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GRAFFITI, STICKERS AND ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY: A
LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE COMPARISON OF TWO STOCKHOLM
NEIGHBOURHOODS

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INTRODUCTION

Within linguistic landscape studies, research on informal signs such as graffiti and stickers remains underrepresented. Linguistic landscape research has predominantly focused on the presence of signs in public space, often overlooking the importance and meaningfulness of their absence, erasure, and nonexistence. The present study investigates the informal linguistic landscapes of two district areas of Stockholm, Södermalm and Järva, selected for their contrasting features. The study aims to highlight both quantitative and qualitative differences in graffiti and stickers between the two areas. A further aim is to explore the anti-graffiti regime instituted by Stockholm and its impact on graffiti practices in Södermalm and Järva.

The thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical framework of linguistic landscape studies, providing definitions of the field and discussing central concepts of the discipline. The chapter also defines the city as central to linguistic landscape studies and outlines methodologies.

Chapter 2 focuses on graffiti and stickers as objects of study within linguistic landscape research. It presents definitions, features, motivations, and methodological approaches specific to these types of signs.

Chapter 3 examines anti-graffiti regimes and the semiotics of nonexistence they produce. In doing this, it underlines the importance of including the aspect of absence and removal practices in linguistic landscape research on graffiti.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of the linguistic situation that characterises Sweden, discussing language policy, diatopic variation, contemporary multilingualism, and youth language varieties. The chapter concludes with a description of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime.

Chapter 5 presents the processes of site selection, data collection and annotation.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis. It first analyses the graffiti corpora, then the stickers corpora, and finally investigates the influence of the anti-graffiti regime on graffiti in Södermalm and Järva. The chapter concludes with a comparative summary which highlights the differences observed between the two areas.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

1.1 Introduction

The present Chapter introduces the concept of linguistic landscape, an expanding field in linguistic research. In Section 1.2, the classic definition as well as more recent and comprehensive definitions are presented. Section 1.3 describes the different types of signs and the role various actors have in producing them. In Section 1.4, the functions of linguistic signs and the concepts of linguistic dominance and prominence are presented. Section 1.5 introduces the concepts of linguistic vitality and visibility in connection to the functions of signs identified in the previous Section. In Section 1.6 the central role of the city is underlined and connected to the concepts of superdiversity, glocalisation and commodification of space. Finally, in Section 1.7 the methodologies of the discipline, as well as recent expansions in its research topics, are presented.

1.2 Definition

The concept of linguistic landscape (LL) was first introduced by Landry & Bourhis (1997), who defined it as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25). Within this framework, the linguistic landscape is understood as having two functions: an informational function and a symbolic function. The first consists of the fact that the linguistic landscape of a territory provides information concerning its sociolinguistic environment by reflecting the array of languages present in it. The latter refers to the fact that the linguistic landscape signals the social value and status of different languages and, by extension, of the communities that speak them. In Section 1.4 a more detailed explanation of these functions is presented.

Subsequent research has expanded the object and the scope of the field. Shohamy and Gorter (2009) define the linguistic landscape as every kind of “language in the environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces” (Shohamy & Gorter 2009: 1). In this broader perspective, the linguistic landscape is not only limited to official or commercial signs but also includes informal texts such as graffiti, posters and stickers (Fiorentini & Forlano 2024: 803).

Additionally, the linguistic landscape ceases to be merely an object for empirical observation and is rather seen as a socially meaningful space in which language practices, identities and ideologies are

negotiated. According to Bagna et al. (2021), the linguistic landscape is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Bagna et al. 2021: 355) that forms a vast and pervasive domain of communication to which all inhabitants of a territory are constantly exposed (Barni & Bagna 2015). Language producers and users have an active role in shaping it through their dynamic negotiation of rights and identities (Barni & Bagna 2015: 11). In Ben-Rafael et al.'s view (2006), the linguistic landscape is a context-dependent and symbolic construction of space that is shaped by a large variety of actors, that include both public institutions and individuals (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 8).

As a consequence of this theoretical broadening, the discipline experiences a shift in methodologies and a widening of research foci, which will be highlighted in Section 1.7.

1.3 Sign types and actors

Two types of signs can be distinguished: top-down signs and bottom-up signs. Top-down signs are produced and exhibited by institutional agencies which act under the control of local or central policies. As such, they are expected to reflect the dominant culture and language (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 10). Instances of top-down signs are road signs, street names, and inscriptions on government buildings. Bottom-up signs are produced by private actors and are characterised by a greater language diversity (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 26). Instances of bottom-up signs are commercial signs or advertising signs displayed on businesses or on billboards.

This distinction illustrates that the linguistic landscape of a territory is not the result of a homogeneous set of practices, but rather the outcome of interaction between multiple actors operating at different levels and in ways that are not necessarily harmonious nor coherent (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 8). As mentioned, these actors include both individuals and public institutions, whose behaviour and choices lead to the creation and use of LL elements (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 8-9). According to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 9-10), this process can be read through three theoretical lenses that are not mutually exclusive: Bourdieu's, Goffman's or Boudon's. In Bourdieu's perspective, social reality is determined by power relations; in this view, the dominance of certain languages over others in the LL of a territory can be explained in terms of power relations between dominant and subordinate communities. In Goffman's view, social action is determined by the drive of presentation of self, which leads to strategies of inclusion and exclusion; in this perspective, the elements of the LL are a means through which communities express their identity. Finally, Boudon sees social action as motivated by good reasons, that are rational considerations made by actors; from this perspective, the LL structure and

features can be read in terms of the interests that LL actors have, namely the attractiveness and influence of their signs on the public.

The LL is also fundamentally influenced by language policy, that is “the explicit and conscious intervention on language form and functions” (Dal Negro 2008: 206), which shapes and regulates the use of signs (Gorter 2006b: 84). In light of this, the linguistic landscape can be described as having a double nature, because it is, on the one hand, “the expression of a given sociolinguistic situation” (Dal Negro 2008: 206) and, on the other hand, “the instrument through which a new course in language policy is made immediately apparent and a new sociolinguistic scenario is being shaped” (Dal Negro 2008: 206). Consequently, the LL cannot be seen as a mere mirror of the sociolinguistic composition of a territory, because its production is always mediated by official and non-official interventions on language, as well as by speakers’ attitudes and ideologies (Dal Negro 2008: 206).

1.4 Sign functions, dominance, prominence

As briefly introduced in Section 1.2, Landry & Bourhis (1997) identify two functions the LL can perform: the informational function and the symbolic function.

Through its informational function, the LL serves as “a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25). In other words, it informs on the linguistic characteristics and language boundaries that characterise the territory. Additionally, the presence of a specific language on public signs indicates that said language can be used as a means of communication in public and private establishments in that territory (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25). The LL also informs on the sociolinguistic composition of the language groups inhabiting the territory, and on the power and status relationships that exist between said language groups, which is reflected in the dominance and prominence of certain languages over others on public signs. A language is dominant if it is the most employed one (Fiorentini & Forlano 2024: 809) and prominent if it is the most emphasised graphically, through font type and dimension and positioning (Fiorentini & Forlano 2024: 809).

The symbolic function of the LL consists in the effect that the presence or absence of a language on public signs has on the members of the corresponding linguistic communities (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 27-29). Concretely, the presence, dominance and prominence of one’s language convey that its community is recognised as having value, status and vitality, and thus contributes to the maintenance of a positive social identity for the in-group. On the contrary, the absence of one’s language can convey the sense that its community is not valued and has little status within society, and, further, that

its language is not useful. This can contribute to the linguistic assimilation of the community to the dominant language.

Through research on local Italian communities, Dal Negro (2008: 207) identifies three possible functions for signs: they can have a communicative or informative function, they can act as markers of identity of their communities, or they can have an attractive function. Both language choice and factors such as fonts, typographic organisation of space and type of support contribute to these functions.

1.5 Vitality and visibility

Consistently with the functions of signs that they identify, Landry & Bourhis (1997) consider the variety of languages present in the linguistic landscape of a territory as a concrete manifestation of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the ethnolinguistic groups inhabiting a territory. In this perspective, the linguistic landscape is “the most visible marker of the linguistic vitality of the various ethnolinguistic groups living within a particular administrative or territorial enclave” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 34). In other words, the authors see a direct relationship between language vitality, that is the actual use and intergenerational transmission of a language (Berruto 2019: 67-68), and language visibility, that is the use of a language in contexts of social communication (Barni & Bagna 2010: 4). Concretely, the visibility of a language influences its perceived status and power, which in turn can influence its use and intergenerational transmission. If a language is scarcely represented or absent in the LL, it may be perceived as having low status and power, and consequently as being less useful. This can lead its linguistic community to abandon it in favour of the dominant language in a process of assimilation, thus impacting on language vitality.

Building on this view, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) assert that the relationship between linguistic landscape and the sociolinguistic context is bidirectional. On the one hand, the LL “reflects the relative power and status of the different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context” (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 67) and can be therefore seen as the product of a specific sociolinguistic situation, which can provide information about it. On the other hand, the LL “contributes to the construction of the sociolinguistic context” (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 68), because the continuous exposure and processing of the LL can influence people’s perception of the languages of a territory and, consequently, influence their linguistic behaviour.

By contrast, other authors (Barni & Bagna 2010; Barni & Bagna 2015) reject the idea that there is a direct relationship between the visibility of a language in a territory and its vitality, asserting that this

relationship rather depends on several linguistic, extra-linguistic and contextual factors (Barni & Bagna 2015: 10). Among these are “the linguistic situation of the area, the size of the city, the extent of the immigrant communities, their degree of ‘rootedness’, employment opportunities in the area, migration channels and migration status, community organisations, local public policy towards immigrants, etc.” (Barni & Bagna 2010: 5).

1.6 The city as a linguistic landscape

Large modern urban contexts are the most important source for examining and interpreting linguistic dynamics (Barni & Bagna 2015) and a privileged context to investigate the linguistic landscape (Gorter 2006b). Since the LL is a marker of sociolinguistic dynamism, its analysis can reveal the presence of new languages and the appearance or disappearance of others (Dal Negro 2008: 206). Consequently, research on the LL of a territory can be used as a means to investigate and uncover its social reality (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 9).

Contemporary cities are characterised by superdiversity (Bagna & al. 2021: 349-350), which is an especially high rate of linguistic and cultural diversity, directly linked to the phenomenon of immigration. Cities are places where different cultures, languages and identities come into contact and interact, negotiating to conquer sufficient space to manifest their vitality and visibility (Barni & Bagna 2010: 5). Grzech & Dohle (2018: 67) claim that the LL provides insight into how individuals and communities “create, appropriate, negotiate and resist particular language practices and discourses” while also contributing to the construction of public space. Consequently, cities are privileged spaces where cultural and linguistic contact, interaction and negotiation can be observed (Barni & Bagna 2010: 3).

The city tends both towards monolingualism and towards plurilingualism (Barni & Bagna 2010: 5). The tendency towards monolingualism is caused by the fact that the city is the “centre where the unitary linguistic model is the strongest” (Barni & Bagna 2010: 5) and that the dominant language is a “necessary and indispensable tool for interaction, as well as a symbol of integration, assimilation and full citizenship” (ibid.). The tendency towards plurilingualism is because cities are made up of heterogeneous groups that are in contact with each other and they are spaces where collective and individual identities can express themselves (ibid.).

According to Gorter (2006b: 81-82), cities are characterised by a process of glocalisation, a concept that combines the effects of the processes of regionalisation or localisation and of globalisation. Regionalisation or localisation consists of an emphasis on regional identity and language.

Globalisation, on the other hand, manifests itself through two phenomena. The first is the presence of English in the LL. The second is multilingualism and language contact situations, which are consequences of the link between globalisation and immigration. Consequently, the study of LL is fundamentally linked to issues of multilingualism.

Leeman and Modan (2010) identify a connection between linguistic landscape and commodification of space. According to the authors, commercial interests influence material manifestations of language in the cities. One phenomenon linked to the commodification of space consists of instances in which a local variety or minority language is employed by businesses to not directly address the members of its community, but rather for commercial purposes, that seek to market the business as authentic, rustic, genuine and unique (Bagna et al. 2021: 353-354). Another phenomenon is the wide employment of English, with different aims. It can be used for informative purposes as a *lingua franca*, to address tourists or speakers of a language that is not the national one. It can also be used for symbolic reasons: since English is seen as a fashionable, young and attractive language, businesses can employ it as a device to associate these features to the business's identity (Bagna et al. 2021: 354).

1.7 Methodological approaches

There are two kinds of methodological approaches to linguistic landscape studies: the quantitative-distributive approach and the qualitative-descriptive approach.

The first approach used in the field was the quantitative/distributive one (Bagna et al. 2021: 352). It is an objective method in which pictures of signs found in the LL of a territory are classified as either top-down or bottom-up, with the aim of researching the differences in distributions of languages between the two categories. Through this method, different phenomena can be investigated, including the role of language policies, power relations, linguistic ideologies and attitudes (Bagna et al. 2021: 352). Employing a purely quantitative method is reductive, as it does not provide insight into the sociolinguistic reasons that could explain why the LL is as it is (Barni & Bagna 2015: 14). For this reason, it should be used alongside the qualitative-descriptive approach.

Subsequent studies take on a qualitative-descriptive approach, a method that is rooted in interdisciplinarity (Gorter 2006b: 86-88). This method allows the researcher to investigate the functions of the languages found, their modalities of interaction in texts, and if, how and how much the visibility of a language is representative of its vitality in communities.

One of the methodological challenges of the field is the definition of the unit of analysis. Some researchers take as unit of analysis the individual sign, that is “la più piccola unità di PL analizzabile, tipicamente un testo circoscritto, come un’insegna o un annuncio” (Uberti-Bona, 2021: 539), whether it appears in isolation or in combination with other signs (Fiorentini & Forlano 2024: 808). Others take as unit of analysis the totality of signs that are co-present on the same structure and that are referable to the same actor. For instance, signs on a restaurant are referable to the owner of the restaurant. The establishment can be therefore taken as the unit of analysis. Uberti-Bona (2021) distinguishes the concepts of sign and unit: a sign is the individual finite text, and a unit is the physical structure that is wider and spatially delimited, in which more texts can coexist (Fiorentini & Forlano 2024: 808). Furthermore, the author identifies three types of units:

- Informal contexts, where various actors post spontaneous texts that will circulate at a short range, like walls.
- Commercial contexts, like shops or restaurants.
- Institutional contexts, like street signs or government buildings.

The advancement of linguistic landscape studies is closely connected to technological developments (Gorter 2006b: 83-84), specifically the development and universal spread of smartphones and of digital tools that allow to collect, classify and store big quantities of data. Another important technological advancement for the field is the possibility to create crowdsourcing apps, such as Lingscape, through which users can take pictures of signs, geolocate them and provide information about them (Bagna et al. 2021: 359). Thanks to these new and improved tools, the study of the linguistic landscape has experienced a widening in scope and an extension of topics of research. Among these are:

- Skinscape, which studies bodies as corporeal landscapes, and focuses on tattoos as bodily inscriptions (Peck & Stroud 2015: 133).
- Schoolscape, which studies the visual and spatial organisation of educational spaces, focusing on the inscriptions and images that are found there (Bagna et al. 2021: 357).
- Graffscape, which studies the landscape constituted by graffiti. This field will be further explored in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

GRAFFITI AND STICKERS

2.1 Introduction

The present Chapter introduces graffiti and stickers as objects of study within linguistic landscape research. Section 2.2 focuses on graffiti. Subsection 2.2.1 presents the etymology and history of graffiti, together with a range of definitions of contemporary graffiti. Subsection 2.2.2 introduces the concept of graffscape and discusses its implications for the study of the linguistic landscape. Subsection 2.2.3 addresses the motivations behind graffiti production and the features that distinguish graffiti from other bottom-up signs. Subsection 2.2.4 examines the features of communication through graffiti. Section 2.3 focuses on stickers. Finally, Section 2.4 presents the methodologies employed in the analysis of graffiti, stickers, and posters.

2.2 Graffiti

2.2.1 Past and present of graffiti

The term ‘graffiti’ etymologically derives from the Greek *graphein*, meaning ‘to write’ (Phillips 1996: 1). The word was initially used to refer to inscriptions scratched onto ancient Roman walls (Blume 1985: 137; Phillips 1996: 1). It is also related to the *sgraffito* technique, a type of mural decoration produced by scratching or carving a surface (Blume 1985: 137). Despite the relatively recent origins of the term, the practice of inscribing marks on surfaces is far more ancient and can be traced back to early human activities such as rock carving (Guerra 2012: 89).

In a contemporary perspective, graffiti can be understood as a form of semiotic, semantic and artistic experimentation (Guerra 2012: 89) that consists of “any type of drawing, writing or scratch on the walls” (Mwangi et al. 2015 as cited in Gasparyan 2021: 15). The emergence and global diffusion of graffiti is closely intertwined with two major developments: the widespread increase of literacy and the invention of aerosol spray cans, which enable the rapid execution of large-scale wall writings (Blume 1985: 137-138).

Contemporary graffiti is characterised by increasing commodification. Although mainstream society commonly rejects graffiti as a form of vandalism, its mass diffusion and global spread have contributed to define them as a form of modern ethnic art (Blume 1985: 146). This process has been influenced by the international recognition of artists such as Banksy (Pennycook 2010: 70) and

Basquiat. Furthermore, the establishment of various Graffiti Halls of Fame and the inclusion of graffiti in mainstream art exhibitions have led to its progressive industrial and commercial exploitation, while simultaneously contributing to its social and cultural normalisation.

A variety of definitions of graffiti have been proposed in the literature. A selection of these is presented in the remainder of the present Subsection.

Petrucci (as cited in Ciancabilla 2020: 5) introduces the notion of *scritture esposte* ('exposed writings'), referring to writings that are not produced on paper for individual and private consumption, but are rather inscribed on other kinds of materials and intended for collective consumption in open spaces.

Pennycook (2008) defines graffiti as "transgressive global art" (Pennycook 2008: 302), describing it as a multimodal hybrid of text and image that is frequently perceived as inherently anti-social and transgressive (Pennycook 2008: 302-303). While graffiti originally emerged as a core component of hip-hop culture, Pennycook observes that it has since evolved into an autonomous subculture, that is increasingly independent from its origins and that has spread universally (Pennycook 2008: 302). These processes of evolution and spread are reflected in the emergence of specialised terminology, including:

- *Tag*: a writer's logo or signature.
- *Buff*: the removal or covering of a piece.
- *Bomb*: the act of covering an area with multiple tags or other forms of graffiti.

Blume (1985) defines graffiti as pictorial or written inscriptions that are not officially authorised and that are largely unwanted. They are typically inscribed on public surfaces by anonymous individuals or groups who are usually not personally acquainted with the readers (Blume 1985: 137). Blume emphasises that graffiti makes up a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that is heterogeneous in forms, themes, motivations, and goals. Section 2.2.3 further explores these factors.

Gasparyan (2021) conceptualises graffiti as a form of mass communication and underlines its communicative and expressive properties (Gasparyan 2021: 16). The communicative model proposed by the author is discussed in detail in Section 2.2.4.

Guerra (2013; 2020) argues that wall writing encompasses a range of distinct practices, which he categorises as follows:

- **Graffiti**: a heterogeneous form of wall writing aimed at externalising the author's thoughts, in which the semantic element prevails on the semiotic one (Guerra 2013: 41).

- Murals: a form of free art that is primarily focused on pictorial representation.
- Tags: a type of wall writing that resembles a signature in both form and function.

2.2.2 Graffscape

The application of linguistic landscape studies to the graffscape, that is, the landscape constituted by graffiti (Bagna et al. 2021: 357), is a relatively recent development. Pennycook (2008: 304) observes that LL research has largely overlooked graffiti, instead privileging quantitative approaches aimed at interpreting the linguistic landscape primarily from the perspective of language policy and multilingualism. According to Guerra (2013), the lack of linguistic research on graffiti may be related to their widespread social classification as a form of vandalism (Guerra 2013: 41).

Despite this initial lack of academic focus, the study of graffiti is fundamental for a comprehensive understanding of urban linguistic landscapes (Guerra 2013: 41). As Pennycook argues, “an understanding of graffiti as transgressive urban semiotics opens up important directions for an understanding of linguistic landscapes (LL) more generally” (Pennycook 2008: 302). Within linguistic landscape theory, graffiti can be classified as a type of bottom-up signs or, in Calvet’s (1990) terms, as instances of *in vivo* linguistic actions performed by private individuals, which contrast the *in vitro* linguistic action performed by officials and authorities. From this perspective, the analysis of graffiti constitutes a crucial layer to comprehensively understand the relations, hierarchies and tensions between languages and communities that shape the urban linguistic landscape.

In Guerra’s view (2020), graffiti is inherently counterhegemonic. Accordingly, the language of graffiti stands in opposition to what Chomsky defined as the “language of power” (Guerra 2020). The counterhegemonic nature of graffiti derives from the defining features of this type of bottom-up signs. Primarily, it is linked to its vandalic nature, as graffiti is produced by breaking laws and norms of public property and urban decorum. Secondarily, it is linked to the fact that while graffiti functions as a form of mass communication, it violates the conventions of mass communication by addressing the public directly, anonymously, and without prior mediation or censorship (Guerra 2013: 571-572).

The analysis of the graffscape therefore requires a dynamic view of the linguistic landscape. Pennycook introduces the notions of ‘landscaping’ (Pennycook 2008: 310) and ‘graffscaping’ (Pennycook 2010: 90) to convey the idea that the linguistic landscape is a dynamic entity which is imagined, invented, and created by multiple actors through discursive and interactive processes that are embedded in everyday practices and closely tied to the territory. From this perspective, graffiti exemplifies Ben-Rafael et al.’s view of the linguistic landscape as a context-dependent and symbolic

construction of space shaped by a large variety of actors (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 8). As Pennycook notes:

To talk of graffscapes is to invoke several ways of thinking: by locating graffiti within an understanding of landscapes as constructed, interactive, expressive, semiotic resources, we can start to see such street art not as immobile text on static city walls, but rather as part of the integrative life of the city that gives it meaning (Pennycook 2010: 86-87).

From a methodological point of view, research on graffiti highlights the limitations of a purely quantitative approach to linguistic landscape analysis. Within such frameworks, linguistic landscapes are often “viewed as blank texts on which different languages have been written” (Pennycook 2008: 304), and analyses are therefore largely limited to issues of linguistic presence. In contrast, Pennycook (2008: 304) argues that linguistic landscape research should adopt a larger focus that includes not only presence, but also salience, context, and meaning. Further methodological considerations are addressed in Section 2.4.

2.2.3 Features and motivations of graffiti

Graffiti writing is a practice that mainstream society widely perceives as transgressive. This transgression primarily lies in the fact that the production of graffiti is unauthorised and often legally prohibited and sanctioned (Pennycook 2008: 307). Wall writing is therefore frequently labelled as an act of vandalism that reveals social and cultural unease and that fosters further urban degradation (Ciancabilla 2020: 261-262). This framing of graffiti has consequences for both graffiti producers and the institutions that try to prevent the phenomenon. From the producers’ perspective, anonymity becomes a central concern, as it is essential to avoid legal repercussions (Blume 1985: 141). From the institutions’ perspective, the implementation of anti-graffiti policies becomes necessary. This aspect will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Although it is rarely possible to determine with certainty the motivations behind each individual piece of wall writing, Blume (1985: 143-145) identifies several recurring motives that drive graffiti production. One of the primary motives is existence proof. By writing on walls, graffiti writers seek to affirm, document and immortalise their presence and existence in public space (Ciancabilla 2020: 259). This motive is most clearly exemplified by tags, a form of wall writing that dominates the urban landscape in terms of frequency and visibility (Ciancabilla 2020: 256). While tags are often perceived by the public as incomprehensible marks that pollute and damage the city’s attractiveness (Milton 2002 as cited in Pennycook 2008: 308), essentially, they are simple signatures. This view reveals that

the practice is not exclusive to modern urban contexts. Ciancabilla (2020: 254) notes that the incision or inscription of signatures on walls has been the most widespread form of wall writing since Ancient Rome. In the author's perspective, contemporary tags are an extreme evolution of signature wall writings (Ciancabilla 2020: 256). Modern tagging practices emerged in New York in the 1970s and rapidly spread worldwide, eventually acquiring the status of a global and mass phenomenon (Ciancabilla 2020: 256). Tags are primarily characterised by an underlying process of stylistic research, which leads to the creation of a unique and recognisable piece (Ciancabilla 2020: 259-260). Another central feature of tags is extreme repetition. The stylistic uniqueness and the repetition reinforce the proof of existence function and contribute to the writer's symbolic appropriation of the urban territory (Ciancabilla 2020: 260).

Closely related to the existence proof is the motive of self-expression. As Blume (1985: 143-144) observes, individuals in modern societies often experience feelings of marginalisation and powerlessness while simultaneously feeling a strong need to express their identities, opinions and emotions. Graffiti provides an anonymous yet highly visible medium through which such expression can take place. Through wall writing, the individual can express their stance and identity both implicitly and explicitly. Implicitly, because the act of illegal wall writing is itself an expression of identity and stance that constructs the writer as risk-taking, transgressive, and opposing bourgeois sensibilities (Pennycook 2008: 307). Explicitly, because the writer can openly express criticism, protest, rejection, or agreement through his pieces (Blume 1985: 145), a feature that is evident in political graffiti. Graffiti can also function to express group identity, either by signalling affiliation with a group that the writer regards as prestigious or by enabling marginalised communities to symbolically resist exclusion, social isolation and stigmatisation (Blume 1985: 144).

Another factor that drives the production of graffiti is artistic expression, which is particularly evident in aesthetically elaborate or linguistically creative pieces (Blume 1985: 144). As mentioned in relation to tags, style and aesthetics play a central role in graffiti culture, as they are necessary to ensure both visibility and recognisability, both of which are prerequisites to achieve the goals of proof of existence and self-expression.

One last central motive that is underlined in the literature is that of territorial marking (Blume 1985: 145), which was tied originally to gang graffiti in American cities. This type of graffiti employs cryptic codes, specialised symbols and distinctive calligraphic styles to mark territorial and ideological boundaries, signal group membership and distinguish between in-group and out-groups (Phillips 1996: 2). However, the relationship between graffiti and territory extends far beyond gang graffiti. The choice of where to write a piece conveys important information about the writer's identity

and motivations. More broadly, wall writing is a means through which writers appropriate space (Calvet 1990) in order to express themselves, their identities, and their stances (Phillips 1996: 1). Through this process of graffscaping, graffiti writers become active agents who transform, reinvent and create urban space, fundamentally contributing to the shaping of the city's landscape (Pennycook 2008: 307-308).

