurring slowly, and it is more in the surface rather than in deep.

#### **2.5. The Unknown “Romani Law”**

The sparsely known as “Romani law” is part of the pillars that make up their culture and identity. It is not, as people may think, a different law for everyone, Gipsy and non-Gipsy, have the same rights and duties. It is therefore a form of social action, in which the essence of Romani culture is transmitted through conflict resolution. Isn't the society trying to establish mediation proceedings, solutions to problems, trying to avoid other more complex and sensitive performances? In this sense, the Romani community has always "resolved" conflicts through mediation proceedings, which leads couples to accept elements typical of their culture.

##### **2.5.1. The Importance of the "Arreglador" (“Mediator”) in the Transmission of the Romani Culture**

We find the mediating figure of "Arreglador" or mediator in the Romani community, which is one of the clearest examples of its cultural identity. The mediator is an old Romani, renowned in the community, which mediates and resolves conflicts between Romani, giving judgment. Judgment will be obeyed and respected by the entire Romani community (Aparicio and Delgado, 2014).

As noted, the mediator must be male, old, with experience and must also have demonstrated an impeccable honesty throughout his life. This is not hereditary and the Gipsy community confers great responsibility to it and great pride, which doesn't come without responsibility. Many times, the mediation process requires hard work, trying to reach the objective, which is just the agreement between two parties, trying not only to reconcile different postures, but also to come to a solution when people have opposite view.

The Mediator (better known as "Patriarch" for non-Romani), as noted above, implies and entails a huge sacrifice. When he is called to "sort out" (sort out, mediate, intercede) in any conflict between Romani, he should immediately leave everything (including work, if necessary), and seek to resolve the problem. The resolution and mediation of these conflicts are not free of problems and tensions between different families involved.

Basically, the way of action of these mediators, generally follow the criteria and guidelines described below (Aparicio and Delgado, 2011):

- They act upon request by at least one party;
- They should not be involved in the conflict he is called to resolve;
- Each party has the same right to describe the situation and explain;
- All situations are analyzed and deliberated;
- Finally the mediator issues his sentence, which must be respected by both parties;
- Subsequently, he ensures compliance to the sentence;
- Enforcement of decisions. Failure to comply may result in personal and family exile.
- If the offense involves blood, the offender and his family are exiled. Exile affects the whole family of the guilty person and they must leave, during the time decided in the sentence, the city in which they live. When the punishment is fulfilled, they can return, if it is guaranteed that the same conflict between the parties will not repeat again.

We also would like to emphasize that the weight of Romani law, not only lies with the individual, but also directly affects their own family, which as noted above, is the foundation of identity in the Romani culture. Thus, the family will suffer the consequences of wrongdoing of one of its members. This may be changing today, however, given its importance (because do not forget, directly affects the very essence of Romani culture), it is likely it will be happening very slowly.

### **2.5.2. A Cross-Bridge: Romani Intercultural "Mediator"**

The figure of Romani mediator, can be practiced by both men and women. It is a person who mediate between the Romani and the main culture, building bridges of contact, resolving administrative problems, and so on. The Romani mediator, is a figure who in practice helps with social issues and connection with institutions.

### **2.5.3. "Palabra Gitana": The Romani Promise/Commitment**

As noted above, the Romani is an unwritten culture. Therefore, the word takes on a fundamental value as a social commitment. It carries the same features of a signed contract between Romani and even more if there are witnesses who can corroborate. It doesn't have the same validity if it occurs between Romani and non-Romani.

## **2.6. The Religion**

Even if the belief of the Romani who originally came to the Peninsula in 1425 is unknown, we are aware that until the seventies they were mostly Catholic. A few years later, Romani experienced a major change in their beliefs, mainly turning to the Evangelical Church.

Evangelical Romani belong to the Church of Philadelphia. The key features, among others, are the following:

- Belong to the Protestant rite;
- There are no images in churches;
- Baptism by immersion of the person when is an adult;
- Mary is mother of Jesus, but is not a virgin.

But when did the Romani Pentecostalism arise and what does it mean? We can say that the Pentecostal evangelical movement among the Romani population was born around the 50s in France. Seven years later, Clément Le Cossec, a French evangelical pastor from Assemblies of God decided to create the Romani Evangelical Mission, which began to expand throughout the French territory (Fraser, 2005). In 1968, the Romani Evangelical Mission is separated from the Assemblies of God and joins the Protestant Federation of France. At present, we estimate the presence of Romani evangelicals in over forty countries.

The Romani Evangelical movement began in the neighboring country in the middle of last century, and it does not reach Spain until the mid-sixties. It is introduced by making contact between French Protestants and Spanish Romani who migrated to this country for the wine harvest. The result of these meetings is the creation of the first evangelical church in the catalan city of Balaguer. A few years later, the religion began to spread in many other Catalan towns, and after to Bilbao, Palencia, Santander, Valladolid and other Spanish cities.

From the year 1969 on, these groups have taken the name of Romani Evangelical Mission or Romani Evangelical Movement finally going to become Evangelical Church of Philadelphia, or "participants in Worship "(named after the daily ceremony).