The illegality of graffiti and the motivations behind its production also shape its materiality and modes of production. Two fundamental requirements are size and speed. Size is essential to ensure visibility, which allows writers to more easily achieve the goals of self-expression, proof of existence, and artistic expression. Speed, on the other hand, is necessary to avoid legal repercussions. For these reasons, aerosol spray cans have become the preferred medium, as they are easily transportable, concealable, and allow for rapid and easy execution (Phillips 1996: 1).

Finally, graffiti displays a wide range of linguistic forms (Blume 1985: 139). Guerra (2012: 90) notes that the language used in graffiti is influenced by the writer's aims and motivations, the occasion of production, and the characteristics of the surface on which the text is inscribed (Guerra 2012: 90).

Syntactically, graffiti can range "from one word sentences, through simple and complex nominal phrases to complete sentences, extending to monologues [...] or dialogues" (Blume 1985: 139). Most graffiti, however, is short and often sub-sentential (Blume 1985: 139). This is determined by the need for speed in production and by the material difficulty of writing on certain surfaces (Blume 1985: 139).

Lexically, graffiti exhibits a higher frequency of taboo words and abbreviations compared to other communicative genres (Blume 1985: 139). The prevalence of taboo words can be linked to the anonymity and expressive freedom that graffiti allows, while the abbreviations can be explained in relation to the temporal and spatial constraints of its production.

From the perspective of sentence construction, Blume (1985: 139) observes that graffiti exhibits features such as brevity and wordplay, which make them similar to advertisement slogans. In a different perspective, Guerra (2012: 90) asserts that graffiti often takes the form of *grido scritto* ('written shout'), because it often reproduces slogans of various nature as writings on walls. Consequently, the author observes that from the point of view of diamesic variation, graffiti can be classified as a form of "oral-writing" (Guerra 2012: 90), that is, written communication which is very close to orality.

2.2.4 Graffiti as a form of communication

Graffiti constitutes a specific form of communication whose features are influenced by its conditions of production, spatial placement and communicative aims. Communication through graffiti can take place in either the public or the private domain. The public domain includes open and highly visible spaces, such as walls, lampposts and fences (Rodriguez & Clair 1999: 2). The private domain includes spaces within buildings, such as school desks and interior walls (Rodriguez & Clair 1999: 2), as well as spaces that imply a certain degree of intimacy, such as public toilets, changing cubicles and lifts (Blume 1985: 140).

Even though in principle any theme could occur in either domain, Blume (1985: 140) observes a degree of correlation between the two factors: graffiti in the public domain tends to address matters of social, public or political interest, while graffiti in the private domain frequently deals with personal issues (Gasparyan 2021: 16), private topics such as interpersonal relationships, and taboo topics related to sexuality or obscenity (Blume 1985: 140).

Domain and theme allow to infer both the intended addressee or group of addressees and the communicative function of graffiti. The communicative relationship established between writer and addressee through graffiti has been described by Blume (1985: 142) as a form of defective communication, characterised by mutual anonymity and by the absence of social connection between writer and reader. As a consequence, conventional norms of conversation, including politeness and Gricean maxims, do not apply to processes of communication through graffiti. This can also explain why graffiti frequently employs taboo language and transgressive content.

On the basis of domain, theme and intended addressees, Blume (1985: 140-143) identifies four communicative uses of graffiti:

- Mass communication. Graffiti of this type is addressed to the general public and is most often located in the public domain. It typically deals with political, social or public themes.
- Categorical communication. Graffiti of this type targets a specific social group and can appear in both the public and private domain, though it is more frequent in the latter. It often involves taboo or sensitive topics, such as sexuality.
- Individual communication. Graffiti of this type is directed to an unknown singular addressee and has the potential to develop into a dialogic exchange if the addressee writes a response. It is typically found in the private domain, for example on school desks or bathroom stalls.

- Reflexive individual communication. Graffiti of this type is aimed at the author themselves rather than at an external audience. It serves an expressive function, thus resembling diary entries. It is often found in the schoolscape.

The communicative aim of graffiti also influences its readability. Graffiti intended for mass communication, such as pieces expressing the writer's stance on societal or political issues, tends to be highly readable and more straightforward in style (Phillips 1996: 2). By contrast, graffiti addressed to specific in-groups often relies on codes, nicknames, symbols and specific styles that ensure limited readability from outsiders while remaining fully interpretable for insiders. Instances of the latter case are gang graffiti and New York Style graffiti rooted in 1970s subway graffiti culture (Phillips 1996: 2).

Gasparyan (2021: 17-23) proposes a comprehensive model of communication through graffiti. In the author's framework, graffiti is viewed as a form of mass communication with a linear communicative structure, which can, in specific cases, become an interactive structure. The model identifies five components: the speaker, the channel, the message, the receiver and the potential noise.

- The speaker. It is the individual or group of individuals who start the communicative act by producing the graffiti. They create multimodal messages that combine linguistic and visual components to achieve different goals. The speaker's choices are guided both by the communicative aims and the constraints of production, including anonymity and illegality. Finally, the speaker's linguistic competence, cultural background and world knowledge play a crucial role in shaping the communicative choices made.
- The channel. It is the physical medium on which the graffiti is inscribed, typically a wall or another surface on which one can write. The selection of the channel is deliberate, as it needs to be appropriate to ensure that the message is visible to the intended audience.
- The message. Graffiti content is highly variable and serves multiple functions, including informing, persuading and provoking audiences. To achieve these, the message has to be carefully structured both linguistically and visually, to ensure visibility and impact. The content and linguistic organisation of the message are influenced by the aims of the writer, as well as by the spatial and temporal limitations.
- The receiver. They can be targeted or not. The intended audience can range from the general public to specific social groups or individuals. The receiver plays a central role in graffiti communication, as their reaction to the piece determines whether the communication remains linear or becomes interactive. This transition depends on the effect produced by the graffiti, whose intensity is shaped by the message and may be weakened by various forms

of noise. If the effect is sufficiently strong, the receiver may provide feedback by adding a new message in response to the original.

- The (potential) noise. It is any factor of disturbance to the channel that can lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the message. Some causes of noise in graffiti communication include the use of a font or handwriting that is difficult to read, the audience's lack of knowledge about the social context of the piece or references introduced in the piece and the implicitness of the message. Noise can also be deliberately introduced by the writer to restrict comprehension to a particular audience, as is common practice in gang graffiti or subcultural graffiti.

2.3 Stickers

Sticker art is a form of street art that consists of placing stickers in urban spaces (Guerra 2013: 45). Stickers vary widely in size, shape and theme. They are a distinctive type of bottom-up signs with specific features (Fiorentini 2020: 120): they are small, they are produced on a variety of non-durable materials, they can be printed or hand-written, and they can be affixed anywhere, which makes them largely independent from their immediate context. Their ease of use, concealability, and rapid application allow stickers to appear in locations that are often inaccessible to other forms of street art, such as graffiti or posters (Guerra 2013: 46). As Guerra (2013: 47) notes, “lo stickerismo consente di portare la lingua, con i suoi contenuti più scomodi e talvolta anche politicamente scorretti, negli spazi urbani che altrimenti le sarebbero preclusi”.

Since they are printed on non-durable materials and most often placed in open and exposed areas, stickers are likely to deteriorate easily, to be overlapped by other stickers, and to be partially or completely torn off (Fiorentini 2020: 120). While they are intended for mass communication, their small size often limits readability, particularly if the stickers are hand-written. This constraint influences the language used in the stickers, which is often brief and economical. Guerra (2013: 53) observes that the language of stickers, similarly to that of graffiti, is diamesically a form of written communication very close to orality. Their small size also determines the need to balance their semantic and semiotic components to attract attention and maximise impact (Guerra 2013: 46). Another strategy to compensate for the limited visibility of stickers is repetition: often, multiple copies of the same sticker are placed within a small area to amplify the message and to increase the likelihood that they will be spotted and noticed by more people (Guerra 2013: 46).

2.4 Methodology

Research in the field of linguistic landscape and graffscape, as noted in Section 1.7, combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involves counting the signs collected and identifying the languages present in them, as well as counting potential additional variables, such as the location of the signs, the type of surface on which they appear, and other contextual factors.

The qualitative component of research on the graffscape, on the other hand, aims to interpret the content and form of signs. Guerra (2020) identifies three main methods for analysing graffiti and stickers: thematic analysis, linguistic analysis and artistic analysis. In line with the purpose of the present study, the first two are presented, while artistic analysis is excluded.

The first step for both quantitative and qualitative analyses is fieldwork. After identifying their areas of interest, researchers document the linguistic landscape of the chosen areas by photographing the signs found. The photographs are enriched by annotations including the location, street name and date of documentation. Additional variables can be annotated, depending on the research focus. A crucial methodological decision concerns the unit of analysis, which can range from entire walls to individual pieces. Once collected, the texts are transcribed and compiled into a corpus for analysis.

For thematic analysis, Guerra (2020) recommends adopting an inductive approach, with the aim of identifying themes emerging from the data rather than relying on predefined categorisations. The analysis proceeds through multiple readings of the corpus. A first reading allows the identification of the general thematic areas of the data. A second reading is used to identify micro-themes, and to cluster them into proto-themes, defined as internally homogeneous categories. A third reading serves to ensure precision and adequacy in the classification of each piece. Finally, the proto-themes are named and described. In Guerra's (2020) view, this approach facilitates the organisation of graffiti and stickers according to their main dynamics and helps manage their thematic complexity in a highly logical and organised manner.

Guerra (2013) applies this method to the classification of graffiti and stickers found in the linguistic landscape of Rome. With regard to graffiti, the author identifies six main proto-themes (Guerra 2013: 41-44):

- Political graffiti, subdivided between neofascist, far left and anarchist. Graffiti of this type is characterised by a high degree of stylistic and linguistic variability, as well as by the frequent use of a higher register, including neologisms and complex syntactic constructions.

- Ultras graffiti, subdivided into political, supportive, offensive or subcultural. Political ultras graffiti may align with either far-left or far-right ideologies and may display racist overtones. Supportive ultras graffiti expresses support for one's team, while offensive ultras graffiti targets rival teams.
- Jovial and irreverent graffiti, subdivided into ironic and obscene. These wall writings are typically aimed at making fun of a specific individual or group. While linguistically they are highly readable, their full comprehension often depends on shared background knowledge between writer and reader. As a result, only readers who are familiar with the target of the graffiti can fully grasp its meaning.
- Love graffiti, subdivided into poetic, affectionate and passionate. This category is characterised by a high degree of linguistic and stylistic variation and often appears near places that are frequented by the intended addressee.
- Blasphemous graffiti, which tends to be brief and is characterised by the use of vulgar blasphemies.
- Existential graffiti, which displays higher linguistic ambitions and often adopts a poetic and complex style.

With regard to linguistic analysis, Guerra (2020) argues that the study of graffiti and stickers provides a privileged context to observe and research youth language and contemporary linguistic change. Additionally, there is often a strong correlation between the theme of a sign and the linguistic choices it exhibits (Guerra 2013: 47). Guerra (2013: 45-47) provides an example of linguistic analysis of stickers in the linguistic landscape of Rome. The author identifies five main thematic categories and describes their associated linguistic features:

- Promotional stickers, which aim at promoting businesses related to entertainment, such as clubs or pubs. They closely resemble commercial advertisements and typically include the names of the business, sometimes together with slogans, symbols, or simple lexemes describing the type of entertainment offered, and contact information such as a phone number and email address.
- Business stickers, which aim at advertising businesses that provide services, for instance in the field of home maintenance. These stickers generally employ simple lexemes referring to the service provided (e.g. "plumber"), followed by contact details.
- Political stickers, which aim to assert the presence of a political movement, to mark the territory and to spread one's political message. From a linguistic point of view, they tend to be more elaborated and experimental, displaying greater lexical variation and more complex

syntactic structures. They can range from simple, only including the name of the movement, to complex, with sentences that express political stances.

- Ultras stickers, which have functions that are comparable to political stickers. They also can be either simple, only including the name of the team, or more complex, with slogans that convey the team's identity, mentality, or intentions.
- Cultural or religious stickers, which form a more heterogeneous category, including a wide range of cultural or religious references or practices.

Having examined the presence, features, and methodological approaches to the analysis of graffiti and stickers in the urban landscape, the following Chapter shifts the focus on absence and nonexistence of signs by examining the institutional measures that aim at preventing, erasing, and repressing graffiti.

CHAPTER THREE

ANTI-GRAFFITI REGIMES

3.1 Introduction

The present Chapter focuses on anti-graffiti regimes, an important dimension to consider in the study of the graffscape. While research on the linguistic landscape has traditionally focused on the presence of signs in public space, graffiti are volatile entities, which are subject to constant attempts at institutional control and erasure. Drawing primarily on Karlander (2019), the present Chapter examines anti-graffiti regimes and the semiotics of nonexistence that they produce.

3.2 Anti-graffiti regimes

Anti-graffiti regimes are assemblages “of institutional, discursive, and visual modes of spatial, semiotic regulation, which jointly strive to keep a certain space graffiti-free” (Karlander 2019: 201). In other words, anti-graffiti regimes consist of all the measures that an administration takes to prevent, manage, and remove graffiti from the urban landscape. These measures aim and lead to the nonexistence of graffiti, which is ‘the object of a specific desire’ (Baudrillard 2011 as cited in Karlander 2019: 200), that of visually silent space (Karlander 2019: 200).

The repression of graffiti has two main motivators: censorship and maintenance of urban decorum. Concerning censorship, as Pennycook (2008) notes, “anti-graffiti policies have been around as long as states and societies have developed ways of policing what can be said and where” (Pennycook 2008: 307). Since graffiti is anonymous, writers can flout norms of convention (Blume 1985: 146) and express themselves and their ideas as freely as they wish, which can be problematic for urban administrations. Additionally, since graffiti is illegal and unauthorised, censorship can only be performed once the piece has already been written (Guerra 2020). Concerning the maintenance of urban decorum, anti-graffiti policies are fundamental for administrations because they play a political role in the city: graffiti is one of the most evident ways through which the administration’s control over security is seen and perceived, therefore, “to be easy on graffiti may be seen as being light on crime” (Pennycook 2008: 308).

Anti-graffiti regimes have common purposes that have to do with prevention and deterrence, erasure, and punishment. However, the scope and intensity of anti-graffiti regimes can vary (Karlander 2019: 202). As Karlander (2019) notes, “a heavy-handed regimentation of illegal graffiti may or may not

coexist with a permissive officialised stance on certain forms of graffiti and street art” (Karlander 2019: 202). Iveson (2010) describes very strict regimes as waging a “war on graffiti”. The author focuses especially on the US context and on the city of New York, describing and analysing the anti-graffiti regime it has instituted starting from the 70s. He asserts that the “wars on graffiti” employ common strategies:

- Increased employment of technology and research on new technologies. This strategy involves the diffusion of military technologies into urban spaces. Examples are the installation of barbed or razor wire to deter unauthorised access into areas that are at a high-risk for graffiti offences, the employment of chemicals to make surfaces and materials graffiti-resistant, and the widespread introduction of CCTV surveillance systems (Iveson 2010: 119-120). Additionally, increasing funds are allocated to research with the aim of developing new technologies to improve anti-graffiti surveillance and prevention (Iveson 2010: 120-121).
- Use of intelligence and counterintelligence operations. In many jurisdictions, police departments have created special anti-graffiti squads that are tasked with gathering intelligence about graffiti culture and about individual graffiti writers, and occasionally with running counterintelligence operations within graffiti scenes (Iveson 2010: 122).
- Propaganda. This strategy involves the creation and diffusion of campaigns to deter young people from producing graffiti and to mobilise community support for anti-graffiti efforts. It can also sometimes involve instances of censorship of ‘zines and websites (Iveson 2010: 122-224).

Iveson (2010: 124) also observes that the war on graffiti is profitable, due to the investment of administrations and private citizens on security technology and on graffiti-related services. This led to the creation of new businesses that specialise in graffiti removal and prevention.

As Karlander (2019) notes, however, anti-graffiti regimes may also involve lighter practices that function as deterrents, with the aim of providing spaces for artists and writers to express themselves within the confines of legality. Some of these measures and strategies (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019) are hereby illustrated through examples related to the city of Stockholm:

- The commodification of graffiti. This process involves the societal acceptance of graffiti as a form of “modern ethnic art” (Blume 1985: 146) that can be bought and sold on the market and exhibited in galleries. This process contributes to the legal control over graffiti by detaching it from the realm of illegality and subculture (Karlander 2019: 202).

An example of this process is the exhibition *The mystery of Banksy – “a genius mind” - an unauthorized exhibition*¹, which was displayed in Stadsgårdsterminalen, a central location in Stockholm, between September 2022 and February 2023. The exhibition was extensively advertised by the city and attracted a large audience. The choice to label it as “an unauthorized exhibition” is primarily linked to the lack of approval from the anonymous street artist Banksy, but it could also be a play on the illegal nature of graffiti, which is simultaneously neutralised through its exhibition in a legally sanctioned context. Additionally, as is typical for art exhibitions, the event’s gift shop offered a wide range of rather expensive products reproducing the artist’s work. This case exemplifies how graffiti culture can and often is transformed into a marketable and controlled commodity, a process that reinforces the symbolic and institutional anti-graffiti control.

- Commissioned walls or murals. These are pieces commissioned by the city to a specific artist or group of artists (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 397). Their contents are usually controlled and pre-approved, so the censorship acts pre-emptively. However, there are also instances in which censorship is imposed after the production of the piece.

An example of this occurred in 2018 Stockholm with the piece “Fuck The World” by Carolina Falkholt². The commissioned mural, depicting a five-stories high erect blue penis, was painted in one of the richest and central neighbourhoods of the capital. The piece was at the centre of a heated public debate which led to its removal only one week after its production.

- The institution of Halls of Fame. These can be “legal walls on which high-quality murals are produced” (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 397) or walls that are produced illegally but that have reached a level of local and social acceptance (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 398), to the point of becoming commodified as touristic attractions (Pennycook 2010: 70). The most famous instance is the Graffiti Hall of Fame in New York (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 398), established in the 1980s as a semi-unauthorised gallery where writers could practice their skills. Today, it has evolved into a highly regulated space following the motto “Strictly Kings and Better”, where only invited and established artists are permitted to paint.

In Stockholm, the Snösätra Graffiti Wall of Fame³ exemplifies this category. Established in 2014, it is one of the largest Walls of Fame in Europe and a popular tourist attraction. The Wall operates under explicit regulations, established and enforced by a volunteer board of directors: painting is reserved to paying members, who are only allowed to write on specific

¹ <https://www.visitstockholm.se/se-gora/sevardheter/stadsgardsterminalen-har-vaknat-till-liv-med-konst-och-musik/>

² <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/stockholm/nu-malas-den-bla-penisen-over>

³ <https://snosatras.com/om-oss/>

walls, while others are reserved for invited and established artists. Violations of the rules may be reported to the police.

- The creation of open walls. These walls are created by administrations to provide spaces where any member of the public can paint legally (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 399). They are open and usually unregulated, which makes them a “participatory and democratic public space” (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 400) in which everyone can express themselves freely. As Hannerz and Kimvall (2019: 404) note, “open walls in this sense are political and ideological constructs as much as they are artistic arenas”.

The first open wall in the world was established in Stockholm in 1968 and was called *Klotterplank för egna idéer på eget ansvar* (‘scribble board for one’s own ideas and under one’s own responsibility’). It was located in the central square of the city, together with a podium named *Fria talares tribun* (‘free speakers’ tribune’), where anyone could publicly voice their ideas. The 12-meter wall was washed every morning to provide a clean canvas, creating a legally sanctioned and democratic space for public expression. At the same time, the wall functioned as a form of state control, by providing a legal outlet for ideas that could otherwise be expressed through illegal graffiti or demonstrations (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 400). While the *klotterplank* was closed in 1971, open walls have since been created in other Swedish cities and internationally, as a strategy employed by anti-graffiti regimes.

All these mild measures employed by anti-graffiti regimes operate under the assumption that graffiti cannot be fully eliminated, but it must be contained and regulated. By providing spatially confined, legally approved spaces, such as Halls of Fame and open walls, or by commodifying graffiti through exhibitions and commissioned murals, administrations aim at channelling this practice into controlled contexts. In this way, anti-graffiti regimes balance suppression and expression, by deterring illegal graffiti while legitimising controlled forms of creative expression.

Whether stricter or more permissive, anti-graffiti regimes fundamentally aim to the non-existence of graffiti. Karlander (2019: 203) asserts that they establish a “metasemiotic order replete with control, erasure, and marked absences”. In this sense, the absence of graffiti under an anti-graffiti regime, whether caused by acts of erasure or not, signals the semiotic order that the regime upholds (Karlander 2019: 203). As Karlander observes, “*nonexistence*, in semiotic terms, is a form of existence” (Karlander 2019: 213). Anti-graffiti regimes pursue nonexistence through two main types of erasure: removing graffiti and painting over graffiti.

Removing graffiti involves a range of technical methods, including chemical treatments, mechanical removal, use of pressurised water, or of other abrasive techniques (Karlander 2019: 203). The ideal

goal is the restoration of a pre-condition, that of nonexistence of the piece. However, these processes often leave behind a trace, an “enduring mark left in or on a surface” (Karlander 2019: 206). This unwanted relative permanence conveys a metasemiotic message formed by both the act of writing and the act of erasure (Karlander 2019: 204-206). On the one hand, these traces reinforce the semiotic regime by clearly asserting the presence and authority of the anti-graffiti regime, which accentuates the transgressiveness and undesirability of graffiti. On the other hand, they signal the prior existence of graffiti itself. Therefore, these traces visually represent the semiotic struggle for urban space between graffiti writers and anti-graffiti regimes.

Painting over graffiti is a widely employed technique of erasure, due to its accessibility and ease of use (Karlander 2019: 207). These practices may result in a complete or partial coverage, sometimes leaving traces that are readable. In any case, while repainted walls may appear void and somewhat homogeneous, this apparent emptiness is not a lack of semiosis (Karlander 2019: 207).

Erasure, therefore, is not simply “a restoration of the semiotic conditions that purportedly existed prior to erasure” (Karlander 2019: 211). It does not produce voids, but rather extends and modifies semiosis, creating a composite semiotic object composed of traces of the original writing, of the erasure act, and of the regime that imposed the erasure. In other words, erasure of graffiti does “not simply *restore* or *reverse*, but *create*” (Karlander 2019: 211).

CHAPTER FOUR

LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN SWEDEN

4.1 Introduction

The present Chapter presents a general and comprehensive overview on the linguistic situation in Sweden, providing the background necessary to understand language use and variation in contemporary Sweden. Section 4.2 focuses on Swedish language policy. Subsection 4.2.1 describes how the spread of English and increasing multilingualism led to the adoption of the 2009 *Språklagen* ('Language Act'), while Subsection 4.2.2 briefly explores the history of national minority languages and communities and their legislative protection. Section 4.3 focuses on standard Swedish and dialectal variation. Section 4.4 examines multilingualism in contemporary Sweden and language variation determined by immigration. Section 4.5 explores Swedish youth language: Subsection 4.5.1 is dedicated to *ungdomsspråk* ('youth language') in general, while Subsection 4.5.2 focuses on the Swedish youth multiethnolect commonly referred to as *Rinkebysvenska* ('Rinkeby Swedish'). Section 4.6 describes Stockholm's anti-graffiti regime.

4.2 Language policy

4.2.1 Swedish, English and multilingualism

Starting from the late 1990s, increasing globalisation led to widespread multilingualism in Sweden. Increasing immigration flows were leading to cultural and linguistic super-diversity in the country. Today, it is estimated that more than 200 languages are spoken in Sweden. At the same time, English was progressively gaining status and becoming a second language employed in both high and low domains (Hult 2003: 43).

Sweden ranks among the countries with the highest levels of English proficiency (EF English Proficiency Index 2005)⁴. In daily life, most Swedes use English regularly (Hult 2003: 52), and the language is highly visible in both top-down and bottom-up signs, in commercial and informal contexts alike. English is employed for both practical and symbolic purposes: practically, it serves as a lingua franca that allows to reach a wider audience; symbolically, it is used to represent modernity and progress (Hult 2003: 54-55).

⁴ <https://www.ef.se/epi/regions/europe/sweden/>

The spread of English to higher domains, particularly education, media and business, led to the widespread fear that the status of Swedish was being threatened (Hult 2003: 46) and that Sweden was headed towards a diglossic situation in which English would dominate high-status domains while Swedish would be confined to the low-status domains of common daily interaction (Hult 2003: 44).

In response to this perceived threat, in 2000 the Swedish government created the *Kommittén för svenska språket* ('Committee for the Swedish language'), which was tasked with drafting a language policy. In 2002, the committee published *Mål i mun: förslag till handlingsprogram för svenska språket*⁵ ('Speech: suggestions for an action programme for the Swedish language'), presenting eighty policy proposals that specified the roles of Swedish and English in different public domains, with the aim of ensuring balanced multilingualism in Sweden (Hult 2003: 46).

On 7 December 2005, the Swedish Parliament agreed on a comprehensive Swedish language policy with four goals⁶:

- The Swedish language must be the main language in Sweden.
- Swedish should be a complete and socially supportive language.
- Swedish used in the public domain should be polite, simple and understandable.
- Everyone should have the right to language.

Subsequently, on 1 July 2009, Sweden adopted the *Språklagen* ('Language Act')⁷, which regulates the status of Swedish and other languages in Sweden. The law designates Swedish as the national and official language and recognises the existence of five national minority languages: Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli, Romani and Sámi. Swedish sign language is also equated to minority languages.

4.2.2 National minority languages

The 2009 *Språklagen* recognises five national minority languages in Sweden: Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli (language of the Tornedalians), Romani and Sámi.

The history of these communities and of their languages is complex and largely under-documented. According to the *Ombudsmannen mot etnisk diskriminering* ('The ombudsman against ethnic discrimination')⁸, from the end of the 19th century until the 1970s, the Swedish government pursued policies of assimilation against the national minorities, which led to their "Swedification", loss of

⁵ <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2002/04/sou-200227/>

⁶ <https://www.isof.se/flersprakighet/sprakpolitik/lar-dig-mer-om-sprakpolitik/sprakpolitik-i-sverige>

⁷ <https://www.isof.se/flersprakighet/sprakpolitik/lar-dig-mer-om-sprakpolitik/spraklagen>

⁸ <https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/reports/discrimination-of-national-minorities-in-the-education-system>

cultural identity and of language (Ombudsmannen mot etnisk diskriminering: 2008). These policies, rooted in nationalistic and racist ideologies, included measures such as forced sterilisation and social segregation. In schools, national minority children were forcibly removed from their families and sorted into ethnic groups. They were educated to adopt the language, culture and religious values of the majority, while their own languages and cultures were portrayed negatively. Swedish was imposed as the compulsory language, while minority languages were only used as initial auxiliaries until children acquired sufficient proficiency in Swedish. The combination of these factors led to the endangerment of the national minority languages.

In 2000, Sweden ratified two European acts:

- Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This Convention aims at the protection of minorities' human, linguistic and educational rights. It mandates the ratifying countries to promote equality, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and the conditions for preservation and development of minority cultures.
- The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which aims to combat and prevent discrimination related to the use of minority languages and to create a legal and administrative structure for their recognition and protection.

These ratifications were implemented through the 1 January 2010, *Minoritetsslagen* ('Minority Act')⁹.

4.3 Rikssvenska and dialekter

The standardisation of written Swedish began in the sixteenth century, with the translation of the Bible. The written standard was based on the variety spoken in the kingdom's centre of power, the area of Mälardalen (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 53). On the other hand, spoken standard Swedish, or *rikssvenska* ('national Swedish'), is based on the formal variety spoken in Stockholm and its surrounding areas. It began to spread nationally from 1842, following the introduction of compulsory elementary education (Bodén 2011: 36).

Regional variation in Sweden can be conceptualised as a continuum ranging from *rikssvenska* to the *traditionella dialekter* ('traditional dialects'). Between these two poles are the *regionala standardspråk* ('regional standard languages') and the *utjämnade dialekter* ('levelled dialects').

⁹ <https://www.isof.se/flersprakighet/sprakpolitik/lar-dig-mer-om-sprakpolitik/minoritetslagen>

Traditionella dialekter ('traditional dialects') are languages with distinct pronunciation, vocabulary, inflectional systems, and syntactic patterns. In contemporary Sweden, they are almost completely extinct. Only a very small number have survived, out of which the most well-known is the Älvdalen dialect, spoken in northwestern Dalarna (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 58).

Regionala standardspråk ('regional standard languages'), commonly called *dialekter* ('dialects'), are the most widespread form of regional variation in contemporary Sweden. They are distinguished into six groups: Southern Swedish dialects, Götaland dialects, Svealand dialects, Norrland dialects, Finnish-Swedish dialects, and Gotland dialects (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 50-51). The differences between these varieties are primarily in pronunciation (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 50). On the continuum of regional variation, regional standard languages are positioned closer to standard Swedish.

Utjämnade dialekter ('levelled dialects'), by contrast, occupy a position that is closer to traditional dialects on the continuum, as they present a higher frequency of phonological and lexical features that differentiate them from the standard language (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 58).

Regional varieties are characterised by a high degree of dynamism. Language contact leads to diachronic change, which over time results in dialectal levelling. This process is closely linked to increased mobility, urbanisation, immigration, and the influence of the prestigious varieties used in the economic centres of the country, namely Gothenburg and Stockholm. These factors have contributed to the extinction or severe endangerment of virtually all Swedish traditional dialects (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 59-65).

4.4 Migration-related varieties

Official data indicates that Sweden is a highly multilingual and multicultural society. As of 2025, *Statistikmyndigheten* ('the statistics authority') reports a total population of approximately 10.6 million people¹⁰, out of whom about 830,000 have foreign background¹¹, meaning that they are either foreign born or born in Sweden to foreign born parents. It is estimated that about 20% of the population has foreign ancestry (Kotsinas 2001: 126). The most common countries of origin include

¹⁰

https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101A/BefolkManadCKM/table/tableViewLayout1/

¹¹

https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101Q/UtIsvBakgFin/table/tableViewLayout1/

Syria, Finland, Iraq, Poland, Iran and Somalia. In Stockholm, more than one third of the population has foreign background (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2011: 2).

While no precise statistics are available regarding the number of immigrant languages spoken in Sweden, estimates suggest that there are approximately 200¹². Arabic, Finnish, Somali, Dari and Persian are the most widely spoken.

Kotsinas (2001: 126-127) observes that most immigrants in Sweden reside in suburban areas of the largest cities, particularly Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Demographic statistics show that, in many of these areas, between 50% and 70% of residents have foreign background, the average income is lower, and the rate of unemployment is higher. Kotsinas (2001: 127) also observes that Swedes and long-term immigrants tend to prefer residing in areas that are more “Swedish”. As a consequence, in these areas everyday contact with native Swedish speakers is limited. However, since no ethnic group constitutes a majority, Swedish is commonly employed as a lingua franca in public interaction (Kotsinas 2001: 127).

Bijvoet & Faraut (2015) identify three types of migrant-related language variation in Sweden:

- Swedish interlanguage and L2 use, commonly called *invandrarvenska* (‘immigrant Swedish’), is the variety spoken by first-generation immigrant learners. It is inherently unstable, as it develops through language learning. It is characterised by the influence of the speaker’s L1 and by a tendency towards simplification. These features are not stylistic choices but rather reflect the speakers’ developing competence in Swedish.
- Suburban slang, a variety primarily spoken by young speakers in multiethnic neighbourhoods. It is commonly called *Rinkebysvenska* (‘Rinkeby Swedish’), term that identifies the Stockholm neighbourhood of Rinkeby as an archetype of immigrant-dense areas, or *shobresvenska* (‘sho bre Swedish’), name derived from the Arabic *shoo* (‘what’), which resembles the Swedish *tjo* (‘hi’) and the Serbo-Croatian abbreviation *bre* (‘bro’). Section 4.5.2 discusses this variety in detail.
- Suburban Swedish, a social dialect emerging from the conventionalisation of linguistic features employed by migrant speakers who use Swedish as a lingua franca. This variety has many labels, the neutral one being *förortssvenska* (‘suburban Swedish’). Other labels are *blattesvenska* (‘cockroach Swedish’), which is highly derogatory (Kotsinas 1996: 36-37), and

¹² <https://www.isof.se/flersprakighet/sprakpolitik/vanliga-fragor-om-sprakpolitik/vanliga-fragor-sprakpolitik/vilka-ar-de-storsta-minoritetsspraken-i-sverige>

miljonsvenska ('million Swedish'), which alludes to the Stockholm suburbs housing project called *miljonprogrammet* (Årman 2018: 47).

Suburban Swedish spoken by adult first-generation immigrants is characterised by great variation, which depends on a combination of factors, including the speaker's length of stay in Sweden, their contacts with native Swedish speakers and their first language (Kotsinas 2001: 127). Common features include the use of a restricted vocabulary, the omission of grammatical morphemes that express tense, aspect and number, the rarity of subordinate clauses, and the overuse of paratactic constructions (Kotsinas 2001: 128-141). Additionally, speakers often employ compensatory strategies including repetition, circumlocution, analytic decomposition, lexical over-use and semantic over-extension (Kotsinas 2001: 141-145).

In public discourse, Suburban Swedish has been defined as "broken Swedish" (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2011: 6), because it deviates from the accepted Swedish standard. Årman (2018) reports that the variety has been described as an "aberrant and deviant offshoot of standard Swedish" (Milani et al. 2015 as cited in Årman 2018: 53), and that its speakers have been described as brutalising the language. Årman (2018: 48) argues that the variety has undergone a process of iconisation, in which the negative conceptualisation of Suburban Swedish as problematic, homophobic and sexist has extended to its speakers.

4.5 Youth language

4.5.1 *Ungdomsspråk*

Youth language is an age-based sociolect defined in contrast to the adult standard (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 169). This variety is typically used by young people between approximately the ages of 13 and 24, from the start of adolescence to the end of education and entry in the labour market (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 170). Since it is an age-based variety, youth language is transitional. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of age grading, which refers to the idea that speakers pass through different stages in their lives which are associated with distinct linguistic characteristics. Examples are child language, youth language, and adult language (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 171).

Young people are linguistic innovators at different levels. This innovation is primarily driven by identitarian goals, as youth employ language to define themselves, their identities and their uniqueness, to mark peer affiliation, and to signal distance from adults (Norrby & Håkansson 2015:

172). Youth language differs from the adult standard at different levels and in multiple ways, which are explored below with specific focus on Swedish and Stockholm.

In terms of pronunciation (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 174-176), studies conducted by Ulla-Britt Kotsinas in Stockholm reveal a correlation between young speakers' pronunciation and their neighbourhood of residence, which is influenced by social factors such as parental income and occupation, and housing conditions. Additionally, young speakers were found to actively avoid pronunciation features traditionally associated with Stockholm speech, using this divergence as an identitarian strategy to distance themselves from adult speakers.

Youth language is also characterised by a high degree of lexical innovation and creativity, particularly in the creation of slang (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 177-180). Slang expressions can be widespread and shared by an entire generation, or they can be limited to specific subcultures. Most slang expressions are fleeting, because they are used briefly and then replaced by new ones, but some undergo a process of standardisation. In such cases, slang ceases to be perceived as non-standard and becomes integrated into colloquial language (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 178). Swedish examples include *kille* ('boy'), *tjej* ('girl'), *snacka* ('to chat'), *jobba* ('to work').

Slang is often used in connection with taboo words and expressions (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 178), which Swedish distinguishes in *svordomar* ('swearwords') or *könsord* ('genitalia words'). The use of slang, particularly when combined with taboo language, is another way in which young speakers distinguish and distance themselves from the adult world.

Norrby & Håkansson (2015: 178-180) observe that Swedish youth slang is shaped by the multilingualism of the country. It is influenced both by immigrant languages, mainly Arabic, Turkish and Spanish, as well as by English. English has become an integral component of Swedish in general and of Swedish youth language in particular (Hult 2003: 55-56), a phenomenon commonly referred to as *svengelska* ('Swenglish'). While English is sometimes used to fill lexical gaps, especially in the fields of technology and science, it is also often employed with identitarian purposes in cases where a Swedish equivalent is available. Young Swedish speakers often incorporate English loanwords such as *shit*, *cool*, *sweet*, *bad* in everyday interactions. Additionally, Swedish equivalents such as *skit* ('shit') and *as* (uncertain origin and meaning) are commonly used as intensifying prefixes that can convey both positive and negative meanings, as in *skitbra* (lit. 'shit good', 'very good'), *skitdåligt* (lit. 'shit bad', 'very bad'), *asbra* ('very good'), *asdåligt* ('very bad'). English influence is also evident in adapted loanwords such as *bloggare* ('blogger'), *skejtare* ('skater'), *surfare* ('surfer'), *najs* ('nice').

Another defining feature of youth language is the extensive use of discursive particles (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 181-185). These are brief, unstressed words that can be used in different parts of the sentence and that can be removed without compromising the meaning of the sentence. Some instances that are frequently used in Swedish youth language include *ba* (apocope of *bara*, ‘only’), *liksom* (‘like’), *ju* (‘well’), *typ* (‘like’), *va* (‘huh’), *du vet* (‘you know’), *s’är* (apocope of *så här*, ‘like this’). The use of discursive particles is subject to age variation within youth speech. For example, *ba* is mostly employed by and associated with very young speakers at the beginning of their adolescence.

Discursive particles are often criticised as meaningless filler-words that embody the youth’s poverty of expression and bad language. However, they serve a series of interactional functions in language: they can be used to express the speaker’s attitudes and stance, to mitigate the force of statements, to mark vagueness, and to structure discourse by supporting turn-taking and facilitating interpretation. Additionally, they can contribute to group cohesion, as an extensive employment of discursive particles can signal unity and solidarity.

Finally, youth language is characterised by a distinctive conversational style (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 189-192). Youth interactions typically involve short turns, frequent overlaps, and a rapid conversational rhythm. Prosodically, they tend to involve a great variation in volume and intonation. Meaning is often conveyed implicitly, making shared background knowledge fundamental for successful interpretation.

4.5.2 Rinkebysvenska

Rinkebysvenska is a youth language variety spoken in Swedish multiethnic neighbourhoods (Kotsinas 1996: 37). The name derives from the Stockholm suburb of Rinkeby, where Ulla-Britt Kotsinas first observed and described the variety in the 1980s. Rinkeby is considered the archetype of immigrant-dense areas in Sweden (Kotsinas 1996: 36), as it is characterised by a high proportion of immigrant residents and by a consequent high degree of linguistic diversity, with more than 100 languages spoken in the area (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 205). This variety, however, is not exclusive to Rinkeby, as it is also attested in other multiethnic neighbourhoods, where it takes a local name. For example, in the Rosengård suburb in Malmö it is commonly called *rosengårdssvenska*.

Rinkebysvenska is a multiethnolect (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 203), a variety that emerges in contexts where speakers of several minority languages coexist and use the majority language as a lingua franca. In this variety, features from different minority languages converge and are used independently of the speaker’s L1. *Rinkebysvenska* functions as an identity marker that signals the

speaker's identification with the in-group of multilingual suburban youth, by showing group affiliation and solidarity (Ganuza 2011: 91).

Rinkebysvenska is characterised by features typical of youth language, including the use of a high rate of discourse particles (Kotsinas 1996: 38) and a similar conversational style (Ganuza 2011: 98), as well as by features that differentiate it from *ungdomsspråk*.

In terms of pronunciation, the distinction between long and short syllables is neutralised, producing syllables of similar length (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 211). Additionally, word boundaries are clearly marked, resulting in a staccato-like prosody (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2015: 22). The speaker's accent may also be influenced by their L1.

Another central feature is grammatical simplification, which can include the omission of obligatory elements such as the subject, the deviation from standard grammatical gender and agreement patterns (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2011: 13), and the use of a non-standard word order (Ganuza 2011: 91).

Lexical simplifications and expansions are also common. An instance is the meaning extension of *gå* ('to walk') to also include *åker* ('to go') (Norrby & Håkansson 2015: 205-206). Foreign linguistic material, both in terms of words and of phonetics, is borrowed and incorporated by speakers (Bodén 2011: 36). Some instances of borrowings from other languages include *jalla* ('hurry up') from Arabic, *aina* ('police') from Turkish slang, *bre* ('brother') from Serbo-Croatian, *walla* ('I swear to God') from Arabic.

The use of *rinkebysvenska* is context dependent. Typically, it is used in peer-to-peer, high-involvement interactions, and is generally not employed in formal contexts or in communication with adults (Ganuza 2011: 98). This demonstrates that speakers have sociolinguistic awareness, as they recognise linguistic differences and the social meanings associated with them (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2011: 11). Additionally, speakers show awareness of language attitudes (Bijvoet & Fraurud 2011: 11), because they are aware that *rinkebysvenska* is a highly stigmatised variety, which the general public often labels as a form of degeneration and degradation of standard Swedish (Kotsinas 1996: 29). This awareness influences the linguistic choices of the speakers, who decide in which contexts it is appropriate to use their variety and in which contexts they are expected to use standard Swedish. At the same time, in contrast with the general public's perception, Årman (2018) shows that high school students who speak *rinkebysvenska* actively defend it as valid and creative, while criticising ethnically Swedish speakers who appropriate it either to appear "cool and trendy" (Årman 2018: 53) or to mock the multiethnic youth who use it (Årman 2018: 56).

4.6 Stockholm and its no tolerance anti-graffiti regime

Stockholm is the capital city of Sweden. Stockholm refers both to the county (*Stockholms län*), comprising 26 municipalities and inhabited by about 2.5 million people, and to the city (*Stockholms stad*). As of 2024, the population of Stockholm city is 995,574 people (Stockholms Stad 2025: 20).

Stockholm city is divided into 11 *stadsdelsområden* ('city district departments'), which are grouped into three macro-areas:

- *Västerort* ('Western area'), including the districts of Järva, Hässelby-Vällingby, Bromma.
- *Inre staden* ('Inner city'), including the districts of Kungsholmen, Norra innerstaden, Södermalm.
- *Söderort* ('Southern area'), including the districts of Enskede-Årsta-Vantör, Skarpnäck, Farsta, Hägersten-Älvsjö, Skärholmen.

These districts differ markedly in terms of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. In general, Inner-city districts display higher average income and employment rates, while the Western and Southern areas present differentiated features. Several suburbs, especially in the Western area, display lower average incomes, higher unemployment rates and higher proportions of residents with an immigrant background. These differences are addressed in greater detail in Chapter 5, with specific reference to the districts of Södermalm and Järva, which are the areas of interest of the present study.

The relationship between Stockholm and graffiti is a layered one. On the one hand, Stockholm was the first city in the world to establish an open graffiti wall, *Klotterplanket* (see Section 3.2), an initiative celebrated at the time as a win for democracy and freedom of expression (Hannerz & Kimvall 2019: 401). On the other hand, since 2007 the city has enforced the *Policy mot klotter* ('policy against graffiti') (Kommunstyrelsen 2007), a strict *nolltolerans* ('zero-tolerance') policy against graffiti (Ceccato et al. 2025: 3).

The Policy is based on the principle that the urban environment is everyone's property and that it is everyone's responsibility to maintain it (Kommunstyrelsen 2007). Under Chapter 12 of the *Brottsbalken* ('Penal Law'), graffiti is defined as a crime of vandalism, punishable with a fine and imprisonment of up to one year in average cases, and of up to four years in cases of serious damage (Stockholms stad 2021: 20).

The stated aim of the Policy is to increase the feeling of cleanliness and safety in the city through the removal and prevention of graffiti. Graffiti is therefore explicitly framed as a security issue, as its presence is linked to heightened feelings of unsafety and to a more negative overall experience of the

city (Stockholms stad 2021: 7-8). It is also stated that repression and prevention of graffiti can prevent issues of truancy, substance abuse and criminality within the youth (Stockholms stad 2021: 13).

Following the zero-tolerance principle, the Policy states that no type of graffiti and vandalism is tolerated and issues a series of measures to enforce this resolution (Kommunstyrelsen 2007). These are here condensed and integrated with the latest legislation (Stockholms stad 2021):

- Erasure. All graffiti written on city property (streets, squares, parks, pedestrian tunnels, bridges, bins, road signs, wall, etc.) must be cleaned up within 24 hours from its discovery and/or report. Schools and preschool have the highest priority. If the graffiti is offensive or racist, it must be removed immediately, within 4 to 8 hours from their discovery and/or report. Interval cleaning is also performed on areas that are prone to recurring graffiti, such as parks and areas close to the subway.
- Police involvement. All remediated cases must be documented with photographs and reported to the police. Ceccato et al. (2025: 3) observes that the Policy also empowers police to conduct strip searches and make arrests based on suspicion of graffiti involvement.
- Technology. New buildings and objects pertaining to the city must be designed to make graffiti writing more difficult. This includes improved lighting, strategic placement of vegetation and protective railings, increased CCTV surveillance (Ceccato et al. 2025: 3).
- Prevention. People who work in contact with youth must receive training on the risks connected to graffiti. Selling of spray paints, markers, and other materials used for graffiti should be hindered.
- The city shall not participate in or support activities or events that do not clearly distance themselves from graffiti and vandalism or that may arouse interest in them.
Practically, this led to the cancellation of graffiti workshops and of touristic street-art tours and to the prohibition of public advertisement for street-art related events.

The Policy is enforced by *Trafikkontoret* ('the Traffic Office'), which partially relies on citizen reporting tools to identify cases to remediate. These tools consist of a telephone line and the app *Tyck till*, opened in 2014, which is reported to receive about 30,000 reports per year (Stockholms stad 2021).

In its latest report, *Handlingsplan för minskat klotter* (Stockholms stad 2021), the Traffic Office underlines the need for increased supervision of legal walls, as statistics suggest that illegal graffiti have increased in the areas surrounding them. Currently, Stockholm has four open graffiti walls, two in Södermalm (Inner-City), one in Spånga-Tensta (Västerort) and one in Farsta (Söderort).

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA COLLECTION AND ANNOTATION

5.1 Introduction

The present Chapter focuses on the processes of data collection and annotation. Section 5.2 relays the process of site selection. Subsection 5.2.1 addresses the preliminary questionnaire, while Subsection 5.2.2 focuses on the analysis of official statistics. Section 5.3 discusses the methodology and process of data collection. Section 5.4 clarifies the procedure of data annotation. In Section 5.5, the research questions are presented.

5.2 Site selection

The initial idea for the present study is comparing the informal linguistic landscape (graffiti and stickers) of two Stockholm neighbourhoods with different and contrasting sociodemographic features. The site selection consisted of two phases. First, an explorative questionnaire was used to investigate how residents of Stockholm perceive graffiti and its distribution across the city. Second, official statistical data was reviewed to identify areas that contrast the most in terms of demographic features.

5.2.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to investigate Stockholm residents' experiences and perceptions of graffiti. Specifically, it examined the participants' views on the types of graffiti present in the city, the languages in which they occur, and the perceived differences across urban areas. Participants' hypotheses on the reasons for these differences, as well as their general opinions on graffiti, were also investigated. It is available online at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1WpPxynJdqf9EU5CyKwYByhoMuFsPg0DERAV73SK9hGQ/edit>

The questionnaire was distributed online via social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook groups focused on the Stockholm area), blogs and forums (Reddit and Flashback Forum), and via participant resharing. The sampling strategy can be therefore described as a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling. It is acknowledged that these types of sampling have the potential

to skew the representativeness and balance of the study. The questionnaire remained open for one month, from 18 August 2023, and collected responses from 55 participants.

The participants were briefly informed on the purposes and aims of the questionnaire, and it was disclaimed that their answers would be used anonymously for research purposes. The questionnaire was structured in two parts. The first included demographic questions concerning current residence, age, gender, level of education, occupation, country of birth, languages spoken, length of residence in Stockholm, and area of residence. The second part focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences of graffiti in Stockholm.

Out of the 55 respondents, 49 (89.1%) were residing in Stockholm at the time of participation, while 6 (10.9%) were not, but reported having resided in the city for most of their lives.

Age (Figure 1) was measured in 5-year brackets. The sample was skewed towards participants aged 20 to 34, who made up a combined total of 83.6% of all participants.

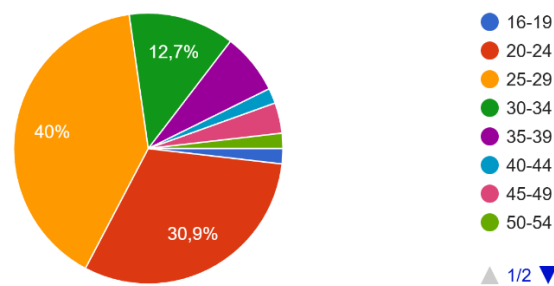


Figure 1. Age of participants

In terms of gender, 28 participants (50.9%) identified as male, 26 (47.3%) as female, and 1 (1.8%) as non-binary.

Regarding education (Figure 2), most participants reported completing tertiary education, with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees together accounting for 65.4% of the sample. An additional 30.9% report having completed high school degrees, while only 2 participants report compulsory education as their highest level of schooling.

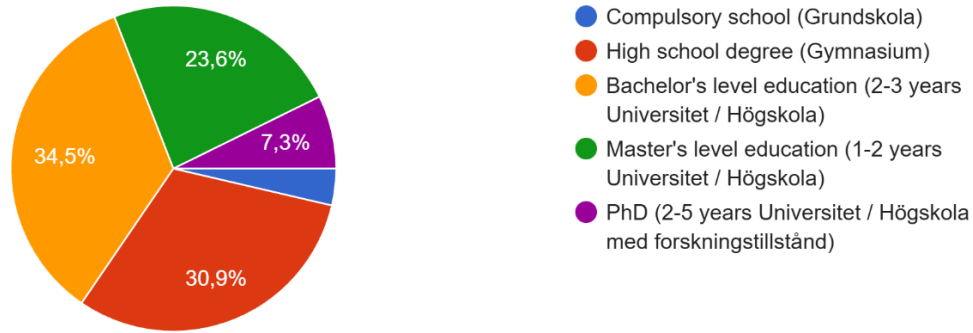


Figure 2. Education level of participants

31 participants (56%) reported not having attended any courses in which graffiti was addressed. By contrast, 24 participants (44%) reported having attended courses that addressed graffiti, with 5 participants indicating that they attended courses pertaining to multiple fields on the topic (Figure 3).

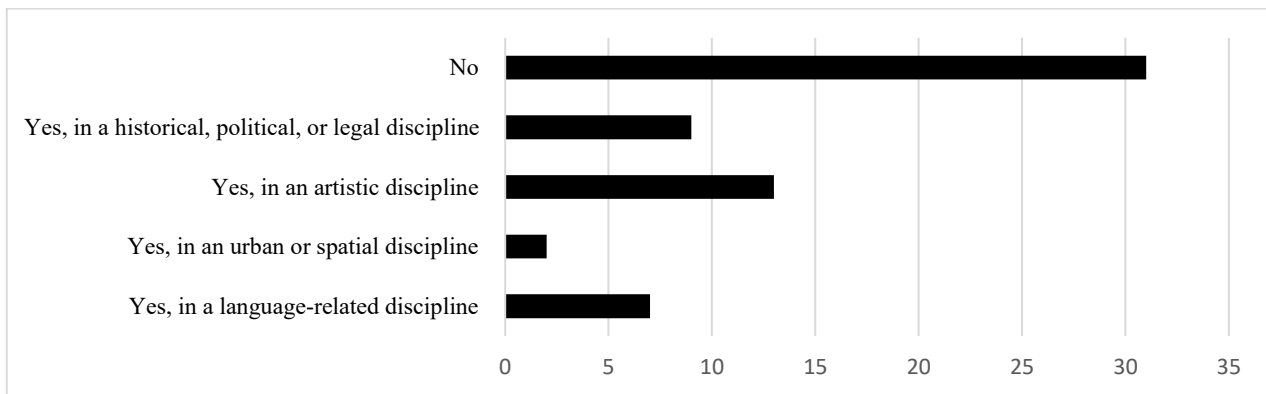


Figure 3. Attendance of graffiti-related courses

Occupational categories are presented in Table 1. Nearly half of the participants (47,3%) reported being students, which reflects the age skew of the sample.

Occupational category	Percentage	Number of participants
Students	47.3%	26
Creative and cultural professions	7.3%	4
Service sector	14.5%	8
Office and management	10.9%	6
IT	7.3%	4
Social sector	9.1%	5
Manual labour	1.8%	1
Unspecified	1.8%	1

Table 1. Occupations of participants

With regard to countries of origin, most participants were born in Sweden (56.4%, 31 participants). Following are Italy (12.7%, 7 participants), Germany (10.9%, 6 participants) and Poland (3.6%, 2 participants). The remaining countries of origin are represented by a single participant each; they are Spain, Russian Federation, Romania, Portugal, Lithuania, Ireland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Chile.

Concerning the languages spoken, nearly all participants reported speaking English (98.2%, 54 participants), followed by Swedish (81.8%, 45 participants). Spanish and German were each spoken by 18.2% (10 participants), and Italian by 16.4% (9 participants). Russian, Finnish and Polish were spoken by two participants each, while Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian, Persian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Japanese, Romanian, Catalan, Irish, Czech and Turkish were spoken by one participant each.

Participants reported different periods of residence in Stockholm (Figure 4).