For some historians, the Spanish Romani population belongs to the Evangelical Church for over 50% of the total. Others, however, believe that it reaches 70%.

A study by anthropologist Silvia Carrasco in 2003, reflects that 72.3% were evangelicals; 25.9% Catholic; 0% Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists and others (when three years ago reached 4.3%) and only 1.8% did not belong to any religious belief. These figures diverge from those of the seventies, when 91% of the Romani was Catholic. Religiosity has always been a constant in the Romani culture through time, and expresses its peak in the cult of their dead relatives. Some of the characteristics we note are, among others, the stringency in mourning, the period this needs to be observed, the adornment of the graves (sometimes even exaggerated), and the waiver to enter bars, cinemas and entertainment in times of mourning.

## **2.7. The Important Role of Romani Women in Conveying the Cultural Change**

Just thirty years ago a young Romani could only go out accompanied by adults or kids. Until a few years ago, it was completely normal to abandon the studies at an early age and the main objectives in life were reduced to the care of the home, husband and children. They could be employed to work as street vendors and in street markets, neglecting their own studies.

But today the situation of Romani women has changed completely. Romani of the XXI century are taking care of their own studies, delaying the age of completion, and reaching high positions in the society. They also participate in different training plans, acts as mediator and as social worker in their own community, etc..

In just twenty-five years, the change that has occurred is visible in many aspects of everyday life and it has become the engine that promotes integration and coexistence with non-Romani society. This was made possible through associations promoted by the Romani women themselves.

### **2.7.1. The First Association of Gipsy Women**

The first association of Romani women (Romi) started in Granada in 1990, reflecting the agitation of a group of women who wanted to fight for equal rights and gender, for the social and cultural promotion of the community. Since then, many associations were born in the Peninsula, such as "Romí Sersení" (1991), "Peppermint" and "Alboreá" in Madrid; the "Sinando Kalí" in Jaén; Murcia "Kalochí Kaló" or association of university Romani "Amuradi" in Seville, to name a few.

#### **2.7.1.1. The Romani Associations in the City of Valladolid (Spain)**

The Romani association for women was born in Valladolid in the second half of the twentieth century, precisely in the sixties, following the impulse that had gained momentum with the creation of associations in Andalusia. The association was born under the umbrella of the Romani Secretariat Foundation.

##### **2.7.1.1.1. From the Suburbs to the city, from the Shanty Housing to the House**

Despite the existence of these social movements originated in the seventies, the Romani in Valladolid were still living in poverty and isolation, concentrated in shanty houses in the outskirts of a neighborhood located on the suburbs of the city: the district of San Isidro.

Starting in 1976, a change in the integration policy in Valladolid, attempted to eliminate the situation of marginality that was created in the outskirts of "wasteland of San Isidro". So, on March 8 of that year, the City of Valladolid approves the construction of one hundred and ten houses in a new neighborhood of the city, to be occupied by one hundred ten families living in the shanty houses in the city (Aparicio, 2002). A new neighborhood was built, with the aim of providing shelter to those Romani families, trying to keep them away from poverty and isolation in which they were living. Nothing could be more far from reality.

The new neighborhood that was built was called after the illusion that was sought at the moment of creation: "The Hope". A few years later, on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1979, the first houses were handed over to the Romani families. In return, each family would be paying one thousand pesetas a month, to acquire the property, fact that is unknown to most Valladolid population.

New neighborhoods were also born in many other Spanish cities in the mid-seventies. They were built with integration policies badly laid out, with exciting objectives which were lacking objective basis, with best intentions but with the absolute ignorance of the social and cultural reality. The end result was almost doomed to failure before the actual start. The case of Valladolid couldn't be different.

The intention, as we noted above, was good but it was not in its planning and approach, and even less when it came to the execution.

It shouldn't have been allowed the construction of a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, only for Romani, with construction materials of poor quality, with few supplies and a really regrettable infrastructure. So, after a few months of occupation, homes were already in ruin. The floor was sinking, rain water did not seep in, the population was gradually increasing, and the unemployment rate reached ninety percent of its residents... ultimately there were the same situations of poverty and isolation that had previously existed in the slums from which they departed. The process of social integration as originally planned had gone wrong. Ultimately, shortly after the district was constructed until its final evacuation in 2002, the town had become the largest ghetto in the history of the city, the province and even the community. In many places they were trading drugs and it became the best shelter for criminals.

This situation tied in the Romani with all the isolation context of the neighborhood where there was other people as well. The media did the rest.

The non-Romani people, fueled by racist "information" from some media who did not know the problem at all, was thinking that Romani had destroyed the houses that had been given to them, that they were the source of crime and traffic of drugs. Again, the most extreme intolerance raged with some people whose only fault was to have paid for homes that lacked of the minimum conditions of habitability. For sure the unemployment aggravated the crisis.