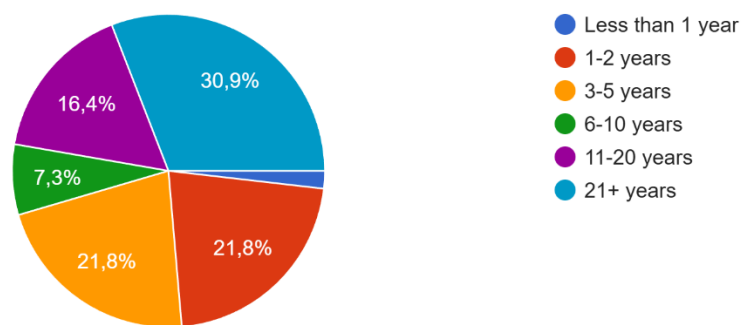


Figure 4. Length of residence in Stockholm

The areas of residence (Figure 5) are grouped by district if within the area of Stockholm city, or by municipality if within Stockholm County. Some participants reported only a general north or south area. A minor inconsistency is noted, as 6 participants reported not living in Stockholm in the first question, while only 5 participants report it in this question.

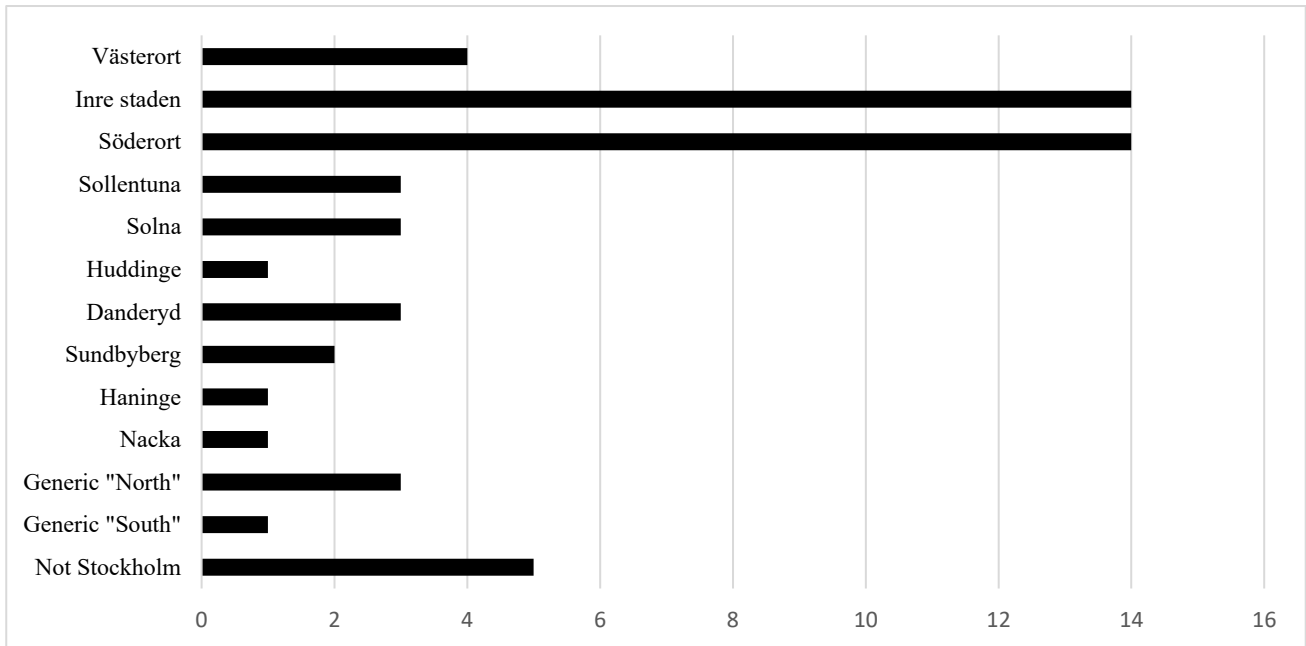


Figure 5. Areas of residence

Participants expressed different attitudes towards graffiti and wall writing. The majority (65.5%, 36 participants) reported a positive attitude. Among these, three participants stated that they themselves practice or have practiced graffiti writing. Several responses framed graffiti as a vital practice that is necessary to reclaim the city against increasing gentrification: “I love graffiti. In an age where cities are getting more and more clean, soulless and dead, graffiti creates life and is a way for people to reclaim the city” (Response 42, 25-29 years old female living in Danderyd); “There are pretty much only positives to graffiti. Brings vibrancy to a city that’s progressively getting more and more dull as gentrification spreads” (Response 2, 20-24 years old male living in Midsommarkransen, Söderort). Only three participants expressed a completely negative stance towards graffiti. A further 29% (16 participants) reported ambivalent attitudes, asserting that it “depends where and what kind” (Response 15, 25-29 years old female living in Årsta, Söderort). These participants reported a negative attitude towards tags and stated that they prefer more artistic and expressive pieces. At the same time, they underlined the importance of placement and of respecting private property.

All participants reported having encountered graffiti in Stockholm, with nearly half (48.1%) stating that they see it daily or almost daily, and 27.3% reporting seeing it a few times a week. Tags were the most observed type (94.5%), followed by murals and text (80% each) and stencils (58.2%). English (80%) and Swedish (76%) were the most reported languages. Other languages observed included Arabic (4 participants), Spanish (3 participants), Italian (2 participants), and Finnish, German, Ukrainian and French (1 participant each). 16% of participants either did not remember the languages observed or reported primarily seeing tags.

Most participants (65.5%) reported noticing differences in the presence and type of graffiti across different areas of the city. Firstly, participants perceived that most wall writings in Stockholm are tags. Secondly, they observed that the area of the Inner city and neighbourhoods that are “richer, whiter” (Response 34, 30-34 years old male living in Årsta, Söderort) generally do not have a lot of graffiti. However, they also reported that more “trendy” (Response 4, 30-34 years old male living in Årsta, Söderort) areas that are popular for youth and for night life (Response 34) tend to have more wall writings. Particularly, multiple participants observed that the area of Södermalm (district of the Inner city) has more graffiti than the rest of the Inner city, and that these tend to have a more political tone. There is also a consensus about the fact that graffiti is more common on the outskirts, as well as in areas that are less residential and more secluded, for example close to train stations.

Participants explained the differences observed in terms of various, intertwined factors. First, the zero-tolerance graffiti policy, which determines the general scarcity of graffiti in the city as well as the prevalence of tags. In Response 2, the participant observes: “the 24 hour rule that applies to Stockholms inner city has a big part in this. There is rarely any reason to spend 20+ to get one piece up just for it to be buffed the next morning so putting up throwies or tags is simply just better for getting up”.

The strict anti-graffiti policy also determines heightened security and concrete legal risks for writers. Participants noted that these factors lead to greater fear of getting caught, as well as an absolute need for anonymity and speed. Consequently, the Inner city is generally dispreferred by writers, because it is more populated, crowded, and illuminated, which determines a higher risk. Additionally, this explains why the preferred type of wall writing in general, and specifically in the Inner city, is tags, as these fulfil the need to prove one’s presence and mark the territory in a fast manner. In Response 20 (20-24 years old female living in Flemingsberg, Huddinge), the participant observed:

In the city you have to be quicker. There’s a lot of ppl around, therefore you have to work fast. Quantity over quality. You want ppl to see your tag. By the rail you often have more time, tho it is more risky. Ofc you want quantity there as well but I feel as if quality is valued higher there. The chance that ppl will remember your name is higher if they see one really nice piece that sticks out by the rail, or if they see your tag everywhere they go in the city.

Multiple participants also hypothesised a connection between the presence of graffiti, the action of the anti-graffiti regime, and the demographic characteristics of the area, namely class, ethnicity and average income. They observed that erasure is performed more quickly in “areas that are generally perceived as higher class” (Response 10, 25-29 years old male living in Sundbyberg), because

“graffiti is often seen as a poor, uneducated and anti-authority art and culture, which does not belong in those high salary areas according to some” (Response 7, 20-24 years old male living in Södermalm, Inre staden).

Finally, participants asserted that, despite repression, graffiti is present because “it’s a human need” (Response 34) and “an excellent tool to mark your territory” (Response 21, 25-29 years old male living in Bromma, Västerort), as well as “a fast way to make your environment reflect your identity” (Response 34).

Based on the questionnaire, some guiding hypotheses were formulated:

1. Tags would be the prevalent form of wall writing.
2. The Inner city would be likely to have less graffiti and more signs of erasure. However, Södermalm could be a district where more pieces could be found, and therefore an area of interest within the Inner city.
3. Suburban areas would be likely to have more graffiti.
4. There could be a link between demographic features and incidence of wall writings.

5.2.2 The official statistics

Based on the fourth hypothesis derived from the questionnaire, that is, that there could be a link between demographic features and incidence of wall writing, a review of official statistics for the city of Stockholm was conducted. The data was retrieved from the *Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm 2025* (Stockholms stad 2024), which was the latest available at the time of research, and which covers statistics for the year of 2023. The aim was that of identifying the district areas that were most contrasting from the point of view of demographic features.

The ultimate choice to focus on the district areas of Södermalm and Järva was therefore primarily informed by demographic indicators and partially guided by the observations that emerged from the questionnaire, in which participants’ responses underlined Södermalm as a potential area of interest. The comparison between the two district areas is now presented through official statistics and introduced through observations provided by two informants who are native to the city. Their contribution is aimed at providing a preliminary description of the areas based on their personal perspective and experience, as well as on their perception of public attitudes.

To allow readers who are not familiar with Stockholm geography to envision the area, a map taken from the *Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm 2025* (Stockholms stad 2024) is provided (Figure 6). The areas of interest are highlighted in pink.

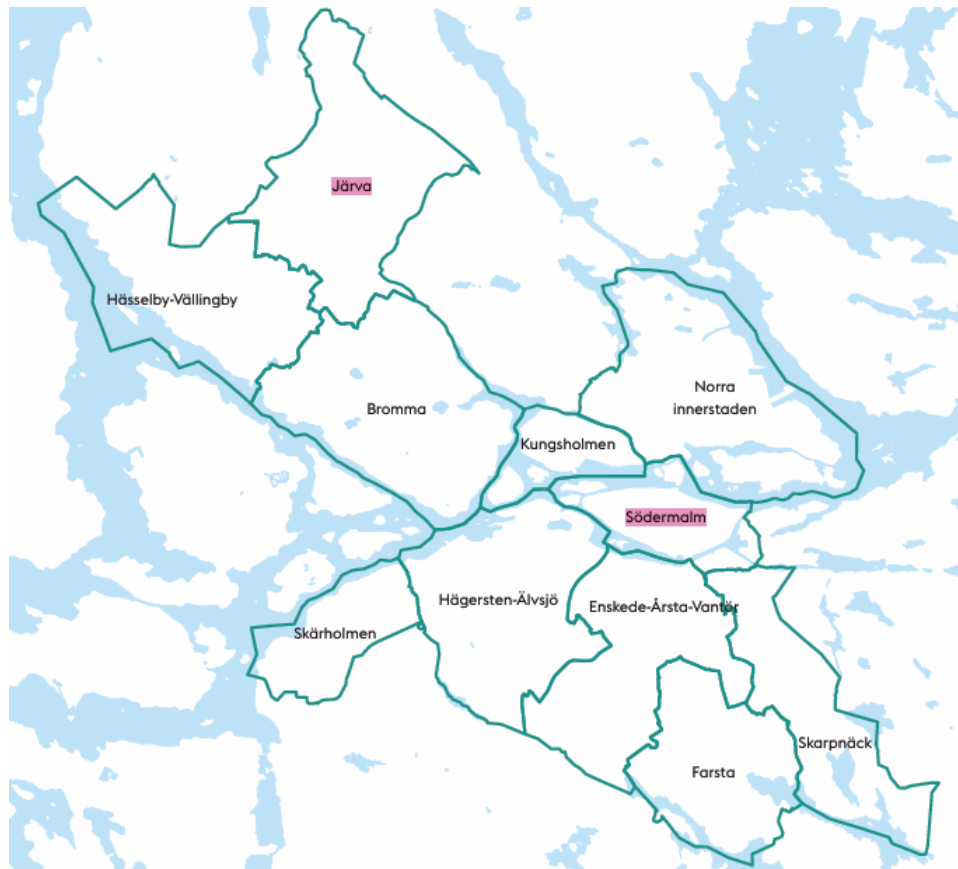


Figure 6. Map of Stockholm district areas

Södermalm is a district area that forms part of the Inner city. It includes the districts of Gamla Stan, Hammarby sjöstad, Långholmen, Reimersholme, Riddarholmen and Södermalm. According to the informants, Södermalm is generally perceived positively by the public. In the 20th century, Södermalm was largely inhabited by working-class residents. However, around the 1990s the ongoing process of gentrification of the area intensified and led to rising housing prices and to the displacement of lower-income residents. Today, Södermalm is often described as a “hipster” left-leaning area and is appreciated for its active nightlife and cultural scene. To live in Södermalm is the goal of many young people and young professionals, as the area is associated with higher social status and prestige, while being perceived as young and fun.

Järva is a suburban district area located in Västerort. It includes the districts of Akalla, Bromsten, Flysta, Husby, Kista, Lunda, Rinkeby, Solhem, Sundby and Tensta. The informants describe Järva as being perceived rather negatively by the general public. This negative perception is linked to its high proportion of residents with immigrant backgrounds and to the widespread belief that crime rates in

the area are the highest in the city, which contributes to the area being perceived as unsafe and unattractive. Järva is a predominantly residential area, where housing prices are among the lowest in Stockholm. Despite this, ethnic Swedes and long term immigrants tend to disprefer living in these areas.

According to the *Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm 2025* (Stockholms stad 2024), at the time of data collection Södermalm had 130,564 residents, corresponding to 13.2% of Stockholm's total population, while Järva had 92,659, corresponding to 9.4%.

Concerning immigration rates, foreign born individuals and individuals born in Sweden to foreign born parents make up 21.1% of Södermalm's population (27,524 people) and 75.6% of Järva's population (70,028 people), the highest proportion among Stockholm's district areas. In terms of origins, in Södermalm 37% of immigrants have European background (excluding the Nordic countries), followed by 25% with Asian background, and 15% with Nordic background (which includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway). In Järva, 46% of immigrants have Asian background, followed by 33% with African background and 13% with European background (excluding the Nordic countries).

Regarding educational background, the majority of Södermalm residents have completed post-secondary education (70.8%), followed by 22.7% with a high school education and 4.1% with compulsory education. In Järva, 40% of residents have completed post-secondary education, 33.7% have high school education, and 18.6% have compulsory education.

The average annual income per capita in Södermalm is 387,667 SEK (roughly 36,280€), while in Järva it is 243,600 SEK (roughly 22,800€). These figures include the income figures for unemployed residents, who represent 2.5% of the population in Södermalm and 6% in Järva, the latter being the highest rate among Stockholm's district areas.

Finally, crime statistics reveal a discrepancy between the public perception reported by the informants and the recorded data. Södermalm reported a total of 35,294 crimes, corresponding to 270 crimes per 1,000 residents, while Järva reported 16,124 crimes, corresponding to 174 crimes per 1,000 residents. Regarding crimes of vandalism, which include graffiti, Södermalm recorded 15,637 cases, the highest figure in the city, while Järva recorded 5,217 cases.

Overall, the areas of Södermalm and Järva present significant differences in terms of demographic features, including immigration and educational background, average income and unemployment rates. Södermalm is characterised by a lower proportion of residents with an immigrant background, higher educational levels, higher average income, and lower unemployment rates. By contrast, Järva

is characterised by a substantially higher proportion of residents with an immigrant background, lower overall educational levels and average income, and higher unemployment rates. The comparison between the two areas is summarised in Table 2.

Feature (as of 31/12/2023)		Södermalm	Järva
Population		130,564	92,659
Immigrant background		21.1% (27,524 people)	75.6% (70,028 people)
Education level	Compulsory education	4.1%	18.6%
	High school education	22.7%	33.7%
	Post-secondary education	70.8%	40%
Average income		387,667 SEK (\approx 36,280€)	243,600 SEK (\approx 22,800€)
Unemployment rate		2.5%	6%
Reported crimes per 1000 residents		270	174
Reported vandalism		15,637	5,217

Table 2. Demographic features for Södermalm and Järva, 2023

5.3 Data collection and methodology

The data used in the present study was primarily collected over the course of four days of fieldwork, divided between two days in Södermalm and two in Järva. Additionally, 7 signs included in the dataset were encountered incidentally on occasions not specifically aimed at research. The fieldwork focused on bottom-up signs, specifically on graffiti and stickers. An additional focus was on the absence of graffiti resulting from acts of erasure, of which some significant examples were documented. This category of data was complemented with official figures obtained through direct contact with *Trafikkontoret*. Access to this data was made possible by the Swedish Transparency Act, which grants full access to public records in Sweden.

A preliminary step in the fieldwork process for both locations consisted of an exploration of the areas using the Street View function of Google Maps. This was used to identify potential areas of interest and to outline a general route to follow during fieldwork. While all the areas identified with this method were researched, the route was not followed strictly nor exclusively, as the fieldwork process led to the discovery of additional areas of interest that had not been previously identified.

Södermalm was the first area to be investigated. The data was collected on 20 September and 6 October 2025. Since the area of Södermalm is extended, the initial and primary focus was on spots identified through Street View and on areas known, or presumed, to be rich in graffiti and stickers. These included parks, construction sites, areas close to subway stations and bridges, and the areas surrounding the open walls of Tanto and Skanstull. At the same time, to ensure thorough coverage, all territorial subdivisions of the area were explored. In total, approximately 16 kilometres were covered on foot and documented through photographs taken with a smartphone. A total of 514 photographs were collected and annotated with information concerning the territorial subdivision in which they were taken. Following a process of revision and selection, 186 photographs of graffiti and 62 of stickers were retained and divided in separate folders. The resulting corpora consist of 200 graffiti texts and 90 sticker texts.

Järva was the second area investigated. The data was collected on the 23 and 28 October 2025. The same fieldwork approach employed in Södermalm was applied in Järva. Specifically, the areas identified through Street View were researched first, as well as areas known or presumed to be rich in graffiti, including the area surrounding the open wall in Tensta. All territorial subdivisions of Järva were explored, for a total of 16 kilometres. Compared to Södermalm, substantially fewer instances of graffiti and stickers were encountered in Järva. Consequently, only 249 pictures were taken. After revision and selection, 27 pictures of graffiti and 26 of stickers were retained. The resulting corpora consist of 22 graffiti texts and 45 sticker texts.

For both Södermalm and Järva, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the number of photographs and the number of texts included in the corpora. This is due to two reasons. First, in some cases one picture was sufficient to document multiple signs. Second, some signs were particularly extended and required multiple photographs to be fully documented. Table 3 summarises the number of photographs collected per area and category, as well as the number of texts included in each corpus.

District area	Graffiti pics	Graffiti corpus	Sticker pics	Sticker corpus
Södermalm	186	200	62	90
Järva	27	22	26	45

Table 3. Number of photographs and texts for Södermalm and Järva

Before the collection process, it was established that the unit of analysis would be the individual sign. This decision was confirmed during the collection process and further motivated by the intricacy and overlapping that characterised many of the signs encountered, which determined the partial or total unreadability of many texts. This is exemplified in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Graffiti wall in Tanto (Södermalm)

Additionally, a few instances of interactive graffiti were encountered during the fieldwork. These consisted of semantically connected signs that were either overlapping or placed in close proximity. Due to these features, interactive graffiti was treated as a single analytical unit. An example is provided in Figure 8.

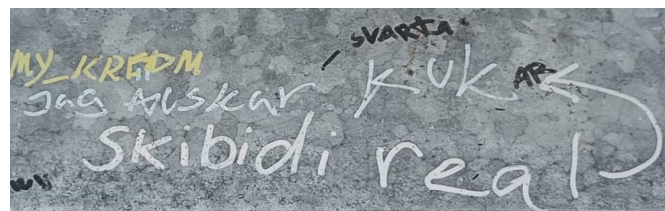


Figure 8. Interactive sign in Solhem (Järva)

Finally, the collection process excluded tags for the category of graffiti, while instances of tags found on stickers were retained. The exclusion of tags from the graffiti documentation is motivated by the fact that they lack linguistic content, they are often low in readability, and they occur with high frequency and repetition. Murals were also excluded for the dataset, due to their lack of linguistic content and low readability. On the other hand, repeated instances of graffiti and stickers with linguistic content were counted as separate occurrences and explicitly annotated as repetitions.

5.4 Data annotation

The photographs were organised into six folders in order to divide graffiti, stickers and signs of erasure found within each district area.

The first steps were transcription and translation. In all cases, the languages of the signs could be easily identified. However, given the wide range of languages attested in the Södermalm dataset, the collaboration of several language informants was necessary. Specifically, native speakers of Swedish, Arabic, Polish, German, Russian, Finnish, and Romanian supported the translation work. Additional challenges in the translation process included the presence of abbreviations, slang expressions, and multilingual signs.

Following transcription and translation, each text was annotated using an Excel spreadsheet. The following features were annotated:

- Date of collection and territorial subdivisions. For Södermalm, the territorial subdivisions are: Hornstull, Tanto, Skanstull, Slussen, Gamla Stan, Långholmen. Additionally, the name of the street Katarinavägen was also used. For Järva the territorial subdivisions are: Flysta, Spånga, Rinkeby, Tensta, Kista, Husby, Akalla.
- Languages. When the sign was monolingual, the language was directly annotated. If the sign was multilingual, this was labelled as such, and the languages were specified in parentheses. As a rule of thumb, if a sign, typically made up of a single word (e.g. *penis*, *antifa*), could be interpreted as either Swedish or English, it was annotated as Swedish. The label “N.D.” (‘not determined’) was used for signs in which the language parameter did not apply, for example in cases like *Adam & Ani 2022*. An additional label, “numbers/symbols” was used for graffiti exclusively containing numbers or symbols that were considered semiotically relevant, such as the anarchist (A), the swastika, *1312* or *161*. If a sign exclusively consisted of a team name with no additional elements, the item was labelled “team name”, and the country of origin of the team was specified in parentheses, for example *FC St. Pauli* [team name (GER)].
- Youth language. Instances containing slang words or expressions, abbreviations, or youth-specific terminology were annotated accordingly. If the feature could be linked to the *Rinkebysvenska* variety, this was also annotated.
- Intertextuality. The texts were examined to identify possible intertextual references. If these were identified, either a link to the original reference or a brief explanatory note was included in the annotation.
- Theme. Each text was annotated for both proto-theme and micro-theme. If the thematic classification was not possible with certainty, the label N.D. (‘not determined’) was used.

- Type of communication (linear vs. interactive). Each text was annotated as either linear or interactive communication. Additionally, a series of 76 writings found in Katarinavägen (Slussen) were annotated as a monologue.

5.5 Research questions

The broad research question guiding the study is:

- What differences can be observed in the informal linguistic landscape of Södermalm and Järva?

More specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

- What languages are employed in graffiti and stickers in Södermalm and Järva? Do these reflect the linguistic composition of the local resident communities?
- Do the signs display linguistic features identifiable as *ungdomsspråk* and *rinkebysvenska*?
- Which models of communication (linear, interactive, monologic) can be identified in the datasets?
- What themes characterise graffiti and stickers in the two areas?
- What effects does Stockholm's anti-graffiti policy have on the urban linguistic landscape? How visible are practices of erasure? How do these influence the distribution and placement of graffiti?

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

The present Chapter focuses on the analysis of the graffiti and sticker corpora, as well as on the influence of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime. Section 6.2 presents the graffiti analysis through 4 Subsections that examine the languages recorded, the youth language features observed, the communicative structures of the graffiti, and their thematic content. Section 6.3 presents the sticker analysis in two Subsections addressing the languages recorded and the thematic and linguistic features observed. Section 6.4 analyses the influence of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime on the city's linguistic landscape. Finally, Section 6.5 provides a comparative analysis of the district areas of Södermalm and Järva.

6.2 Graffiti analysis

The graffiti analysis is structured as follows: first, the languages used in graffiti are examined; second, features linked to *ungdomsspråk* and *Rinkebysvenska* are analysed; third, the thematic content is explored; fourth, the communicative structures of the texts are investigated.

6.2.1 Languages

The distribution of languages in the Södermalm graffiti corpus is presented in Table 4.

Language	Number	Percentage
Swedish	129	64.5%
English	34	17%
German	10	5%
Latin	3	0.15%
Romanian	1	0.5%
Icelandic	1	0.5%
Spanish	1	0.5%
Russian	1	0.5%
Multilingual (Swedish, English, Polish)	1	0.5%
Multilingual (Swedish, English)	3	1.5%

Multilingual (Swedish, German)	2	1%
Multilingual (English, German)	2	1%
Multilingual (French, Arabic)	1	0.5%
Multilingual (Swedish, Turkish)	1	0.5%
N/A	10	5%

Table 4. Languages of graffiti in Södermalm

Of the 200 graffiti texts collected in Södermalm, 181 are monolingual, 9 are multilingual (8 bilingual and 1 trilingual), and 10 are cases in which the language parameter is not applicable. The label “N/A” (‘not applicable’) includes instances annotated as ‘N.D.’ (‘not determined’) (Figure 9), ‘team name’ (Figure 10) and ‘numbers/symbols’ (Figure 11, Figure 12).

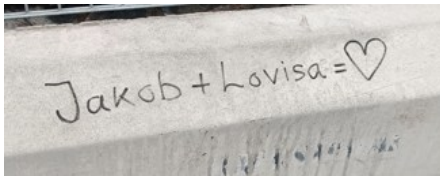


Figure 9. Text 74, Slussen (Södermalm)

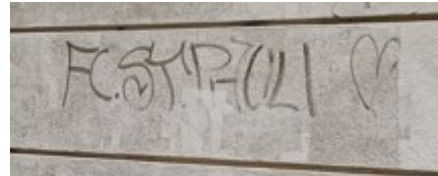


Figure 10. Text 66, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 11. Text 153, Slussen (Södermalm)



Figure 12. Text 154, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

Most graffiti are monolingual Swedish (64.5%). Swedish also appears in 6 multilingual signs in combination with English (3 instances), German (2 instances), and English and Polish (1 instance). English is the second most frequent language. On the one hand, this could reflect the fact that Swedes have a high proficiency in the language and use it daily. On the other hand, this could be linked to the presence and action of international residents or tourists. The third most frequent language is German, which is found in 10 monolingual signs (5%), as well as in 4 multilingual signs (2 in combination with English, 2 in combination with Swedish). Latin occurs in 3 instances. Single occurrences of Romanian, Icelandic, Russian and Spanish are also present. The Spanish example is shown in Figure 13. The text reads “*No pasaran!!!*” (‘they shall not pass’) and quotes the well-known Spanish antifascist slogan *¡No pasarán!* The writing displays non-standard spelling and punctuation, since it

is missing both the accent and the initial exclamation points. These features, together with the fact that it is likely authored by the same person who produced the Katarinavägen monologue (see Section 6.2.3), suggests that the sign was possibly written by a native Swedish speaker.

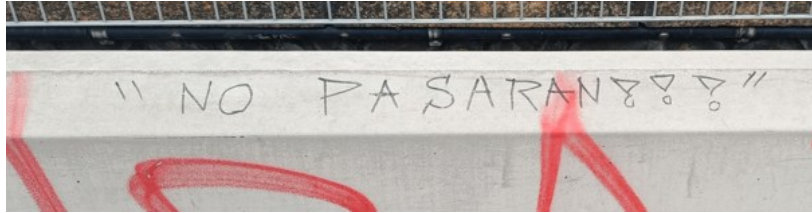


Figure 13. Text 106, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

As briefly mentioned above, 9 signs (4.5%) found in Södermalm are multilingual. Out of these, 1 instance is trilingual (Figure 14).

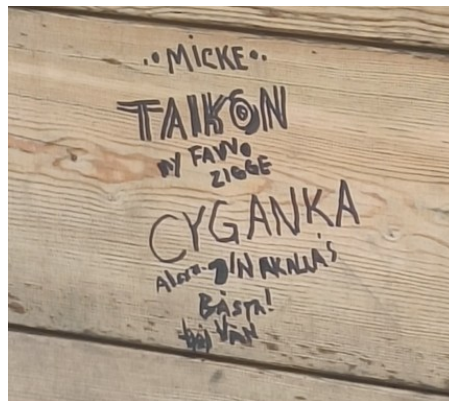


Figure 14. Text 3, Tanto (Södermalm)

The text combines Swedish, English and Polish, and reads *Micke Taikon my favvo zigge cyganka Alexa in Akalla's bästa! Tjej vän* ('Micke Taikon (SWE) my (ENG) favourite gypsy (SWE) gypsy (POL) Alexa in Akalla's (ENG) best! Girl friend (SWE)'). Swedish is the dominant language, while Polish is more visually prominent, as *cyganka* is written in a larger font. The text also contains multiple abbreviations and slang terms, which are features typical of youth language. These will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.2.2.

The bilingual signs include 3 instances of texts in Swedish and English, 2 in German and Swedish, 2 in English and German, and 1 in French and Arabic. Figure 15 presents an example of bilingual sign in English and Swedish.



Figure 15. Text 23, Tanto (Södermalm)

The text reads: ‘*OM DU ÄR: - sås; - aborre; - riddare; - fakesmile; -SMHI lowkey DÖ <3*’ (‘IF YOU ARE: - sauce; - perch; - knight; - fakesmile; - SMHI (the Swedish meteorological and hydrological institute) lowkey DIE <3’). The text could be nonsensical or targeted towards an in-group; a hypothesis is that the names listed could be nicknames or gamertags. In this sign, Swedish is the dominant language, while the two English words *fakesmile* and *lowkey* function as integrated English elements, which is consistent with youth language practices in Sweden (see Section 6.2.2).

The instance of graffiti in French and Arabic is presented in Figure 16.



Figure 16. Text 29, Tanto (Södermalm)

The text reads *Je suis إسرائيل* (‘I am Israel’), seemingly in support of Israel in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

With regard to the Järva dataset, the languages recorded are summarised in Table 5.

Language	Number	Percentage
Swedish	9	40.9%
English	6	27.3%
Multilingual	3	13.6%
N/A	4	18.2%

Table 5. Languages of graffiti in Järva

As in the Södermalm dataset, Swedish and English are the prevalent languages. Three multilingual signs were also recorded and consist of 2 bilingual signs in Swedish and English, and 1 bilingual interactional sign in English and Arabic. The latter is presented in Figure 17.

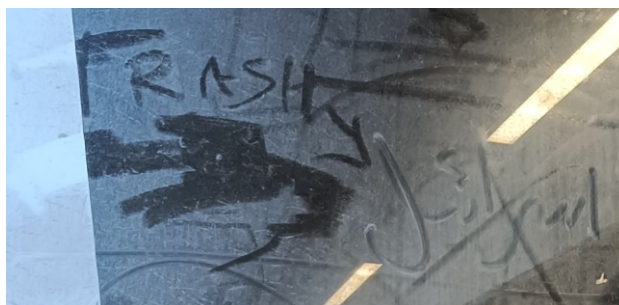


Figure 17. Text 15, Kista (Järva)

The text is interactional in nature, as it is composed of two parts expressing opposite stances on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and therefore likely produced by different writers. The first writer wrote إسرائيل ('Israel'), which was later crossed out. The second writer added *trash* with an arrow pointing to the first sign.

Notably, Järva is an immigrant-dense district area, with 75.6% of residents having immigrant backgrounds. The lack of languages other than Swedish, English, and the isolated instance of Arabic is therefore striking. One possible explanation relates to the features of immigrant-dense areas described in Section 4.4, namely the fact that residents of these areas may employ Swedish as a lingua franca. This would explain its relative prevalence despite the multilingual environment of the district area. Additionally, the variety of recorded languages could also be impacted by the overall scarcity of graffiti found in Järva.

6.2.2 Features of *Ungdomsspråk* and *Rinkebysvenska*

Building on the framework outlined in Section 4.5, the present Section examines the presence of linguistic features typical of youth varieties in graffiti found in Södermalm and Järva. The features investigated include abbreviations, slang words and expressions, neologisms, and partially the use of taboo words.

The identification and interpretation of slang terms and expressions relied on the input of native Swedish and German speakers, as well as on online resources including Merriam-Webster¹³,

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Slangopedia¹⁴ (a crowdsourced online slang dictionary for Swedish) and Urban dictionary¹⁵ (a crowdsourced online slang dictionary for English).

In the Södermalm graffiti dataset, 15 texts (13.3%) exhibit features linked to youth language. Table 6 summarises the distribution of these texts by language and specifies the reference code for the texts.

Reference codes	Language	Number
8, 15, 22, 57, 173, 191, 107	Swedish	7
47, 169	German	2
72, 158	English	2
3	Multilingual (English, Swedish, Polish)	1
5	Multilingual (German, English)	1
23	Multilingual (English, Swedish)	1
170	Multilingual (English, Turkish)	1

Table 6. Youth language in Södermalm graffiti.

The instances of graffiti that present youth language features are presented, following the order of their reference codes.

Text 3 was partly presented in Section 6.2.1 (see Figure 14). It is the only instance of a trilingual sign, and it reads “*Micke Taikon my favvo zigge cyganka Alexa in Akalla’s bästa! Tjej vän*” (‘Micke Taikon (SWE) my (ENG) favourite gypsy (SWE) gypsy (POL) Alexa in Akalla’s (ENG) best! Girl friend (SWE)’).

The text exhibits features of both *ungdomsspråk* and *Rinkebysvenska*, starting from the language mixing itself: firstly, the integration of English elements (*my*, *’s*) in a Swedish sentence exemplifies the phenomenon of *svengelska* (‘Swenglish’), which is a distinctive feature of Swedish youth speech; secondly, the use of the Polish word *cyganka* (‘gypsy woman’) is consistent with practices of language mixing that stem from the multilingual identity of *Rinkebysvenska* speakers. Another feature that is connected to youth language in general is the use of two abbreviations: *favvo* is a Swedish abbreviation for “favourite” and *zigge* is an abbreviation of the Swedish term *zigenare* (‘gypsy’). Additionally, both *zigenare* and *cyganka* are classified as derogatory terms to refer to Romani people. Finally, *tjej* (‘girl’) was historically an element of youth slang, but has since undergone a process of standardisation that led to full social acceptance of the term.

¹⁴ <https://www.slangopedia.se/>

¹⁵ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>



Figure 18. Text 5, Tanto (Södermalm)



Figure 19. Text 169, Långholmen (Södermalm)

Text 5 (Figure 18) is a multilingual sign in German and English. The German informant classifies the word *geil* (lit. ‘horny’) as a slang term meaning ‘cool’ or ‘awesome’. The word is accompanied by the English emphasiser “as fuck”, expression that is common in youth speech. Similar expressions are found in texts 47 and 169 (Figure 19), which are repeated instances reading *tod geil* (lit. ‘dead horny’).

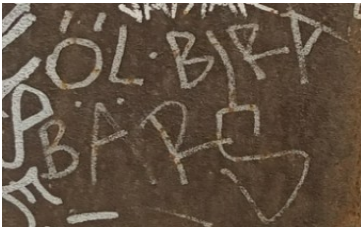


Figure 20. Text 8, Tanto (Södermalm)



Figure 21. Text 15, Tanto (Södermalm)



Figure 22. Text 22, Tanto (Södermalm)

Texts 8, 15 and 21 are monolingual Swedish. Text 8 (Figure 20) reads *öl bira bärs* (‘beer beer beer’); *öl* is the standard term for ‘beer’, while *bira* and *bärs* are slang terms that originated as youth language but have standardised into common informal terms. Text 15 (Figure 21) reads *sluta bög spraya* (‘stop gay spraying’). *Bög* is a slang term for ‘gay’ that used to be derogatory before being reappropriated by the LGBTQIA+ community. Nowadays it carries a more neutral connotation, depending on the context. *Spraya* is a loanword from the English verb ‘to spray’, and is a common verb. Text 22 (Figure 22) reads *rök fett* (‘smoke cool’), where *fett* (lit. ‘fat’) functions as a slang intensifier, meaning ‘very’ or ‘cool’, depending on the context. This intensifier is very common in Swedish youth language.

The next example is Text 23, which was briefly presented in Section 6.2.1 (see Figure 15). It reads: ‘OM DU ÄR: - sås; - aborre; - riddare; - fakesmile; -SMHI lowkey DÖ <3’ (‘IF YOU ARE: - sauce; - perch; - knight; - fakesmile; - SMHI (the Swedish meteorological and hydrological institute) lowkey DIE <3’). The text exemplifies *svengelska* (‘Swenglish’), as it employs the English words *fakesmile* and *lowkey*. The latter is an expression associated with Gen-Z slang.



Figure 23. Text 57, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Text 57 (Figure 23) reads *punkare heilar INTE (inte deras vänner heller)* ('Punks DO NOT heil (not their friends either)'). The word *heilar* is an ad-hoc adapted loanword derived from the German *heil*, referring to the nazi salute. The text serves to signal the writer's political stance and as a statement of group identity, which positions the punk subculture in opposition to Nazism. The message is emphasised graphically by the prominence of the negation *INTE* ('not'), which is in a larger font and underlined. The writing is crossed out by a second writer, which indicates interaction.



Figure 24. Text 72, Slussen (Södermalm)

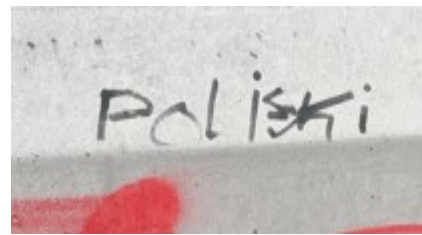


Figure 25. Text 107, Slussen (Södermalm)

Text 72 (Figure 24) reads *FCK TIDÖ* ('fuck TIDÖ') and employs a common English abbreviation for 'fuck'. The piece expresses political rejection of and opposition to the current right-wing government.

Text 107 (Figure 25) reads *poliski*. It was not possible to find a standard translation for the term. One hypothesis that was discussed with the Swedish language informant is that the word could be a playful or witty rendering of the Swedish term *polis* ('police'), to which the suffix *-ki* was attached. This suffix does not belong to Swedish morphology and may evoke Slavic-sounding morphology.



Figure 2611. Text 158, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)



Figure 27. Text 170, Långholmen (Södermalm)

Text 158 (Figure 26) reads *homos 4 hamas*. The expression employs the English abbreviation *homos* ('homosexuals') and the numeral *4*, a phonetic abbreviation of 'for'. It is a slogan employed by pro-Palestine queer activists, a movement that in Stockholm is prevalently associated with the organisation *Queers for Palestine*.

Text 170 (Figure 27) reads *FAKC AINA* ('fuck the police'). It employs a non-standard spelling of the English term 'fuck' as well as the term *AINA*, a slang word common in *Rinkebysvenska* and derived from the Turkish slang *aynasiz* ('police').



Figure 28. Text 173, Långholmen (Södermalm)



Figure 29. Text 191, Långholmen (Södermalm)

Text 173 (Figure 28) reads *NAJS* ('nice'), a common *svengelska* variant of the English 'nice'. The Swedish language informant asserts that the word is commonly used in informal contexts in Stockholm, especially in text messages.

Text 191 (Figure 29) reads *vi hade de bra IAF* ('we had a good time in any case') and employs the acronym *IAF* for *i alla fall* ('in any case').

In the Järva graffiti dataset, 4 texts display youth language features. This represents 18.2% of the total 22 texts recorded. All these texts were found on the same surface, an electrical box next to a bus stop frequently used by adolescents commuting to middle or high school.



Figure 30. Texts 1 and 2, Solhem (Järva)

Text 1 (Figure 30) reads *E + K + S <3 mina besties* ('E + K + S <3 my besties'). The text constitutes an example of *svengelska* ('Swenglish'), as it employs the English abbreviation *besties* ('best friends') together with the Swedish possessive *mina* ('my').

Text 2 (Figure 30) is an interactional text produced by three writers. The first wrote *jag älskar kuk* ('I love cock'), modified by the second writer to *jag älskar SVARTA kukAR* ('I love black cocks'). A third writer commented by adding *skibidi real* with an arrow pointing at the original writings. The youth language features consist both in the use of obscenities and treatment of taboo topics, as well as in the use of two slang expressions in the third writing. *Skibidi* is a Gen-Alpha slang term born out of Internet culture; it is a widely diffused nonsensical word, associated with brain-rot culture. The use of this word may indicate that the author could belong to Gen-Alpha, that is, people born between 2010 and 2024. This is strengthened by the environmental clue given by the placement of the writing. *Real* is also a common English slang word associated with Gen-Zs.

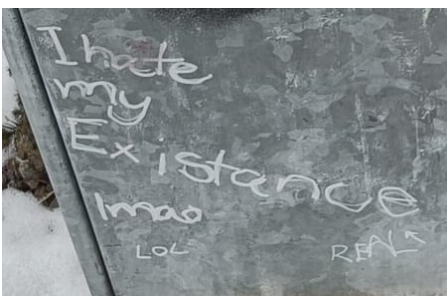


Figure 31. Text 3, Solhem (Järva)



Figure 32. Text 4, Solhem (Järva)

Text 3 (Figure 31) is another instance of interactional graffiti. The original message reads *I hate my existence lmao*, to which a second writer added *LOL* and *REAL* with an arrow pointing to the original message. *Lmao* ('laughing my ass off') and *lol* ('laughing out loud') are common terms of internet slang.

Text 4 (Figure 32) reads *älskar braj <3* ('love weed'). The youth language features consist of the use of non-standard grammar, as the obligatory subject is missing, and the use of the slang term *braj*, used to refer to cannabis.

6.2.3 Communicative structure

This Section examines the communicative structure of graffiti found in Södermalm and Järva, building on the framework proposed by Gasparyan (2021) and discussed in Section 2.2.4. To recap, the author asserts that graffiti typically displays a linear communicative structure, in which an author inscribes a message on a channel, which is subsequently read and interpreted by receivers. In certain cases, the effect that the message has on the receivers may lead them to provide feedback by adding a second writing in response. In this case, the communicative structure of graffiti becomes interactional.

In the present study, the category of interactional graffiti is intended in a narrow sense. Only instances in which additional messages were written next to or on top of the original one were classified as interactional. By contrast, although they are interactional in a broader sense, instances in which messages were merely crossed out were excluded from this category.

In Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 several instances of interactional graffiti were presented. For Södermalm, it includes Text 3 (Figure 14). For Järva, it includes Texts 1 and 2 (Figure 30), Text 3 (Figure 31), and Text 15 (Figure 17). Figures concerning the number of linear and interactive graffiti is provided in Table 7.

District area	Linear	Interactive	Reference numbers of interactive texts
Södermalm	197 (98.5%)	3 (1.5%)	3, 180, 182
Järva	18 (81.2%)	4 (18.8%)	1, 2, 3, 15

Table 7. Linear vs. interactive graffiti in Södermalm and Järva

Interactive graffiti is generally scarce in both datasets. While the percentage of occurrence of interactive graffiti is relatively high in the Järva corpus (18.8%), this figure must be considered with caution, given the very limited size of the dataset.

In Södermalm, in the territorial subdivision of Slussen, an interesting set of graffiti was documented. On the street Katarinavägen, along an area of approximately 400 metres, 76 writings (Texts 75 to 152, excluding Text 107) were written on K-rails. These are clearly authored by the same individual and likely written in a limited span of time. They also share common intertextual and thematic features. For these reasons, these instances were labelled as monologic.

The Katarinavägen writings constitute an isolated phenomenon in the linguistic landscape of Stockholm. The street is central, highly trafficked by both vehicles and pedestrians, and thoroughly illuminated. Despite these conditions, the author spent a considerable amount of time writing 76 texts, which suggests a lack of concern for speed and anonymity. This contrasts with features that are typically associated with graffiti production.

The Katarinavägen graffiti is highly intertextual, consisting mainly of quotations from books, movies, TV series and songs, together with some original texts. The quotations are often signalled by quotation marks, but their use is inconsistent: in several instances, only one quotation mark is present, while in others quotation marks are used for texts that appear to be original. The writings are also linked by shared themes, namely the poetic and political-left themes. This topic will be analysed in more detail in Section 6.2.4.

Some examples of the Katarinavägen graffiti are provided below. Figure 33 presents Text 81, which reads *religionen är folkets opium!* (‘religion is the opium of the people’), a well-known quote by Karl Marx. Figure 34 is multilingual and reads “*Stockholm city svajar i sitt rus*” (‘Stockholm city sways in its rush’), in an instance of poetic celebration of the city through a direct quotation from the song *Vintersaga* by Ted Ström. Finally, Figure 35 is likely an original contribution by the writer and reads *vår alliansfrihet hade tjänat oss väl, tyst och stilla kom istället amerikaner...* (‘Our non-alignment had served us well, quietly and calmly Americans came instead...’), which expresses the author’s opposition to Sweden joining NATO. This stance can be contextualised within the harsh public debate that characterised Sweden and Finland starting from 2023 following their decision to join the alliance.

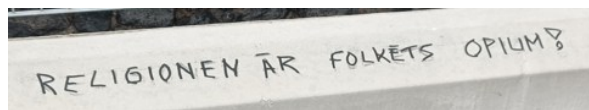


Figure 33. Text 81, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

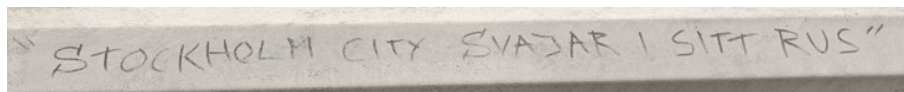


Figure 34. Text 149, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

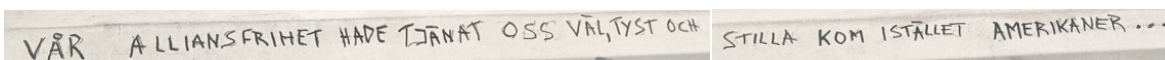


Figure 35. Text 117, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

6.2.4 Thematic analysis and motivations

The thematic analyses conducted in this study are based on the inductive methodology outlined by Guerra (2020). Through repeated readings of the corpora, each text was assigned a micro-theme, which was classified under a broader proto-theme. In addition to thematic classification, the proto-themes were paired with hypotheses concerning the motivations underlying the production of graffiti, following the framework proposed in Blume (1985), which was discussed in Section 2.2.3. These motivations include existence proof, self-expression, artistic expression, and territorial marking.

The analyses for Södermalm and Järva were carried out independently, in order to identify thematic categories specific to each area. The figures resulting from these analyses are presented below and briefly commented on. The label ‘N.D.’ (‘not determined’) is employed for cases in which a theme could not be safely identified. A unified discussion of the identified themes follows, integrating examples from both district areas.

Table 8 summarises the themes found in the Södermalm dataset.

Proto-themes	Total	Total %	Micro-themes	Number	Percentage
Political	57	28.5%	Israeli-Palestinian conflict	10	5%
			Racism	2	1%
			Left	40	20%
			Right	1	0.5%
			LGBTQIA+	2	1%
			Unclear	3	1.5%
Poetic	57	28.5%	Original	6	3%
			Quotations	43	21.5%
			Concerning Stockholm	8	4%
Existential	23	11.5%	Negative emotions (pessimism, frustration, anger, confusion, isolation)	11	5.5%
			Positive emotions (excitement, encouragement)	11	5.5%
			Mixed emotions	1	0.5%
N.D.	19	9.5%	/	16	8%
Interactional	11	5.5%	Love	7	3.5%
			Friendship	3	1.5%
			City	1	0.5%
Sports	9	4.5%	Support	5	2.5%
			Opposition	3	1.5%
			Against the police	1	0.5%
Obscene	7	3.5%	/	7	3.5%
Witty/playful/nonsense	5	2.5%	/	5	2.5%
Territoriality	4	2%	/	4	2%
Graffiti	4	2%	/	4	2%
Religion	4	2%	Christian	2	1%
			Islam	1	0.5%
			Hinduism	1	0.5%

Table 8. Themes of Södermalm graffiti

The Södermalm graffiti corpus displays an equal distribution of political and poetic proto-themes, which characterise 57 texts (28.5%) each. The most frequent micro-theme is that of poetic-quotations (43 instances, 21.5%), followed by the political-left theme (40 instances, 20%). Existential themed graffiti is also highly represented, as they account for 24 instances (12%).

It should be noted that specifically in the Katarinavägen monologue, a certain degree of overlap emerged between the micro-theme of poetic-quotations and the political-left one. In such cases, quotations that explicitly addressed political content were classified under the political-left label.

The figures for the Järva dataset are summarised in Table 9.

Proto-themes	Total	Total %	Micro-themes	Number	Percentage
Political	6	27.3%	Israeli-Palestinian conflict	3	13.6%
			Left	2	9%
			Right	1	4.5%
Obscene	6	27.3%	/	6	27.3%
Existential	2	9%	Negative emotions	1	4.5%
			Positive emotions	1	4.5%
Sports	3	13.6%	Support	1	4.5%
			Opposition	2	9%
Interactional	1	4.5%	/	1	4.5%
Territoriality	1	4.5%	/	1	4.5%
Religious	1	4.5%	/	1	4.5%
N.D.	2	9%	/	2	9%

Table 9. Themes of Järva graffiti

In the Järva dataset, the most frequent proto-themes are the political and the obscene ones, each counting 6 instances (27.3%). These are followed in terms of frequency by the existential proto-theme (4 instances, 118.2%) and the sports proto-theme (3 instances, 13.6%).

As observed, the political proto-theme is prevalent in both datasets. In the present study, the label ‘political’ is used in an intersectional sense, as it includes not only graffiti dealing strictly with institutional politics, but also texts addressing matters of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as graffiti concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As a result, the political proto-theme is highly heterogeneous, and a degree of simplification was necessary, particularly with regard to the Left micro-theme. This includes a wide range of specific topics and foci, such as antifascism,

communism, anarchism, anticapitalism, antiauthoritarianism, antireligion, class, and expressions of anti-police sentiment.

The motivations underlying the production of political graffiti are layered. Primarily, it can be seen as an act of self-expression, through which writers articulate political stances and opinions. Secondly, it may function as a form of territorial marking.

Many instances of political-left themed graffiti employ acronyms, symbols or numbers. Figure 36 presents an example of graffiti expressing anti-police sentiment by employing the well-known acronym *ACAB* ('all cops are bastards') together with its numeric equivalent, *1312*. Figures 37 and 38 provide examples of antifascist graffiti. The first reads *antifa zon 161* ('antifa zone 161'). The numeric combination *161* stands for AFA ('antifascist action'). This is an instance in which territorial marking constitutes a central motivation in the production of the piece. The second text reads *antifa*, which is additionally circled by a heart and accompanied by the erasure of a fascist Celtic cross.



Figure 36. Text 68, Slussen (Södermalm)

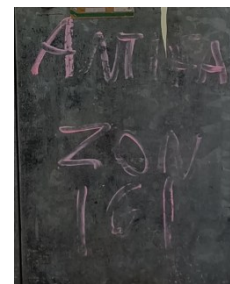


Figure 37. Text 60, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 38. Text 159, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

More extended and creative instances of political-left were documented in the Katarinavägen monologue and are characterised by wordplay and intertextual references.

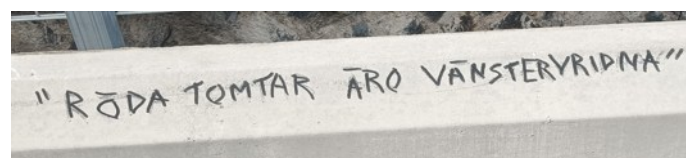


Figure 39. Text 82, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

Text 82 (Figure 39) reads “*röda tomtar äro vänstervridna*” (‘red gnomes are leftists’). While the text is presented as a quotation, the original reference could not be identified. Red gnomes are figures that in Sweden are traditionally associated with Christmas. The author uses *äro*, an archaic form of *är* (‘is’), possibly for stylistic effects that could aim at an ironic use of a high register. The witty humour of the text likely lies in the association between the red colour of the gnomes and its symbolic link to left-wing, and specifically communist, ideology.



Figure 40. Text 89, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

Text 89 (Figure 40) reads *Ulf Kristerson är ett tandtroll, säger flourtanten!* (‘Ulf Kristersson is a teeth troll, says the dental hygienist!’). The writing presents partial non-standard spelling (*Kristerson* instead of *Kristersson* and *flourtanten* instead of *fluortanten*). The text establishes a witty and creative metaphor to depict the right-wing Swedish Prime Minister as a negative, almost villainous character. The reference is based on shared cultural knowledge in Sweden. *Fluortant* is an informal term for dental hygienists, who regularly visited Swedish schools between the 1960s and 1990s to educate children about dental care¹⁶. In this text, they are pictured as positive, benevolent figures who advise the reader. By contrast, the *tandtroll* (‘tooth troll’) is a fictional creature that digs tunnels into teeth and causes tooth decay, which is commonly used in Sweden as a scare tactic to persuade children to brush their teeth.

Another micro-theme that falls under the political proto-theme is that of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In both datasets, only one pro-Israel graffiti was found in each area: the Södermalm instance was presented in Figure 16 and reads *Je suis إسرائيل* (‘I am Israel’), while the Järva instance was presented in Figure 17 and consisted of the first part of the interactive graffiti that reads إسرائيل ← *trash* (‘Israel ← trash’).

In contrast, 9 graffiti in Södermalm and 2 in Järva express support for Palestine. The majority of these constitute examples of *grido scritto* (‘written shout’) (Guerra 2019), as they reproduce slogans commonly used in demonstrations against the Palestinian genocide. Figure 41 and Figure 42

¹⁶ <https://www.smile.se/dag-ar-det-fluortantens-dag/#:~:text=Nya%20t%C3%A4nder%20%C3%A4r%20speciellt%20k%C3%A4nsliga%20och%20d%C3%A4rf%C3%B6r,2000%20talet%20men%20bes%C3%B6ker%20numera%20endast%20utvalda%20skolor.>

exemplify this pattern. The first, found in Järva, reads the slogan *free Palestine*; the second, found in Södermalm, reads the slogan *Länge leve Palestina!* ('long live Palestine').