Even with the situation the Romani was experiencing, and as a result of the strenuous efforts of many families who really wanted another different way of life, the ghetto was transformed into a dynamic element, generating associations of Romani youth. There was so little of this made public. The first youth Gipsy association in Valladolid was born and was called after the town: "La Esperanza" ("Hope"). A training course for Romani women also started here in 1977. A cultural center was built, with an interesting library, probably the best in the region of Castilla and Leon in regards to Romani people and intercultural education. The library was the center for research on multiculturalism, and as a result a new magazine was published with the name of "oujaripen" ("hope" in Romani), again called after the neighborhood in Valladolid where Romani community lived. All this disappeared with the neighborhood.

Despite having generated a number of associations, the Romani ghetto acted as a "black hole." It was impossible to get out. Marginality, crime and especially the enormous damage that caused the drug market, forced local authorities to terminate it. Thus, on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1988, just eleven years after its first occupation, the first house was demolished. The Romani population was relocated under some conditions that, despite giving good results, they could be branded at least intolerant if they were released today. Early in the new century, the town was gone and the Romani spread around in different neighborhoods of the city of Valladolid.

The new integration of the Romani trying to relocate in the city, suffered the stereotypes and prejudices that have lived in the ghetto. The same prejudices and stereotypes applied to the rest of the Romani population already integrated in the city.

We emphasize this particular fact, not only because of our knowledge and participation in it, but as a model for many other ghettos that have existed and still continue to exist, not only in Spain (hopefully fewer), but also in many countries of the Old Europe, that both upholds the principles of freedom. It is sufficient to mention the events of the Romanian and Bulgarian Romani in France and Italy.

## **2.8. Language: Romanó Caló**

The original language is the romanó. Linguistic studies show a clear relationship between the Romani and Indian languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, etc. (Aguirre, 2008). Anyway, the Romani, derived from Sanskrit and is spoken by more than twelve million European Romani, and has experienced change and transformation, adapting to the native language of the country the Romani have reached.

In Spain, the romanó spoken by romani who settled in our country more than five hundred years ago, is called "romanó caló", which is actually a romanó adaptation of to the spanish forms.

The romanó caló has generated new words that have enriched the Castilian, that, even though not commonly used, are widely known (Jiménez, 1853), such as: eating (pull), hoax (hoax), give (dinar), son (kid), crowd (mob), foot (pinré), fear (funk), assert (molar), funk (funk)...



## 2.9. Flamenco in Romani Culture

Our aim in this section is only to point out some basics and general aspects of flamenco, without entering at all, on the question in depth, as this would be a work itself. Therefore, we refer to the existing and extensive bibliography for those who want to dig deeper on this matter.

As we know, the flamenco genre emerged in the late eighteenth century in towns and agricultural villages of Southern Andalusia region, however this cannot be confirmed by data. Centuries later, in 2010, UNESCO has declared it Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Certainly, its genesis is the result of the influence of at least four cultures that existed in the late middle Ages in the Iberian Peninsula: Arabic, Jewish, Christian, and since 1425, the Romani. Nor can we deny its great similarity to Hindu music and dances. Joaquin Albaicin (1997) notes that “Flamenco is basically the result of the particular evolution that the main steps of dance and traditional Hindu music, preserved in a hermeneutic circle, had in Spain”.

For many researchers of this art, the "lamento" or "complaint" that identifies some voices of flamenco music may originally derive from those Romani slaves in the galley who were forced to row day and night. For others, however, was the result of hard work in the forges in metallurgy at that time. The primitive “cante jondo”, perhaps originated within these forges or in the mines, was not accompanied with musical instruments (ram), being also the most genuine andalusian song, accompanied by a deep feeling.

Flamenco is very important as art, as well as an educational resource, frequently used in extracurricular activities with Romani students. In reality, flamenco has helped reduce school absenteeism of Romani in Spain.

## 3. Conclusions

We are convinced that it is necessary to stimulate a change through the modification of the social perception that the majority population has towards the Romani community. If we do not change that perception, everything else will not work. Are we prepared to listen to the Romani? Likewise, are we trying to educate a population that is convinced of the reality of prejudice and racist stereotypes generated by misinformation from the media? It will be after the "cognitive shift" of perception, when we should really work on the knowledge itself. A knowledge based on grounded reality and objective facts. This is how we should finally remove these prejudices and stereotypes anchored (and not all of them).

Once removed some of the many prejudices and stereotypes (which still exist), the next step would be to generate intercultural attitudes and values. They would be attitudes and values which would allow coexistence in peace and harmony, through the values generated by a society protected by democracy and the constitution. It would mean to encourage values and attitudes that promoted respect, tolerance, solidarity, and always protected by justice and with the final aim of harmonious coexistence. The final proposal would be a framework, perhaps utopian, but not unattainable, where Romani and non-Romani could live in a multicultural society.

This objective must be raised in a framework and common planning. The frame is the school and the planning is the education itself. An education that, in the words of Muñoz (2005), *"fosters a culture of the meeting, integrates values and references male and female, in which the behaviors and ways of being, traditionally associated with the "feminine", are valued as worthy to be universalized"*.

In our case, the intention goes beyond. We hope, and we commit ourselves to perform action based on these premises, but at all times, we are aware that we must develop the work in practice and, consequently, we are open to changes and modifications that we are sure will occur. But for this, we should and must count on the protagonists of change: the Romani people.



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