Figure 41. Text 15, Rinkeby (Järva)



Figure 42. Text 167, Långholmen (Södermalm)

More extended and elaborated messages were also recorded. Figure 43 presents Text 192, found in Södermalm, which reads *två år av folkmord. Över 20000 morder barn i Gaza* ('two years of genocide. More than 20000 children murdered in Gaza'). The impact of the message is strengthened by the use of lists of the names of children to create the numbers. Figure 44 presents Text 161, which reinterprets the acronym ACAB as *AZAB - All Zionists Are Bastards*.



Figure 43. Text 192, Skanstull (Södermalm)



Figure 44. Text 161, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

The political-right micro-theme is only marginally represented, with one instance in each dataset. The Järva instance consists of two swastikas carved onto an electrical box. Figure 45 presents the Södermalm instance, which seems to be part of the Katarinavägen monologue. This is anomalous, as it contrasts with the political-left micro-theme that is common throughout the monologue. The text reads *vår ära heter trohet* ('our honour is called loyalty'), the official slogan of the SS. The graffiti was heavily crossed out, so much so that its readability is strongly impacted. This fact may suggest that the writer could have initially failed to recognise the intertextual and historical implications of the message and later decided to cross it out, or that it may have been crossed out by another writer.

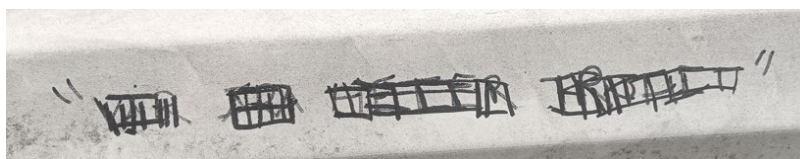


Figure 45. Text 151, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

The next proto-theme presented is the poetic one, which is only present in the Södermalm dataset with 57 instances (28.5%). Texts with this theme are generally more extended, they tend to employ

refined language, and they are sometimes found in combination with an image. In terms of micro-themes, the classification distinguishes between original texts, quotations, and poetic graffiti about Stockholm. The primary motivations behind the writing of poetic graffiti are artistic expression and self-expression.

Examples of original poetic graffiti are provided in Figures 46 and 47. The first figure presents Text 69, which reads *Jag hör längtan i din tystnad* ('I hear the longing in your silence') and is accompanied by an image that represents the message visually. The second figure presents Text 54, which reads *tänk på döden* ('think about death'), conveying a *memento mori* message. This message was found repeated in three different pieces of graffiti in Södermalm.



Figure 46. Text 69, Slussen (Södermalm)



Figure 47. Text 54, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Poetic-quotations and poetic graffiti about Stockholm were found exclusively in the Katarinavägen monologue. Most quotations are taken from Swedish songs (28 instances) written before the 1970s and dealing with themes of loneliness, love, and belonging. Other sources include literary works and theatre. Poetic graffiti about Stockholm are both quotations and original statements expressing affection and reverence for the city. Figure 48 presents Text 147, which reads *Stockholm i mitt hjärta*, a quotation from the homonymous song by Lasse Berghagen. Figure 49 shows Text 143 and reads *stolta stad* ('proud city'), a reference to a song by Fred Åkeström.

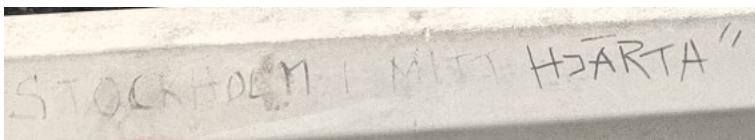


Figure 48. Text 147, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)



Figure 49. Text 143, Katarinavägen (Södermalm)

The existential proto-theme includes poetic or emotional expressions of personal feelings; the motivation behind the writing of this type of graffiti is therefore primarily that of self-expression. The theme is present in both datasets: in Södermalm, it occurs 23 times (11.5%) and in Järva it occurs 4 times (18.2%). The texts were further classified into heterogeneous micro-themes according to the kind of emotion expressed: negative, positive, or mixed. The mixed emotions category only includes

one interactive instance found in Södermalm, which is presented in Figure 50. In this text, the first writer wrote *allt blir ok <3* (‘everything will be okay’), expressing positive emotions of encouragement, which was overlapped by a second writer with *allt kommer gå åt helvete* (‘everything will go to hell’). To note: the second writing is hardly decipherable from the image, but was readable in real life.



Figure 50. Text 180, Långholmen (Södermalm)

Existential graffiti expressing negative emotions include 11 texts in Södermalm and 1 in Järva (see Figure 31). Examples from the Södermalm dataset are presented in Figures 51 and 52. The first reads *ett jävla spring* (‘a fucking run’), an idiom that expresses existential frustration, possibly at the fast pace of life or of the city. The second reads *jag samtycker inte till er NI HAR INGET MÄNNISKO VÄRDE* (‘I do not consent to you, you have no human value’) and expresses feelings of anger and frustration; it could also be interpreted through a feminist lens.



Figure 51. Text 1, Tanto (Södermalm)



Figure 52. Text 156, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

A further example is presented in Figure 53 and consists of a multilingual graffiti in German and Swedish. The text reads *Von heimat in exil non heimligt* (‘From homeland into exile not (GER) feeling like home (SWE)’). The piece expresses negative feelings of isolation and lack of belonging. An interesting feature of the piece is the choice to use the German word *heim* (‘home’) together with the Swedish suffix *-ligt*, used to create adverbs from nouns. Based on this stylistic choice, paired with the use of German, which could be assumed to be the writer’s first language, an hypothetical interpretation of the message could be that the source of the negative feelings expressed may be the immigrational status of the writer, or perhaps a sense of emotional division between homeland and new country.

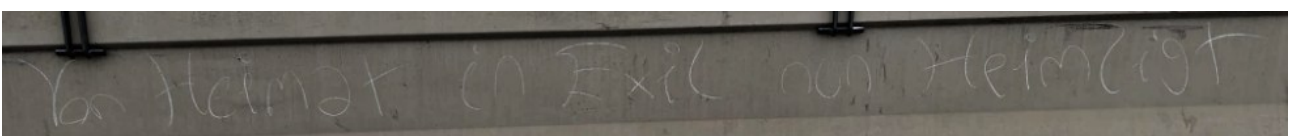


Figure 53. Text 175, Långholmen (Södermalm)

Existential graffiti expressing positive feelings are quantitatively identical to the ones expressing negative feelings: 11 instances are found in Södermalm, and 1 in Järva. Examples are presented in Figures 54 and 55. Figure 54 shows Text 166 and reads *det löser sig* ('it will work out'), while Figure 55 shows Text 188 which reads *du har inte gjort fel* ('you have done nothing wrong'). Both pieces convey compassion and encouragement directed to unknown members of the audience.



Figure 54. Text 166, Långholmen (Södermalm)

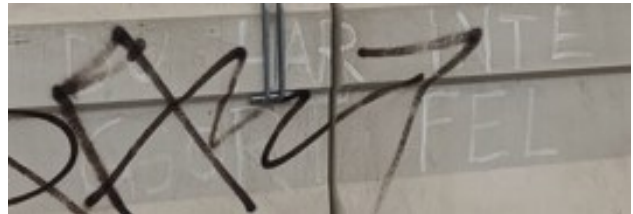


Figure 55. Text 188, Långholmen (Södermalm)

The interactional proto-theme includes the micro-themes of love, friendship, and appreciation for the city administration. In Södermalm, 11 instances were documented, out of which 7 were about love (see Figure 9), 3 about friendship (see Figure 14), and 1 of appreciation for the city administration. The Järva dataset only presented 1 instance of this category, specifically of the micro-theme of friendship (see Figure 30). These writings generally mark presence through initials or names and are sometimes accompanied by affectionate symbols such as hearts. The primary motivations behind this type of graffiti are therefore existence proof and territorial marking.

The sports proto-theme is present in both datasets. In Södermalm, 9 instances (4.5%) were recorded, out of which 5 were in support of a team, 3 were in opposition to a rival theme, and 1 expressed anti-police sentiment. In Järva, 3 instances were recorded, out of which 1 was of support and 2 of opposition. Sport-themed graffiti is primarily motivated by territorial marking, as well as self-expression, as they signify the writer's belonging to the in-group of the team's supporters. Figure 56 presents Text 7, which shows overlapping graffiti from rival teams (AIK and DIF), in an instance of negotiation of space.



Figure 56. Text 7, Solhem (Järva)

Sports-themed graffiti is typically syntactically simple: supportive graffiti often consists of the team's name, while opposing graffiti often consists of the word *hata* ('hate') with the adversary team name. Figure 57 presents an example of the latter, which reads *hata gnaget* ('hate gnaget'). *Gnaget* is a widespread nickname used for AIK supporters.



Figure 57. Text 50, Skanstull (Södermalm)

One instance of sports-themed graffiti expressing anti-police sentiment was recorded in Södermalm and is shown in Figure 58. The text reads *Hammarby enade mot polisen* ('Hammarby united against the police').



Figure 58. Text 194, Hornstull (Södermalm)

The obscene proto-theme is found in both datasets and concerns 7 instances (3.5%) found in Södermalm and 6 instances (27.3%) found in Järva. Likely motivations behind the production of this type of graffiti are self-expression, as well as boredom or shock value. Most instances consist of one-word Swedish or English swearwords. The majority of Swedish examples consist of *könsord* ('genitalia words'), such as *kuk* and *penis*, which are found 2 times in Södermalm and 1 in Järva, while most English instances consist of *svordomar* ('curse words'), specifically *fuck*, which is found 3 times in Södermalm and 1 in Järva. Complex sentences occur more rarely in the dataset. Examples are Text 2 in Järva (see Figure 30), and Text 16, which is presented in Figure 59. To note: the text is quite extended and required 9 pictures and a complementary video to be fully documented, therefore Figure 59 is only an extract from the text.



Figure 59. Text 16, Kista (Järva)

Text 16 reads *Till Lisa Stensit. Ingen annan kan läsa detta än Lisa S. vi möts den 15/4 1982 vid T-bananen. Jag är redan kåt som en hankatt i mars. Jag har ritat av min kuk här. OBS i riktig storlek 26 cm. OBS den är knall blå + lila stööööööön!!!* ('To Lisa Stensit. No one else can read this but Lisa S. We met on the 15th April 1982 by the subway. I am already horny like a male cat in March. I have redrawn my cock here. NOTE in real size 26 cm. NOTE it is bright blue + purple mooaaan!!!'). While the writing is structured like a love note, the message is realistically meant to be obscene and playful.

The proto-theme labelled as witty/playful/nonsense is only represented by 5 texts (2.5%) in the Södermalm dataset. The category includes graffiti which express propositional content, but whose meaning is obscure or nonsensical. Hypotheses are that interpretation may rely on in-group background knowledge, or that these pieces could simply be playful nonsensical jokes. Examples are provided in Figure 60 and 61. The first reads *hur jag sätter tändstickan på rätta stället* ('how I put the match in the right place'), and the second reads *klipp lugg köp höns* ('cut a fringe buy hens').



Figure 60. Text 162, Hornstull (Södermalm)



Figure 61. Text 171, Långholmen (Södermalm)

The territorial proto-theme only characterises 4 instances (2%) found in Södermalm, and 1 instance found in Järva. Likely motivations that determine the production of this kind of graffiti is territorial marking, as well as proof of existence. The first is exemplified by Text 7, which is presented in Figure 62. The text is in German and reads *wurst bande zone* ('sausage gang area'). The latter is exemplified by Text 55, presented in Figure 63, which reads *Ilse was here* (=).

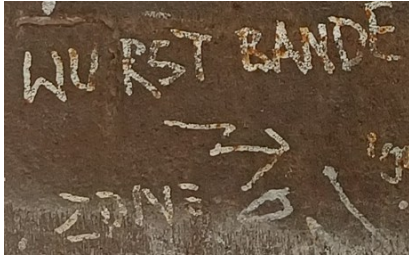


Figure 62. Text 7, Tanto (Södermalm)

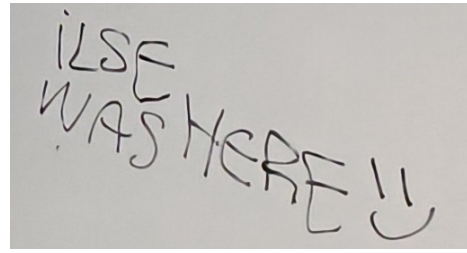


Figure 63. Text 55, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

An interesting proto-theme that was encountered in 4 instances in Södermalm is that of graffiti itself. This kind of graffiti is meta-discursive in nature, and likely motivated by self-expression needs. Specifically, it could be an expressive way for the writer to reject and oppose the Stockholm no-tolerance anti-graffiti regime. Two examples are presented in Figures 64 and 65. Figure 64 reads *fuck the buff*, where ‘buff’ is a specialised term of graffiti which refers to the removal or covering up of a piece. Figure 65 reads *jag saknar gatukonst* (‘I miss street art’).



Figure 64. Text 36, Tanto (Södermalm)

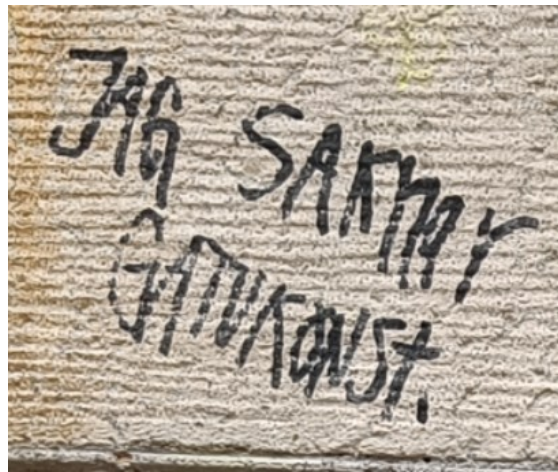


Figure 65. Text 155, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

The last proto-theme identified is that of religion. This category is found in both datasets: 4 instances are found in Södermalm, and 1 is found in Järva. The latter is presented in Figure 66 and reads *Jesus loves you*.

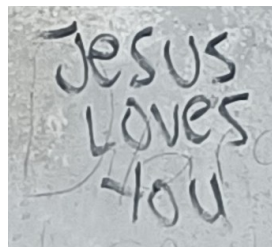


Figure 66. Text 12, Rinkeby (Järva)

The religious graffiti found in Södermalm are more varied, with 2 instances pertaining to Christianity, 1 to Islam (Figure 67) and 1 to Hinduism (Figure 68). Figure 67 reads *I was a witness to a miracle of Allah*, while Figure 68 reads *Krishna loves you*.

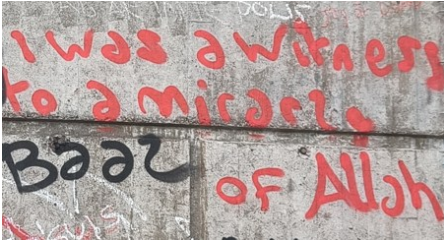


Figure 67. Text 26, Tanto (Södermalm)



Figure 68. Text 67, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

6.3 Sticker analysis

The analysis of the sticker corpora is structured as follows. First, the corpora are described with regard to the languages attested. Second, a thematic analysis is conducted. The latter includes observations on linguistic features, with particular attention to youth language and instances of *grido scritto* (‘written shout’), as well as considerations on the communicative structure of stickers.

6.3.1 Languages

The distribution of languages in the Södermalm sticker corpus is presented in Table 10. The corpus consists of 90 texts. The label N/A (‘not applicable’) includes instances of stickers consisting solely of tags, images, or team names.

Language	Number	Percentage
Swedish	34	37.9%
English	29	32.2%
German	4	4.5%
Italian	3	3.3%
Multilingual	3	3.3%
Latin	2	2.2%
Finnish	2	2.2%
Russian	1	1.1%
Greek	1	1.1%
Basque	1	1.1%
Polish	1	1.1%

N/A	9	10%
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Table 10. Languages of stickers in Södermalm

Swedish (34 instances) and English (29 instances) are the most frequent languages in the corpus. German follows with 4 instances, while Italian occurs 3 times. Latin and Finnish both occur 2 times, while 1 instance each is recorded for Russian, Greek, Basque, and Polish. 3 stickers are multilingual: 1 is in English and Swedish, 1 in English and German, and 1 in Russian and English. The latter is presented in Figure 69. In this sticker, Russian is both the dominant and prominent language, while English appears only in smaller font hashtags positioned at the bottom. The text reads *Путин военный преступник #fuckputin #putinwarcriminal* ('Putin war criminal #fuckputin #putinwarcriminal'). The visual component of the sticker adds a strong metaphorical layer to the message, as it depicts Vladimir Putin with the hair and moustache iconographically associated with Adolf Hitler.



Figure 69. Text 61, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

The Järva sticker corpus consists of 45 texts. The languages attested are summarised in Table 11.

Language	Number	Percentage
Swedish	31	68.9%
Multilingual	6	13.3%
English	4	8.9%
N/A	4	8.9%

Table 11. Languages of stickers in Järva

Swedish is the most attested language overall, as it accounts for 68.9% of the corpus. As hypothesised for graffiti in Section 6.2.1, this may reflect the role of Swedish as a lingua franca in the area. The multilingual stickers found in Järva all belong to the sports proto-theme. They include 2 repetitions of the same sticker in Latin and Italian, 2 repetitions of the same sticker in Swedish and Italian, and 2 different stickers in Latin and Swedish.

6.3.2 Thematic analysis

First, the themes identified in the Södermalm sticker corpus are presented and briefly commented on. The same procedure is then applied to the Järva sticker corpus. A comparative discussion drawing on examples from both datasets follows.

In the Tables presenting the thematic classifications of the two corpora, the label N.D. ('not determined') is used for stickers that consist of tags or drawings, as well as for stickers whose meaning could not be identified with certainty.

The proto-themes and micro-themes identified in the Södermalm sticker corpus are presented in Table 12.

Proto-themes	Total	Total %	Micro-themes	Number	Percentage
Political	30	33.3%	Left	27	30%
			Israeli-Palestinian conflict	3	3.3%
Promotional	17	18.8%	/	17	18.8%
Sports	15	16.7%	Support	14	15.6%
			Opposition	1	1.1%
Playful/witty/nonsense	6	6.7%	/	6	6.7%
Existential	4	4.4%	/	4	4.4%
Religious	2	2.2%	/	2	2.2%
N.D.	16	17.9%	/	16	17.9%

Table 12. Themes in the Södermalm sticker corpus

The political proto-theme is the most frequent in the Södermalm sticker corpus, representing 33.3% of the texts. The political-left micro-theme is predominant overall, as it includes 30% (27 instances) of the entire dataset. Following in terms of frequency are the promotional proto-theme, which accounts for 18.8% (17 instances) of the dataset, and the sports proto-theme, which accounts for 16.7% (15 instances). Playful/witty/nonsense, existential, and religious stickers are more scarcely represented.

The proto-themes and micro-themes identified in the Järva sticker corpus are presented in Table 13.

Proto-themes	Total	Total %	Micro-themes	Number	Percentage
Sports	22	49%	Support	9	20%
			Opposition	1	2.2%
			Political	10	22.2%

			Territorial	2	4.4%
Political	20	44.4%	Left	16	35.8%
			Right	2	4.4%
			Israeli-Palestinian conflict	2	4.4%
Promotional	1	2.2%	/	1	2.2%
N.D.	2	4.4%	/	2	4.4%

Table 13. Themes in the Järva sticker corpus

In the Järva dataset, the predominant proto-theme is sports, representing 49% of the corpus (22 instances). The political proto-theme closely follows, representing 44.4% (20 instances) of the corpus. Additionally, the political-left micro-theme is the overall most frequent micro-theme in the corpus, representing 35.8% (16 instances).

The data for both corpora therefore shows that the political proto-theme, and more specifically the political-left micro-theme, is strongly represented in both Södermalm and Järva. Many political-left stickers documented in both datasets aim at promoting organisations, events, or products. Methodologically, the choice was to include these in the political-left micro-theme rather than creating a “promotional-political” micro-theme. This is because promotional and political orientations are deeply intertwined, as the promotional texts often include slogans or additional messages that could not be purely inscribed in a “promotional-political” micro-thematic category. In Södermalm, 6 texts fall under this category, while in Järva 12 instances of this kind were recorded. Out of these, several consist of repetitions over a limited area of the same exact sticker or of stickers with different graphic outlooks but the exact same messaging. An example found in Järva are stickers linked to the organisation *Radikal klasskamp* (‘Radical class struggle’), which are found repeated 7 times: 5 instances were simple stickers which relayed the website of the association; 2 instances included a longer text. Figure 70 presents one instance of a simple promotional sticker (Text 10) together with another sticker (Text 9) with the organisation’s slogan: *jämlikhet rättvisa socialism* (‘equality justice socialism’). Figure 71 presents 3 graphically different stickers with the organisation’s website handle (Texts 12, 13 and 14), paired with another sticker (Text 15) which reads *bygg vänsterns trollfabrik!* (‘build the left’s troll factory!’). A *trollfabrik* is as an organised group of Internet trolls that aims at influencing the public debate by spreading misinformation and propaganda online¹⁷. The topic was the object of a heated public debate in 2024 and 2025, when the Swedish Right was accused of these actions.

¹⁷ <https://internetkunskap.se/artiklar/ordlista/trollfabrik/>



Figure 70. Texts 9 and 10, Rinkeby (Järva)



Figure 71. Texts 12, 13, 14, 15, Rinkeby (Järva)

Other political promotional stickers present a more extended text. An instance is Text 19, presented in Figure 72, which reads *Vräkningar av barnfamiljer ökar – straffen likaså. Ser du sambandet? SKU* ('Evictions of families with children are increasing – so are the penalties. Do you see the connection? SKU').



Figure 72. Text 19, Kista (Järva)

Other foci found in the Södermalm political stickers include the expression of anti-police sentiment, feminism, anticapitalism, antifascism, anti-racism, veganism, class struggle, opposition to NATO, and opposition to Russia. Linguistically, many of these stickers are instances of *grido scritto* ('written shout'). This is exemplified by two feminist stickers: Figure 73 shows a feminist political-left sticker with the slogan *dead men don't rape*; Figure 74 reads *get the fuck out of my uterus*. Other examples include the call-to-action anarchist sticker presented in Figure 75, which reads the slogan *vem? Om inte du! När om inte nu?* ('who? If not you! When? If not now?') as well as the anti-NATO sticker presented in Figure 76, which reads *Nej till krig! Nej till Nato! Sverige ska inte gå med i USA:s krigsallians* (No to war! No to Nato! Swedish will not join the USA's war alliance).



Figure 73. Text 18, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)



Figure 74. Text 59, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 75. Text 19, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)



Figure 76. Text 77, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Some political-left stickers found in Södermalm also present texts which are more extended and wittier, paired with creative images that are designed to strengthen the message. Figure 77 presents an anticapitalist sticker reciting *Capitalism's condensed pain & suffering*, which is accompanied by a reinterpretation of Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*¹⁸. Figure 78 reads *Giljotinen: för en knivskarp fördelningspolitik* ('The guillotine; for a razor-sharp distribution policy'). The slogan evokes the typical linguistic structure used in political campaigns and is also paired with an evocative image.



Figure 77. Text 71, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 78. Text 21, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

Another political micro-theme found in both datasets is that of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exclusively expressing a position of support to Palestine and opposition to Israel. These stickers also

¹⁸ <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79809>

represent instances of *grido scritto* ('written shout'), as is evident in Figures 79 and 80. The first, found in Järva, reproduces a widely employed slogan that is used in demonstrations for Palestine, which is *Liberation is key Palestine will be free!* The second, found in Södermalm, reproduces another common slogan used in Sweden, which is *Sanktionera terrorstaten* ('sanction the terrorist state').



Figure 79. Text 11, Rinkeby (Järva)



Figure 80. Text 16, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)

The only two instances of political-right stickers were identical stickers found in Järva on the same support. One instance is presented in Figure 81 and reads *Gör Sverige svenskt igen – Alternativ för Sverige* ('make Sweden Swedish again – Alternative for Sweden'). *Alternativ för Sverige* is a far-right nationalist party in Sweden. The impact of the message is strengthened by the design of the sticker, which employs the blue and yellow colours of the Swedish flag, includes a heart with the Swedish flag, and depicts a Viking.



Figure 81. Text 6, Solhem (Järva)

The proto-theme of sports is also present and frequent in both datasets. This type of sticker has several features in common with political stickers: firstly, they are often found repeated in a limited area, and secondly, they include instances of *grido scritto* ('written shout'). Figure 82 presents a case of repetition, since several stickers related to the team Hammarby were found on the same support. Figure 83 presents another sticker in support of Hammarby which has a more extended text: *det kommer en gryning det kommer en dag när Bajen tar guld och allting blir bra!* ('a dawn will come,

a day will come, when Bajen will take the gold and everything will be fine!'). The text is a stadium chant, therefore it can be classified as a form of *grido scritto* ('written shout').



Figure 82. Texts 80, 82, 82, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 83. Text 4, Rinkeby (Järva)

Sports-themed stickers recorded in the Järva dataset display a higher degree of linguistic and visual creativity compared to the ones recorded in Södermalm, regardless of their specific micro-theme. Figure 84 presents a sticker belonging to the micro-theme of opposition, which reinterprets a sign found on Stockholm's public transportation (SL) to forbid the entrance to pets. The text reads *Djurgårdare förbjudna. Sett apor? Anmäl till SL* ('Fans of Djurgården forbidden. Seen monkeys? Report to SL') and is paired with a sign indicating that monkeys, a nickname used for Djurgården fans, are forbidden.



Figure 84. Text 1, Solhem (Järva)

Furthermore, sports-themed stickers recorded in Järva were also classified in two additional micro-themes which were not recorded in the Södermalm dataset: the territorial micro-theme and the political micro-theme.

The territorial micro-theme is exemplified in Figures 85 and 86. Figure 85 reads *Tja! Hej! Salam! Linje blå AIK!* ('Hi! Hi! Hi! Blue line AIK!'). The text draws a link between the 'blue line' and AIK supporters. The blue line is one of the three lines of the Stockholm subway and is specifically the one

that services the area of Järva, as well as other immigrant-dense areas. The use of *salam!*, a shortening of the Arabic greeting phrase *As-salamu-alaykum* serves as a further identitarian element, by connecting the AIK ultras identity to the immigrant identity of the blue line territory. Figure 86 consists of another example of territorial micro-theme in the form of a *grido scritto* (‘written shout’), as it reads *vi är från Stockholm vi är AIK* (‘we are from Stockholm we are AIK’). The text, therefore, associates the identity of being a Stockholmer to that of being an AIK supporter.



Figure 85. Text 25, Rinkeby (Järva)



Figure 86. Text 26, Rinkeby (Järva)

The political micro-theme is presented in Figures 87 and 88. The first reads *Legalisera väskan* (‘legalize the bag’) and expresses opposition to the 2023 Swedish regulation that banned public event attendees to bring bags, which was established as a protective measure following threats of terrorism. The second reads *frihet för avstängda* (‘freedom for the banned’), opposing the practice of banning ultras from attending matches.



Figure 87. Text 34, Husby (Järva)



Figure 88. Text 17, Kista (Järva)



Figure 89. Text 39, Rinkeby (Järva)

Another feature that was recorded in both datasets, but predominantly in Järva, was the employment of expressions in Latin and Italian. The employment of Latin is linked to the action of an AIK ultras association called *Sol Invictus* (‘invincible sun’). The employment of Italian included words such as *mentalità* (‘mentality’), *forza* (‘strength’), *libertà* (‘freedom’). An example is provided in Figure 89.

Another proto-theme that was found in both datasets is the promotional one. 17 promotional stickers were found in Södermalm, while only 1 was found in Järva. This type of sticker aims at promoting businesses, events, products, artists, or touristic destinations. Figure 90 presents an instance of

promotional stickers of German regions and constitutes the only recorded example of interactional communication through stickers. Text 69 reads *Nett hier. Aber waren Sies schon mal in Baden-Württemberg? Baden-Württemberg THE LÄND* ('Nice here. But have you ever been to Baden-Württemberg? Baden-Württemberg THE STATE'). Text 70 responds to the first sticker with *Ja. War scheiße! Bayern bayern.sticker bayernsticker.com* ('yes. It was shit! Bayern bayern.sticker bayernsticker.com').



Figure 90. Texts 69 and 70, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Existential stickers were only found 4 times in Södermalm. Two examples are provided: Figure 91 presents a hand-written text which reads *vi löser det* ('we fix it'), an encouraging message for passersby; Figure 92 reads *trött på störiga killar* ('tired of annoying guys') and expresses frustration.



Figure 91. Text 85, Medborgarplatsen (Södermalm)



Figure 92. Text 79, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Playful/witty/nonsense stickers are another category that was only recorded in Södermalm. 6 instances were identified. An example, that consists of a form of meta-discourse, is provided in Figure 93. The sticker reads *Märket är påklistrat på grund av □ tristess i tillvaron □ oetisk marknadsföring □ nedskräpning □ otillåten affischering X konstnärliga ambitioner □* ('The sticker is affixed due to □ boredom in life □ unethical marketing □ littering □ unauthorized posting X artistic ambitions').



Figure 93. Text 57, Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

Finally, the Södermalm dataset presents 2 instances of religious stickers. Figure 94 presents an extended hand-written note. All the text, except for a word, is readable: *Psalmer: 144:1 lovad vare skaparen mitt [illegible] som tränat mina armar till att kriga och lärk mina händer att strida amen.* (‘Psalm 144:1 Praise be to the creator of my [illegible] who has trained my arms for war and strengthened my hands for battle, amen.’). Figure 95 presents a printed sticker that reads *Orkar du leva vågar du dö utan Jesus???? Visst man kan hoppa utan fallskärm också* (‘can you live, do you dare to die without Jesus???? Of course one can also jump without parachute’).

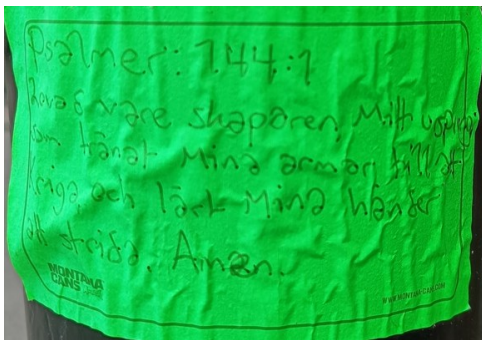


Figure 94. Text 89, Tanto (Södermalm)

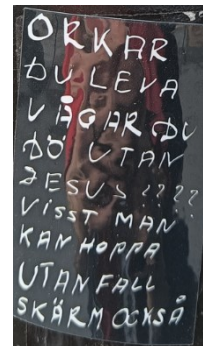


Figure 95. Text 3, Skanstull (Södermalm)

6.4 Effects of the anti-graffiti regime on the linguistic landscape of Södermalm and Järva

The present Subsection aims at interpreting the effects of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime on the linguistic landscape of Södermalm and Järva. The analysis draws primarily on Karlander (2019) and integrates official statistics on graffiti erasure with observations derived from the questionnaire and the fieldwork.

While acknowledging that including tags in the datasets would have determined a higher recorded rate of wall writings, the overall scarcity of graffiti recorded in Stockholm remains striking. Considering that the fieldwork was conducted in an area that stretched for about 16 kilometres in each district area, the number of graffiti encountered is quite low, particularly in Järva, where only 22

graffiti were recorded. This relative absence was also observed and reported by several participants in the questionnaire. For instance, Response 54 (25-29 years old female living in Södermalm) reports that “Stockholm seems in comparison to other European cities quite empty of graffiti”.

In line with Karlander’s (2019: 200) theorisation, several questionnaire participants (Responses 14, 16, 28, 33, 45, 52) interpret the nonexistence of graffiti in Stockholm as the response of authorities to a specific social and political desire, that of visually silent space. Participants explicitly link this desire to socio-economic factors, observing that it is particularly prevalent in areas populated by residents with higher income.

Through direct contact with *Trafikkontoret*, official figures concerning graffiti removal were obtained. These figures are an objective means that can help contextualise the claims derived from the fieldwork and the questionnaire. Due to technical issues that the Office was experiencing, the figures they could provide were limited to the periods from 23 April 2024 to 31 December 2024 (7 months and 7 days) and from 1 January 2025 to 23 October 2025 (10 months and 23 days). The data therefore covers a total period of 18 months.

According to the Office, the city’s 2025 budget for graffiti removal was 22 million SEK (approximately €2 million). Different areas are subject to different price ranges. As mentioned, the city of Stockholm is administratively divided into three macro-areas: Västerort, Inre staden, and Söderort. However, *Trafikkontoret* operates by dividing the city into four areas: Västerort, Söderort, Södermalm and Norrmalm-Kungsholmen-Östermalm. For this reason, statistics specific to the district area of Järva were not available. However, since the areas of Norrmalm, Kungsholmen and Östermalm, together with Södermalm, correspond to the macro-area of Inre staden, the data concerning these areas was summed to allow for a proper comparison between macro-areas.

The statistics provided are summarised in Table 14. Methodologically, it was chosen to leave the sum explicit for the areas of Södermalm and Norrmalm-Kungsholmen-Östermalm. Data for Söderort is kept, but it does not apply to the present study.

Macro-area	Removals 2024	Removals 2025	Total removals (23/04/24-23/10/25)
Västerort	3,264	2,909	6,173
Inre staden (N-K-Ö + S)	1,510+ 2,668 = 4,178	2,187+2,692 = 4,879	3,697 + 5,360 = 9,057
Söderort	4,390	5,941	10,331
Total	11,832	13,729	25,561

Table 14. Removal statistics in Stockholm per area and period

The data shows that acts of removal in the 18 months considered were highest in Söderort, with 10,331 remediated cases, followed by Inre staden with 9,057 cases and Västerort with 6,173 cases. Within Inre staden, Södermalm displays the highest rates of removal, totalling 5,360 cases in the timeframe considered.

An important point to consider further is the Office's decision to institute a separate operational area for Södermalm, distinguishing it from the rest of the Inre staden, while the other macro-areas of the city are grouped together. The fact that the highest incidence of remediated cases in the timeframe considered occurred in Söderort suggests that treating the entirety of Inre staden as a unified operational area should technically be possible. To further clarify this point, data concerning the surface area of each macro-area are provided below:

- Västerort extends over an area of approximately 83 square kilometres, out of which Järva accounts for about 24.5 square kilometres.
- Inre staden extends over an area of approximately 35.5 square kilometres, out of which Södermalm accounts for 5.71 square kilometres.
- Söderort extends over an area of approximately 91 square kilometres.

The figures therefore show that the two most extended macro-areas of the city, Västerort and Söderort, constitute an operational area each, while the considerably less extended area of Inre staden is subdivided. This suggests a disparity in how different parts of the city are treated with regard to graffiti removal. While definitive explanations cannot be provided, several hypotheses can be made. First, the disparity may simply be due to practical considerations. Second, central areas may be more frequently targeted by graffiti writers and may therefore require more focused and punctual interventions. Third, central areas may be prioritised when it comes to removal of graffiti. This hypothesis aligns with questionnaire responses suggesting that richer areas, such as those in Inre staden and particularly Södermalm, prioritise graffiti removal in comparison to other areas of the city.

An additional layer of insight is provided by the fieldwork data on which the present study is based. When considering only the texts selected for the graffiti corpora and excluding the numerous instances of tags that were seen during the collection process, 200 graffiti were recorded in Södermalm and only 22 in Järva. In other words, nearly 10 times more graffiti was recorded in Södermalm than in Järva. These figures support the hypothesis that graffiti is scarcer in Järva than it is in Södermalm, which aligns with the removal data provided by *Trafikkontoret*. One possible

explanation for this pattern lies in the fact that Södermalm is a lively area that attracts young people and has a strong nightlife, while Järva is primarily a residential area.

Apart from the scarcity of graffiti in general, the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime also determines the fact that Södermalm and Järva are pervaded by traces, which are defined as a form of “enduring mark left in or on a surface” (Karlander 2019: 206). These traces mainly present as unevenly painted surfaces (Figure 96) or partially erased graffiti which may or may not retain a degree of readability (Figures 97 and 98).



Figure 96. Erasure outcome in Skanstull (Södermalm)

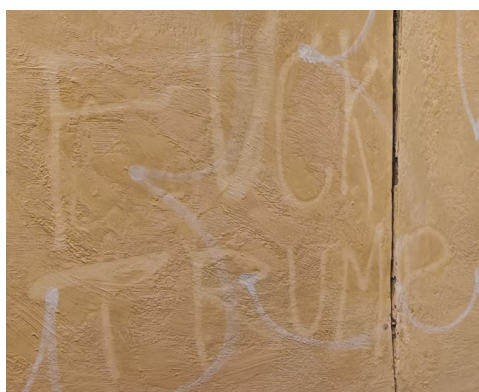


Figure 97. Erasure outcome in Gamla Stan (Södermalm)



Figure 98. Erasure outcome in Gamla Stan (Södermalm)

The attempts to erase or cover up graffiti, such as the ones presented in the Figures above, illustrate Karlander’s (2019) concept of the semiotics of nonexistence: removal does “not simply *restore* or *reverse*, but *create*” (Karlander 2019: 211). These images constitute instances of composite semiotic elements which simultaneously signal the presence, action, and authority of the anti-graffiti regime, the undesirability of graffiti, and the existence of graffiti itself. This is particularly evident in cases such as the ones presented in Figures 97 and 98, where the erasure left traces that are readable and fully interpretable.

The action of the anti-graffiti regime in Stockholm also seems to influence the placement of graffiti. Particularly, in the district area of Södermalm, graffiti seemed to cluster in specific areas. An alternative explanation for this pattern is that graffiti appears clustered in certain areas because removal efforts are less intense or focused there. These areas include the surroundings of the legal

wall in Tanto (Södermalm), where 38 out of the 200 graffiti recorded were found. This pattern is also acknowledged in the 2021 *Handlingsplan för minskat klotter* (Stockholms stad 2021), which prescribed increased surveillance in these areas to prevent it.

Other areas that showed clustering of graffiti were those affected by construction work. Particularly, 109 writings were found on K-rails or temporary barriers of construction sites. Of these, 23 were found in Långholmen and 80 in Slussen, including the 76 texts that make up the Katarinavägen monologue. One likely reason that might account for the clustering of graffiti in areas such as these is the fact that removal of graffiti on temporary structures is not a high priority. Another possible reason, specific to the Långholmen case, is that the temporary barriers might have allowed for increased anonymity, which made the location more attractive to writers. Figure 99 visually illustrates why that is plausible.



Figure 99. Långholmen (Södermalm)

The photograph was taken on the Långholmen bridge, which has a four-lane highly trafficked road in the middle, and shared lanes for bicycles and pedestrians on each side. The placement of the K-rail (at the bottom) and of the barrier, allows writers to not be spotted by oncoming traffic. This, paired with favourable conditions on the bicycle and pedestrian path, such as darkness and light traffic, could likely give writers a perceived sense of safety and guarantee a high degree of anonymity and discretion.

6.5 Comparative analysis of Södermalm and Järva

The aim of this Section is to provide a comparative summary of the analytical results, in order to underline the differences recorded in the informal linguistic landscapes of Södermalm and Järva. The focus is on both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

The most evident and immediate difference is quantitative. With regard to graffiti, the number of instances documented in Södermalm (200) is almost ten times higher than those recorded in Järva (22). This difference was recognised already during the fieldwork process, as finding graffiti proved considerably easier in Södermalm than in Järva. A comparable yet less accentuated pattern applies to stickers. The number of instances documented in Södermalm (90) is double the number of instances documented in Järva (45). This quantitative contrast affects the diversity of languages and themes identified in the two datasets.

Concerning language distribution, Swedish and English are the dominant languages in both district areas, and for both graffiti and stickers. In Järva, the prevalent use of Swedish could reflect its function as a *lingua franca* in the area.

Södermalm displays greater linguistic variety in both graffiti and stickers, counting a total of 10 languages other than Swedish and English in each dataset. This number includes instances of languages found only as part of multilingual signs. By comparison, Järva exhibited very limited linguistic variety: in graffiti, only 1 language other than Swedish and English was recorded, while stickers included two. Overall, the data suggests that the languages attested in graffiti and stickers do not mirror the complex linguistic composition of the resident communities, nor their linguistic vitality. This is especially evident in the case of Järva, a strongly multicultural and multilingual area whose diversity is not visible in its informal linguistic landscape.

With regard to youth language, features pertaining to *ungdomsspråk* and *rinkebysvenska* were exclusively attested in graffiti. The Södermalm dataset included most examples of *ungdomsspråk* (11 instances), the only 2 recorded instances of *rinkebysvenska*, as well as 3 instances of German youth language. By contrast, the Järva dataset only included 4 graffiti which had *ungdomsspråk* features.

Regarding communicative models, the linear communicative model is the most common overall. Instances of interactive graffiti are scarce in both datasets, with 3 instances recorded in Södermalm and 4 in Järva. Notably, 1 instance of interactional communication through stickers was identified in Södermalm. In addition, 76 graffiti identified as part of a monologue were observed in Södermalm. No comparable phenomenon was observed in Järva.

In terms of thematic patterns, the analysis reveals clear differences between the two areas. These differences are partly linked to the quantitative differences mentioned above, as Södermalm displays a wider thematic range for both graffiti and stickers. In the Södermalm graffiti corpus, 11 proto-themes and 21 micro-themes were identified, while in the Järva graffiti corpus only 8 proto-themes

and 7 micro-themes were identified. The most represented proto-themes in Södermalm graffiti were political and poetic, while the most represented micro-themes were the poetic-quotations and political-left. In Järva, the most represented proto-themes were political and obscene, while the most represented micro-theme was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Categories that were recorded in Södermalm but absent in Järva are poetic graffiti and witty/playful/nonsense graffiti.

With respect to the thematic patterns of stickers, Södermalm displayed 7 proto-themes and 4 micro-themes, while Järva displayed 4 proto-themes and 7 micro-themes. In Södermalm, the most represented proto-themes were the political and promotional ones, while the most represented micro-theme was that of political-left. In Järva, the most represented proto-theme were sports and political, while the most represented micro-theme was, like in Södermalm, that of political-left. Categories that were recorded in Södermalm but absent in Järva include playful/witty/nonsense, existential, and religious stickers.

Concerning the influence of the anti-graffiti regime on the informal linguistic landscapes of Södermalm and Järva, the analysis suggests that this is present and crucial. The relative absence of graffiti, particularly in Järva, strongly suggests the effectiveness of the regime. Additionally, official data on graffiti removal, combined with residents' perceptions obtained through the questionnaire, indicate the city's commitment to repress graffiti. Erasure practices leave traces that are highly visible in both areas, in the form of unevenly painted surfaces and smudged writings on the walls. These traces exemplify the semiotics of nonexistence theorised by Karlander, as they show that erasure does not simply restore a precondition of nonexistence, but rather produces complex signs that talk about the regime's presence, control and authority, but also about the existence of graffiti practices and culture.

Additionally, the action of the anti-graffiti regime appears to influence the distribution of graffiti. In Södermalm, it was observed that graffiti tended to cluster around areas with specific features, such as the surroundings of the Tanto legal wall and areas undergoing construction work. 147 writings, corresponding to 73.5% of the corpus, were found in these areas alone. Reasons that may account for this include that they may allow for a higher degree of anonymity, or that they might be prone to slower erasure efforts. Comparable clusters were not observed in Järva, where graffiti was overall scarce. This may indicate a lower production rate for graffiti, more effective removal, or a combination of both factors.

Overall, the presence and action of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime seem not only to limit the quantity of graffiti in general, but also to determine or influence where and how graffiti is written.

To conclude, in the present study Södermalm appears to be a district area which is richer in quantity of graffiti and stickers, as well as in linguistic and thematic variety, while Järva appears to be a district area in which graffiti and stickers are scarce and present less linguistic and thematic variation.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to identify and investigate potential differences in the informal linguistic landscapes of Södermalm and Järva. These areas were chosen because they represent the two most different district areas in Stockholm in terms of demographic features. An additional focus of the present study was to consider the potential influence that the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime has on the practice of graffiti in the areas investigated.

The analysis has shown that the informal linguistic landscapes of Södermalm and Järva differ significantly, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Södermalm appeared to be as an area characterised by a higher density of graffiti and stickers, which were also found to display a higher degree of linguistic and thematic diversity. Järva, on the other hand, appeared to be characterised by a generalised scarcity of informal signs, especially of graffiti, and by a more limited range of linguistic and thematic variation. These differences are not easily explained, although it is possible that they are caused by several intertwining factors. These could include the spatiality of the area, which sees Södermalm as central and Järva as peripheral, the “identity” of the area, which sees Södermalm as an area rich in nightlife and attractive for youth and Järva as a mainly residential area, as well as socio-economic factors.

One key finding of the present research is that language visibility in informal signs found in Södermalm and Järva does not reflect the diversity of the resident population. This appears evident especially in relation to Järva. Despite it being the most multilingual and multicultural district area of Stockholm, this diversity was not recorded in its graffiti and stickers, which were dominated by Swedish and English.

By highlighting the effects of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime, this study illustrates the importance of considering matters of nonexistence, erasure and absence in the study of informal linguistic landscapes. The role of the Stockholm anti-graffiti regime appears to be a central factor in shaping the informal linguistic landscapes of the city. The relative absence of graffiti, the visibility of traces caused by acts of erasure, and the clustering of graffiti in specific areas of Södermalm are elements that assert the strength and effectiveness of the regime. At the same time, the fact that graffiti, while scarce, is still present, the fact that traces left behind from erasure practices are everywhere, and the large amount of funds allocated to graffiti control efforts are factors that assert the perdurance and vitality of graffiti culture and practice.

Further research could be aimed at expanding the study diachronically to document the process of erasure in real time. By performing repeated observations of the areas researched, further

discrepancies concerning differentiated treatments of the areas in terms of erasure practices could be highlighted. Additionally, this would serve to record more realistic data concerning the production rates of graffiti, as it would ideally record new pieces before they are erased. A further expansion could entail researching a district area in Söderort, which would allow comparisons concerning all three macro-areas of Stockholm. Another possibility would be to compare different anti-graffiti regimes to the one of Stockholm. These possibilities were not explored in the present study due to the practical, spatial and temporal commitments they would entail.

Expanding the present research would provide useful data and information concerning not only the informal linguistic landscape of urban areas, but also the effects that anti-graffiti regimes have in shaping them, by highlighting the dynamic and discursive struggles for space that take place in cities.

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Appendix 1

Graffiti corpora

Appendix 1 consists of the language classification of the graffiti texts, the original text (in italics), and its literal translation in English (if the original text is not in English). Symbols are maintained.

Some notes regarding the language classification:

- MIX is the label used for instances that contain multiple languages. In the translation, the languages are specified in parentheses.
- N.D. is the label used if the language is not discernible, for example (9) *Adam & Ani 2022*.
- Numbers/symbols is the label used if the graffiti contains only numbers or symbols, for example (153) (A), (154) 1312.
- Team name is the label used for graffiti that only contain a sports team name. The country of the team name is specified in parentheses, for example (66) FC St. Pauli.
- If an expression could be either in English or Swedish, it is assumed it is in Swedish, for example (2) *penis*, (40) *antifa.se*.

Södermalm corpus

(1) Swedish

Ett jävla spring
'a fucking run'

(2) Swedish

Penis
'penis'

(3) MIX: Swedish, English, Polish

Micke Taikon my favvo zigge cyganka Alexa in Akalla's bästa! Vän
'Micke Taikon (SWE) my favourite (ENG) gypsy (SWE) gypsy (POL) Alexa in Akalla's best! Friend (SWE)'.
NOTE: interactive

(4) English

Jesus <3 99% on way to hell

(5) MIX: German, English

Geil as fuck
'cool (GER) as fuck (ENG)'

(6) English

Music is our god

(7) German

Wurst bande zone
'sausage gang zone'

(8) Swedish

Öl bira bärs
'beer beer beer'

(9) N.D.

Adam & Ani 2022

(10) Icelandic

Hvart eru Bayne? <3
'where is Bayne?'

- (11) English
Bullshit
- (12) English
Slay kill
- (13) Swedish
Tirre fyller år!
'it's Tirre's birthday!'
- (14) Swedish
Folk har 0% respekt
'people have 0% respect'
- (15) Swedish
Sluta bög spraya
'stop gay spraying'
- (16) Swedish
Va?
'huh?'
- (17) Swedish
Kuk
'dick'
- (18) English
Party at the place
- (19) Swedish
Eller?
'or?'
- (20) Swedish
Garage syndrom
'garage syndrome'
- (21) MIX: German, English
Wotan sees
'Odin (GER) sees (ENG)'
- (22) Swedish
Rök fett
'smoke cool'
- (23) MIX: Swedish, English
Om du är: sås aborre riddare fakesmile smhi lowkey dö <3
'If you are: sauce perch knight fakesmile (ENG) the Swedish meteorological and hydrological institute lowkey (ENG) die <3'
- (24) N.D.
Stella + Max <3
- (25) Swedish
Jag BER <3
'I pray <3'

(26) English
I was a witness to a miracle of Allah

(27) Swedish
Psaltaren 88: Od till Baaz
'the psalm 88: ode to Baaz'

(28) Swedish
Liv ut
'life out'

(29) MIX: French, Arabic
Je suis إسرائيل
'I am (FR) Israel (AR)'

(30) Romanian
Jidan nenorocit
'fucking Jew'

(31) Latin
In exil fugit spirit
'the spirit flees into exile'

(32) English
Rock non stop

(33) English
ACAB

(34) Swedish
Häng din cykel?
'hang your bike?'

(35) Team name (Swedish)
Hammarby
'Hammarby'

(36) English
Fuck the buff

(37) English
Tool da fool

(38) German
Gewalt
'violence'

(39) Swedish
Roligt
'funny'

(40) Swedish
Antifa.se
'antifa.se'

(41) English

Think it ain't illegal yet

- (42) Swedish
Man till milis!
'man to the militia'

- (43) Swedish
Kille sökes
'guy wanted'

- (44) Swedish
Gaza
'Gaza'

- (45) Numbers/symbol
161
'AFA', 'anti-fascist action'

- (46) English
Psalm 22:2 : 7-9

- (47) German
Tod geil
'deadly cool'

- (48) German
Rote sonne rote reich
'red sun red kingdom'

- (49) Swedish
Hata CK hata UN
'hate CK hate UN'

- (50) Swedish
Hata gnaget
'hate AIK'

- (51) English
Fuck

- (52) English
Art Vandelay was here

- (53) Numbers/symbol
1312
'ACAB'

- (54) Swedish
Tänk på döden
'think about death'

- (55) English
Ilse was here =)

- (56) English
Gay!

- (57) Swedish
Punkare heilar ~~inte~~ (inte deras vänner heller)
'Punks do not heil (and neither do their friends)'
- (58) Swedish
Jag älskar du <3
'I love you'
- (59) English
Fuck racism
- (60) Swedish
Antifa zon 161
'antifa zone 161'
- (61) Swedish
Mitt liv mitt hat – ni har inga gränser
'My life my hate – you have no limits'
- (62) Swedish
Varje gång ni ser mig le, eller se framåt förstör ni liv för mig varför?
'Every time you see me smile, or look forward, you ruin my life, why?'
- (63) German
AIK über alles 2010
'AIK above all 2010'
- (64) MIX: Swedish, German
AIK über alles ultras nord
'AIK above all (GER) ultras north (SWE)'
- (65) English
Be childish <3
- (66) Team name (German)
FC St. Pauli
- (67) English
Krishna loves you
- (68) English
1312 ACAB
- (69) Swedish
Jag hör längtan i din tystnad
'I hear the longing in your silence'
- (70) Swedish
Jag vet att han ser dig men inte som jag gör
'I know he sees you but not like I do'
- (71) English
Fuck you!
- (72) Swedish
FCK TIDÖ
'fuck TIDÖ'

- (73) English
Free Palestine <3
- (74) N.D.
Jakob + Lovisa = <3
- (75) Swedish
"Stackars, Jack!"
"Poor, Jack!"
- (76) Swedish
Kärleken är vacker, det är människan som är ful.
'Love is beautiful, it's people who are ugly'
- (77) Swedish
Fascismen är kapitalets yttersta konsekvens!
'Fascism is the ultimate consequence of the capital!'
- (78) Swedish
Borgerligheten är full av girighet och falskhet!
'The bourgeoisie is full of greed and falsehood!'
- (79) Swedish
"En del får barn som kuvas, en del får barn som stör, en del får barn som går och undrar vad dom lever för..."
"'children who subdue get a piece, children who disrupt get a piece, children who walk and wonder what they live for get a piece...'"
- (80) Swedish
Tyskland 1933 – USA 2025!
'Germany 1933 – USA 2025!'
- (81) Swedish
Religionen är folkets opium!
'religion is the people's opium!'
- (82) Swedish
"Röda tomtar äro vänstervridna"
"'red elfs are leftists'"
- (83) Swedish
"Elisabeth sa att hon satt hemma och sydde kläder åt sin mor, men egentligen var hon på dans med min bror!"
"'Elisabeth said she was sitting at home and sewing clothes for her mother, but she was actually at a dance with my brother!'"
- (84) Swedish
"Kärleken gillar inte mig..."
"'love doesn't like me...'"
- (85) Swedish
"Hösten och Beethoven älskar varandra"...
"'the autumn and Beethoven love each other...'"
- (86) Swedish
"Varför släpper Israel inte in några journalister i Gaza!!"
"'why doesn't Israel let any journalists into Gaza!!'"

- (87) English
Nobody knows
- (88) Swedish
"Nu har jag fått den jag vill ha"
"now i've gotten that which I want"
- (89) Swedish
Ulf Kristerson är ett tandtroll, säger flourtanten!
'Ulf Kristersson is a teeth troll, says the dental hygienist!'
- (90) Swedish
Livet läker inga sår, livet leker några år, livet smeker vissa sår."
'Life heals no wounds, life plays for a few years, like caresses some wounds.'
- (91) Swedish
"Du, låt dig ej förbittras i denn bittra tid.
"you, do not be embittered in this bitter time'
- (92) Swedish
Välfärdens ruiner, växer sig Mordors skuggor sig starka!"
'The ruins of wealthfare, the shadows of Mordor grow strong!'"
- (93) Swedish
"Ett kantstött kristallglas fördes till mina läppar som färgade den ljusa drycken röd.
"a rimmed crystal glass was brought to my lips which stained the bright drink red.'
- (94) Swedish
"Varje gryning kommer aurora till min bädd"
"every dawn aurora comes to my bed
- (95) Swedish
"Du gamla, du fria, du fjällfeta ko, du tronade på fläsk och bruna bönor!"
"you old, you free, you fat cow, you sat on the throne on pork and black beans!'"
- (96) Swedish
"Sådan är kapitalismen, sådan är den armes lott..."
"such is capitalism, such is the lot of the poor..."
- (97) Swedish
"Har du tappat din peng du barfota barn i världen..."
"have you dropped your money you barefoot child in the world..."
- (98) Swedish
"Bäst att passa på att handla innan pengarna tar slut!"
"best to take the opportunity to shop before the money runs out!'
- (99) Swedish
Sudda, sudda, sudda bort din sura min, köp istället konserverad grön
'Erase, erase, erase away your sour face, buy canned green instead'
- (100) Swedish
"Gud i brallan."
"God in the pants."
- (101) Swedish
"Var blev du av Maria? Du saknade mellan lägen. Du ville allt, men kom aldrig fram..."

”where did you go Maria? You lacked middle ground. You wanted everything, but never got there...”

(102) Swedish

”Somliga går med trasiga skor... gud fader vill nog ha det så.”

”some walk around with broken shoes... God the father probably wants it that way.”

(103) Swedish

”Ja, sa Bill. Ja, sa bull och elake Måns skrattade gott.”

”yes, said Bill. Yes, said bull and wicked Måns laughed well.”

(104) Latin

”Sic semper Tyrannis!”

”thus always to tyrants!”

(105) Swedish

”Just idag mår jag bra!”

”right today I feel good!”

(106) Spanish

”No pasaran!!!”

”they shall not pass!!!”

(107) Swedish

Poliski

‘police’

(108) Swedish

”Flyttlassen gick till Farsta och väntade...”

”the movers went to Farsta and waited...”

(109) Swedish

”Farbror Melker, varför badar du alltid med kläderna på?”

”uncle Melker, why do you always bathe clothed?”

(110) Swedish

”Är du kär i mig ännu Klas-Göran?”

”are you still in love with me Klas-Göran?”

(111) Swedish

”Se hur borgar asen flinar, åt hur jobbar dräggen svinar!”

”look how the bourgeois ass grins, at how the scum works as swines!”

(112) Swedish

”Vi har ingenting annat än vår solidaritet!”

”we have nothing else but our solidarity!”

(113) English

”A working class hero is something to be”

(114) Swedish

”Var blev ni av ljuva drömmar om en rymligare värld?!”

”where did we leave sweet dreams of a more spacious world?!”

(115) Swedish

”All makt utgår från folket!”

”all power comes from the people!”

- (116) Swedish
"Du har känslan men inte den rätta viljan"
 "you have the feeling but not the right will"
- (117) Swedish
Vår alliansfrihet hade tjänat oss väl, tyst och stilla kom istället amerikaner...
 'Our non-alignment had served us well, quietly and calmly Americans came instead...'
- (118) Swedish
"Vadå dyster?!"
 "what do you mean gloomy?!"
- (119) Swedish
"Av var och ens förmåga, åt var och ens behov!"
 "from each and his ability, to each and his need!"
- (120) Swedish
Vakna Strindberg!!! Vi behöver dig!
 'Wake up Strindberg!!! We need you!'
- (121) Swedish
"En dag skall vi komma ner från vita bergen"
 "one day we will come down from the white mountains"
- (122) Swedish
"Lång dags färd mot natt."
 "long day's journey towards the night."
- (123) Swedish
"Tysk höst..."
 "German autumn..."
- (124) Swedish
"Ska vi gå hem till mig, eller ska vi gå hem till dig, eller var och en hem till sig?"
 "should we go home at mine, or should we go home to your, or each to his own house?"
- (125) Swedish
"Ulla min Ulla"
 "Ulla my Ulla"
- (126) Swedish
"Simma lugnt"
 "swim calmly"
- (127) Swedish
"Vi går till botten där vi står, men flaggan den går i topp!"
 "we go to the bottom where we stand, but the flag goes to the top!"
- (128) Swedish
"I skymningen kan man se Vasa segla iväg..."
 "at dusk one can see Vasa sailing away..."
- (129) Swedish
"Staten och kapitalet sitter i samma båt!"
 "the state and the capital are in the same boat!"
- (130) Swedish

"Bryt ej ljusstråle under färd..."
"do not break the light beam while driving..."

(131) Swedish

"Är du lönsam, lilla vän?!"
"are you profitable, little friend?!"

(132) English

"Dear, old Stockholm."

(133) Swedish

"Vatten, stan är full av vatten..."
"water, the city is full of water..."

(134) Swedish

"Helga, jag älskar dig!"
"Helga, I love you!"

(135) Swedish

Sakta vi går genom stan...
'Slowly we walk across the city...'

(136) Swedish

"Nu har jag fått den jag vill ha"
"now I have gotten that which I want to have"

(137) Swedish

"Kyss mig igen, sa Cecilia Lind"
"kiss me again, said Cecilia Lind"

(138) Swedish

Ååå, vad är en bal på slottet...
'Ooh, what's a ball at the castle...'

(139) Swedish

Gråt Göteborg, för att ni ingenting har (förutom Kulle och Ada förstås).
'Cry Gothenburg, because you have nothing (apart from Kulle and Ada of course).'

(140) Swedish

"Görans fru var en riktig drake!"
"the wife of Göran was a real dragon!"

(141) Swedish

"Det är vår stad – ja, Eken!"
"it's our city – yes, Eken!"

(142) Swedish

"En blandning av sött och salt"
"a mix of sweet and salty"

(143) Swedish

"Stolta stad..."
"proud city..."

(144) Swedish

"Stockholm, Stockholm, Stockholm stad!"
"Stockholm, Stockholm, Stockholm city!"

- (145) Swedish
Så lunkar vi så småningom
 'So we gradually get lukewarm'
- (146) Swedish
"Dansar i neon!"
 "'dance in the neon!'"
- (147) Swedish
Stockholm i mitt hjärta
 'Stockholm in my heart'
- (148) Swedish
"Det var dans bortom vägen
 "'there was dancing beyond the road'
- (149) MIX: Swedish, English
"Stockholm city svajar i sitt rus"
 "'Stockholm city sways in its rush'"
- (150) Swedish
Så går vi hem till Söder...
 'So we go home to the South...'
- (151) Swedish
Vår ära heter trohet
 'our honour is called loyalty'
- (152) Swedish
"Sakta vi går genom stan."
 "'slowly we walk across the city.'"
- (153) Number/symbol
 (A)
- (154) Number/symbol
 1312
- (155) Swedish
Jag saknar gatukonst
 'I miss streetart'
- (156) Swedish
Jag samtycker inte till er. Ni har inget människa värde
 'I do not consent to you. You have no human value'
- (157) English
WARNING! Keep the door closed at all times. Contains species dangerous for human life and health.
 Note: accompanied by stencils of Trump and Putin.
- (158) English
Homos 4 Hamas
- (159) Swedish
Antifa

- (160) Swedish
Jag är inte polis. Jag är dömd
'I am not police. I am convicted'
- (161) English
AZAB – all zionists are bastards
- (162) Swedish
Hur jag sätter tandstickan på rätta stället
'How do I put the toothpick in the right place'
- (163) English
ACAB
- (164) Swedish
Men varför ska jag ändra mig när du är dum i huvudet..
'But why should I change myself when you are stupid in the head..'
- (165) Swedish
Loka älskar snopp 8=D
'Loka loves dick'
- (166) Swedish
Du har inte gjort fel
'you have done nothing wrong'
- (167) Swedish
Länge leve Palestina!
'long live Palestine!'
- (168) Swedish
Får jag chans på dig? Ja Nej kanske ? @instagramhandle
'Do I get a chance with you? Yes no maybe? @instagramhandle'
- (169) German
Todgeil
'deadly cool'
- (170) MIX: English, Swedish
Fack AINA
'fuck the police'
- (171) Swedish
Klipp lugg köp höns
'cut a fringe buy chickens'
- (172) Swedish
Pannkakor med sylt!
'pancakes with jam!'
- (173) Swedish
Najs
'Nice'
- (174) Swedish
Bara bajare
'Only Bajen'

- (175) MIX: German, Swedish
Von heimat in exil non heimligt
 'From homeland into exile not (GER) feeling like home (SWE)'
- (176) German
Stirb nicht
 'don't die'
- (177) Swedish
HC LKPG
 'hardcore Linköping'
- (178) English
Queer 1+1=3
- (179) Latin
Vita manet in militia
 'life continues in the struggle'
- (180) Swedish
 a. *Allt blir ok <3*
 'Everything will be ok <3'
 b. *allt kommer gå åt helvete*
 'everything will go to hell'
 Note: b is written over a
- (181) Swedish
Hela i hel
 'whole in whole'
- (182) Swedish
 a. *DE blir bra jag lovar!*
 'They will be go I promise!'
 b. *Tack!*
 'Thanks!'
- (183) Swedish
Tack!! För det ni gör <3 länge leve västerbron <3
 'Thanks! For what you do <3 long live västerbron <3'
- (184) Swedish
~~Hata~~-Bajen
 'hate Bajen'
- (185) German
Von heimat in exil
 'From homeland into exile'
- (186) German
Sieg sicher
 'victory is certain'
- (187) German
Vorwärts in Kampf und sieg
 'Fowards in struggle and victory'

- (188) Swedish
Det löser sig
 'it will work out'
- (189) Swedish
Ni kommer alltid finnas i våra hjärtan
 'You will always be in our hearts'
- (190) Russian
Я секрет
 'I am a secret'
- (191) Swedish
Vi hade de bra IAF
 'We had a good time anyway'
- (192) Swedish
Två år av folkmord över 20000 mordade barn i Gaza
 'Two years of genocide over 20000 murdered children in Gaza'
- (193) Swedish
Jag vill inte betala skatt
 'I don't want to pay taxes'
- (194) Swedish
Hammarby enade mot polisen
 'Hammarby united against the police'
- (195) English
Fuck Trump
- (196) English
Suck my dick Elon
- (197) Swedish
Tänk på döden
 'think about death'
- (198) Swedish
Tänk på döden
 'think about death'
- (199) Swedish
Gaza
 'Gaza'
- (200) English
Shit

Järva corpus

- (1) MIX: Swedish and English
 $E + K + S < 3$ *mina besties <3*
 'E + K + S my (SWE) besties (ENG)'
- (2) MIX: Swedish and English
 a. *Jag älskar kuk*

- 'I love cock (SWE)'
- b. (*Jag älskar*) *svarta (kuk)ar*
'(I love) black (cock)s (SWE)'
Note: *svarta -ar* is added to a.
- c. ← *skibidi real* (ENG)
- (3) English
- a. *I hate my existance lmao lol*
- b. ← *real*
- (4) Swedish
- Älskar braj*
'love weed'
- (5) Team name (Swedish)
- AIK STHLM*
- (6) Numbers/symbol
- KF*
'communist association'
- (7) Team names (Swedish)
- ~~DIF~~
~~515—AIK~~
~~AIK—DIF~~
- (8) Swedish
- Janne i Ängelholms bro*
'Janne on the Ängelholm bridge'
- (9) Swedish
- Kuk*
'cock'
- (10) Swedish
- Leve folkkriget i Peru! KF*
'long live the people's war in Peru! KF'
- (11) Swedish
- Hata DIF*
'hate DIF'
- (12) English
- Jesus loves you*
- (13) English
- Free Palestine*
- (14) English
- Free Palestine*
- (15) English, Arabic
- a. *Trash* (ENG) →
- b. إسرائيل (AR)
'Israel'
- (16) Swedish

Till Lisa Stensit. Ingen annan kan läsa detta än Lisa S. vi möts den 15/4 1982 vid T-bananen. Jag är redan kåt som en hankatt i mars. Jag har ritat av min kuk här. OBS i riktig storlek 26 cm. OBS den är knall blå + lila stööööööön!!!

'To Lisa Stensit. No one else can read this but Lisa S. We met on the 15th April 1982 by the subway. I am already horny like a male cat in March. I have redrawn my cock here. NOTE in real size 26 cm. NOTE it is bright blue + purple moooaaan!!!'.

(17) Swedish

Knulla [illegible]

'Fuck [illegible]'

(18) English

Trash

(19) English

Fuck

(20) Swedish

[illegible] *sug kuk!*

'[illegible] suck cock!'

(21) Number/symbol

卐

(22) Swedish

Ånej

'oh no'

Appendix 2

Sticker corpora

Appendix 2 consists of the language classification of the sticker texts, the original text (in italics), and its literal translation in English (if the original text is not in English). Symbols are maintained. The same conventions as Appendix 1 are applied. One is added:

- TAG is the label used if the sticker consists of a printed or hand-written tag that is illegible.
- IMAGE is the label used if the stickers consists of a picture with no text.

Södermalm corpus

(1) Swedish

Radio Arbetarbildning EN MARXISTISK PODCAST finns där poddar finns

'Radio Worker Education A MARXIST PODCAST is available where there are podcasts'

(2) English

DON'T BUY MONERO Cryptocurrencies are harmful to the banking system and may weaken the state apparatus

(3) Swedish

Orkar du leva vågar du dö utan Jesus???? Visst man kan hoppa utan fallskärm också

'Can you live, do you dare to die without Jesus???? Of course one can also jump without parachute'

(4) Swedish

Dissidenter förgör MAN.ssr

'dissidents destroy MAN.ssr'

(5) Swedish

Folke har gjort en samlad bedömning.

'Folke has made an overall assessment'

(6) Swedish

Framåt Malmö

'forward Malmö'

(7) English

Who are you - ? Head girls

(8) TAG

(9) Latin

Materia ephemera materia ephemera materia ephemera materia ephemera materia ephemera materia ephemera

'ephemeral matter'

(10) English

Donnie who!?!? Donnie fucking Costas!!!! That's who!!!!

(11) English

Komet agency

(12) Swedish

Otydlig

'vague'

(13) English

Sanctum tattoo halloween flash party november 2nd 12-late

- (14) English
ACAB
- (15) Swedish
Främlingar är vänner du ännu inte känner
'Strangers are friends you don't know yet'
- (16) Swedish
Sanktionera terrorstaten
'sanction the terrorist state'
- (17) Swedish
Isidor Behrens Allmänna Idrottsklubben
'Isidor Behrens General Sports Club'
- (18) English
Dead men don't rape
- (19) Swedish
Vem? Om inte du! När? Om inte nu? Gå med @SUFSTHLM | SUF.CC | stockholm@suf.cc
'Who? If not you! When? If not now? Join @SUFSTHLM | SUF.CC | stockholm@suf.cc
- (20) Team name (Swedish)
Hammarby Stockholm
- (21) Swedish
Giljoitenen: för en knivskarp fördelningspolitik YO!
'The guillotine; for a razor-sharp distribution policy YO!'
- (22) Russian
Антифашистское сопротивление
'antifascist resistance'
- (23) Team name (Swedish)
Bajen Stockholm
- (24) Swedish
Gatans förband
'street gang'
- (25) Swedish
Kafé 44
'café 44'
- (26) Swedish
Antifascistisk aktion
'antifascist action'
- (27) Swedish
Anarkistiska bokmässan 2025 16-17 augusti – Stockholm www.a-massan.com
'Anarchist Book Fair 2025 August 16-17 – Stockholm www.a-massan.com'
- (28) English and Swedish
Obsessed with the West en podd om country
'obsessed with the West a podcast about country'

- (29) English
Gently down the stream
- (30) English
Femboys Stockholm fucktivklubb.org
- (31) Swedish
Har du information om högerextrem verksamhet? Kontakta oss! Antifascistisk aktion Stockholm
www.antifa.se
'Do you have information about right-wing extremist activities? Contact us! Antifascist action Stockholm
www.antifa.se'
- (32) English
Together against Russian terror TART (A) (E)
- (33) IMAGE
- (34) Swedish
Antifascistisk aktion
'antifascist action'
- (35) N.D.
Lenny Silver
- (36) English
Warsaw beer festival
- (37) English
Liz loves you
- (38) English
Keep your teeth shut your racist mouth
- (39) English
Rawheads
- (40) Finnish
Korupuhe
'eloquence'
- (41) English
Art sauna
- (42) Swedish
116 Sofia Södermalm Bajenland
- (43) Swedish
Häxan
'the witch'
- (44) TAG
- (45) English
Free gaza
- (46) Swedish

- Titta bort*
'look away'
- (47) English
"everybody shall be free to move seeking a future where hope defeats fear" No Name Kitchen
- (48) English
Hello my name is boycott israhell
- (49) Greek
Φυγ το φως που έψαχνα
'the light I was looking for has disappeared'
- (50) English
Sexwork is work being a landlord is not! (A)
- (51) German
Wetten, dass. Du ne maus bist ?
'I bet that. You are a mouse?'
- (52) English
Embarassing video [QR code] dontlook
- (53) English
Est. 1994 street bombers from Rotterdam to Hong Kong and back
- (54) English
AFA
- (55) Italian
Forza
'strength'
- (56) Swedish
Parasiter
'parasites'
- (57) Swedish
Märket är påklistrat på grund av tristess i tillvaron oetisk marknadsföring nedskräpning otillåten affischering X konstnärliga ambitioner
'The sticker is affixed due to boredom in life unethical marketing littering unauthorized posting
X artistic ambitions
- (58) Swedish
RYSSLAND ut ur UKRAINA! Manifestation varje onsdag 12.30 Fria Ukrainas Plats, Stockholm!
'RUSSIA OUT OF UKRAINE! Manifestation every Wednesday 12.30 Fria Ukrainas Plats, Stockholm!'
- (59) English
Get the fuck out of my uterus
- (60) Latin
Memento mori
'remember you must die'
- (61) Russian and English
Путин военный преступник #fuckputin #putinwarcriminal

- ‘Putin war criminal #fuckputin #putinwarcriminal’
- (62) German
Nett hier. Aber waren Sie schon mal in Magdeburg
‘It’s nice here. But have you ever been to Magdeburg?’
- (63) Team name (Dutch)
Awaydays Heerenveen 1920
- (64) Swedish
Kämpa sthlm - tillsammans mot rasism och fascism
‘Fight Stockholm - together against racism and fascism’
- (65) Team name (Belgian)
Royal standard club – Liege
- (66) Basque
Langile boterea eraiki
‘Build worker power’
- (67) Italian
Sottocultura
‘Subculture’
- (68) Italian
Lazio merda
‘Lazio shit’
- (69) German
Nett hier. Aber waren Sies schon mal in Baden-Württemberg? Baden-Württemberg THE LÄND
‘Nice here. But have you ever been to Baden-Württemberg? Baden-Württemberg THE STATE’
- (70) German
Ja. War scheiße! Bayern bayern.sticker bayernsticker.com
‘yes. It was shit! Bayern bayern.sticker bayernsticker.com’
- (71) English
Capitalism’s condensed pain & suffering
- (72) Polish
RESOVIA jedno miasto jeden klub Sędziszów Małopolski
‘RESOVIA one city one club Sędziszów Małopolski’
- (73) Finnish
Kauhukabinetti hyvinvoinnin hautausmaa! Köyhien kauhu! Taiteen tuho!
‘cabinet of horrors, cemetery of prosperity, horror of the poor, destruction of art’
- (74) English and German
“long live mermaid killer?” Was soll denn das überhaupt heißen und dann immer dieses
‘Long live mermaid killer?’ What does that even mean, and then there’s always this.
- (75) English
“I’m not vegan but I do love animals!” “you mean that you love animals except for the ones you eat!!!”
“I’m glad you said that!” “me too!” Www.pogocafe.co.uk
- (76) TAG

- (77) Swedish
Nej till krig! Nej till Nato! Sverige ska inte gå med i USA:s krigsallians
 'No to war! No to NATO! Sweden will not join the US war alliance'
- (78) Swedish
Bara Bajare
 'Only Bajen'
- (79) Swedish
Trött på störiga killar
 'tired of annoying guys'
- (80) English
Old School Hammarby
- (81) English
Ultra boys 116 Sofia
- (82) English
Ultra boys 116 Sofia
- (83) English
Ultra boys 116 Sofia
- (84) Swedish
Tydlig
 'clear'
- (85) Swedish
Vi löser det
 'we fix it'
- (86) Swedish
116 Sofia Bajenland
- (87) Swedish
Jag sörjer mina döda höns dödahöns.se
 'I mourn my dead chickens'
- (88) Swedish
Ta tillbaka pendeltåget från transportföretagen - allt åt alla Stockholm
 'Take back the commuter train from the transport companies - everything for everyone Stockholm'
- (89) Swedish
Psalmer: 144:1 lovad vare skaparen mitt [illegible] som tränat mina armar till att kriga och lärk mina händer att strida amen.
 'Praise be to the creator of my [illegible] who has trained my arms for war and strengthened my hands for battle, amen.'
- (90) Swedish
Narci-soft. Vet att jag är bättre. Men snäll ändå.
 'Narci-soft. Knows I'm better. But kind nonetheless.'

- (1) Swedish
Djurgårdare förbjudna. Sett apor? Anmäl till SL
'Fans of Djurgården forbidden. Seen monkeys? Report to SL'
- (2) Swedish
Frihet för ultras
'freedom for ultras'
- (3) Swedish
Frihet för dom avstänga!
'freedom for those banned!'
- (4) Swedish
Det kommer en gryning det kommer en dag när Bajen tar guld och allting blir bra!
'There will come a dawn, there will come a day when Bajen takes the gold and everything will be fine!'
- (5) Swedish
Idioter
'idiots'
- (6) Swedish
Gör Sverige svenskt igen - alternativ för Sverige
'Make Sweden Swedish again – alternative for Sweden'
- (7) Swedish
Studera marxismen! Gå med i studiegrupp! Studeramarx.se
'Study marxism! Join a study group! Studymarx.se'
- (8) Swedish
Poliser syns överallt rättvisa ingenstans – antifascistisk aktion Uppsala – AFA-uppsala.antifa.se
'Police visible everywhere, justice nowhere - anti-fascist action Uppsala - AFA-uppsala.antifa.se'
- (9) Swedish
Jämlikhet rättvisa socialism
'Equality justice socialism'
- (10) Swedish
Radikalklasskamp.se
'Radicalclassstruggle.se'
- (11) English
Liberation is the key. Palestine will be free!
- (12) Swedish
Radikalklasskamp.se
'Radicalclassstruggle.se'
- (13) Swedish
Radikalklasskamp.se
'Radicalclassstruggle.se'
- (14) Swedish
www.radikalklasskamp.se
'Radicalclassstruggle.se'
- (15) Swedish
Bygg vänsterns trollfabrik!

'Build the left's troll factory!'

(16) English

Boycott Israeli apartheid – Free Palestine – www.palestinecampaign.org

(17) Swedish

Frihet för ultras

'freedom for ultras'

(18) MIX: Swedish and Italian

AIK ZON – Mentalità Norra stå

'AIK zone – mentality north stand'

(19) Swedish

Vräkningar av barnfamiljer ökar – straffen likaså. Ser du sambandet? SKU

'Evictions of families with children are increasing – so are the penalties. Do you see the connection? SKU'

(20) Swedish

SKU www.sku.se Sveriges kommunistiska ungdom

SKU www.sku.se Sweden's communist youth

(21) English

DON'T BUY MONERO Cryptocurrencies are harmful to the banking system and may weaken the state apparatus

(22) Swedish

38-101 otydlig

'38-101 vague'

(23) Swedish

Kärlek uppror

'love rebellion'

(24) Swedish

Kärlek uppror

'love rebellion'

(25) Swedish

Tja! Hej! Salam! Linje blå AIK!

'Hi! Hi! Hi! Blue line AIK!'

(26) Swedish

Vi är från Stockholm vi är AIK

'We are from Stockholm we are AIK'

(27) Team name (German)

Hamburg sport verein

(28) MIX: Swedish and Italian

Mentalità norra stå

'mentality north stand'

(29) Swedish

Radikalklasskamp.se

'Radicalclassstruggle.se'

- (30) Swedish
Kamratpostaren.se [QR code]
- (31) MIX: Latin and Swedish
Sol Invictus – kärlek uppror
'sol Invictus – love rebellion'
- (32) MIX: Latin and Italian
Invictus libertà
'invictus freedom'
- (33) Team name (German)
Clique du nord ULTRAS Hamburger SU
- (34) Swedish
Legalisera väskan
'legalise the bag'
- (35) English
ACAB
- (36) Team name (German)
Hamburger SU
- (37) MIX : Latin and Swedish
Sol invictus – AIK ultras
- (38) Swedish
Frihet för avstängda
'freedom for the banned'
- (39) MIX : Latin and Italian
Invictus libertà
- (40) Swedish
AIK bira
- (41) Team name (German)
Hamburger sport – verein
- (42) Swedish
Ned med militarism ned med imperialism! RKP revolutionära kommunistiska partiet
'Down with militarism, down with imperialism! RKP Revolutionary Communist Party'
- (43) Swedish
Är du kommunist? Organisera dig! Marxist.se/ga-med eller scanna här: [QR code] RKP revolutionära kommunistiska partiet
'Are you a communist? Organize yourself! Marxist.se/ga-med or scan here: [QR code] RKP Revolutionary Communist Party'
- (44) Swedish
Är du kommunist? Gå med i ditt parti! RKP revolutionära kommunistiska partiet marxist.se/ga-med
'Are you a communist? Join your party! RKP Revolutionary Communist Party marxist.se/ga-med'
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