

This essay will critically examine the barriers in communication in which Gypsy Travellers are faced with. This essay will firstly explore their origins and the discrimination they have suffered which has led them becoming an ethnic minority that is socially excluded. The ethnocentrism and cultural relativism of Gypsy culture will be weaved throughout this essay, critically reflecting on how they affect one another and how they are affected by society. Secondly this essay will look critically at the diverse language of Gypsy Travellers and how they communicate within their community. Thirdly this essay will extensively study the reasons why Gypsy Travellers are amongst the lowest achieving minority groups in education, addressing the struggles they experience and barriers that their culture creates around them. Finally, this essay will look at the barriers surrounding health care, critically examining some of the cultural limitations surrounding the receipt of health care. The Gypsy culture is strongly historical, this essay will look at their culture and why it has left them secluded within society. The case study that will be considered is that of the eviction of Dale farm and how the local authority dealt with the lack of planning and its consequences.

As an ethnic minority group gypsy travellers are a unique culture thwart with controversy, shunned from society with many experiencing difficulties leading what is considered to be a 'normal' life. Gypsy travellers have many origins, with Romany travellers who settled in Europe in the 1500's, Irish travellers who are thought to have been around since the 11th century and those from the circus and who travelled on barges (Friends, Families Travellers, 2009). Historically there is little numerical data regarding the number of gypsy traveller communities, the 2011 census was the first to acknowledge them within an independent category, with 63,000 identifying themselves as Gypsy Travellers, however, this is believed to be lower than the actual number if this census is to be believed (Cromaty 2019). Attitudes towards gypsy travellers is Cleemput(2010) describes as one of 'acceptable hatred', suggesting that racism derived not from grievance but one of envy of the need to continuously move on rather than settling for a constrained home life. It can be seen that although gypsy travellers come under the umbrella of ethnic minority they continue to face discrimination and exclusion (Cassin,R ND). Lloyd and McClusky (2008) argues that discrimination towards Gypsies Travellers appears to be the last form of racism, noting that it was once acceptable for shops and pubs to erect 'No Traveller' signs and the media to derogate and vilify the culture and their traditional lifestyle. Former MP Andrew Mackay (2002) once described Gypsy Travellers within his constituency as 'scum' suggesting people wanted to live in peace 'not be invaded by scum'.

The Cabinet Office (2018) Race Disparity Audit shows that the Gypsy Traveller communities are increasingly socially and educationally excluded, in 2016 it showed them to have scored the lowest in most sections with a large gap in school attendance and exclusion. The Audit also shows gypsy traveller children made the lowest progress in education compared to the average child of the same age and all other ethnicities. Atterbury (2010) argues that individual groups are socially excluded through the circumstances they are surrounded with, suggesting people are judged on wealth and location arguing 'one can be poor and not excluded or excluded and not poor' demonstrating that Gypsy Travellers are seen to be impoverished due to their choice of lifestyle rather than enriched with culture and family. Cassin, (ND) suggest many gypsy traveller children only miss school due to unavailability or being inaccessible due to their lifestyle, further suggesting children from traveller community's education is continuing to decline through a low level of engagement between local authority and the Gypsy Traveller community. This conflict is also evident with some local residents choosing to remove their children from school while the traveller children were in attendance (Home, 2012). Anderson and Tighe (1973) argue that Gypsy travellers' children were actually discouraged from attending school and socialising with local children in order to protect their cultural identity implying that their culture is superior. Lloyd and Mc Clusky (2008) agrees suggesting Gypsy Travellers are often seen to use their culture as either a barrier toward the provision of public services or an 'excuse' allowing them-selves to be excluded from the provision of education. According to Piper and Garrett (2005) Gypsy Travellers failure to participate in education is as a result of their culture. However, Lloyd and McClusky (2008) argue this failure is multi-layered suggesting the education failure within the Gypsy Traveller community is due to the 'institutional racism' of schooling. Many Gypsy Traveller families have different experiences and views on the relevance of schooling, and many prefer to educate their children at home. While in comparison there are those who value their child's schooling and readily encourage their children to attend school (Padfield and Jordan 2004). Much of the concern for schooling is derived from a need to preserve their cultural and family values, Lloyd and McClusky (2008) argues these deep-rooted values encapsulate a fear of outsiders, especially within a school environment. Many Gypsy Traveller children experience bullying, particularly in secondary school, often experiencing name calling and physical abuse. According to Padfield and Jordan (2004) these experiences in turn become deep-rooted within their culture as they are handed down through generations. A young traveller boy cited in McKinney (2001) recounts his school experience "I had a teacher who used to pick up my book as if it was dirty" continuing that once his peers discovered he was a Gypsy they would call him names such as 'tinker' and

‘Gypso’ and would no longer play with him. A recent study compiled by Kings Collage London looked at the underrepresentation of Gypsy Travellers accessing higher education shows there has been little improvement over the years. They suggest there continues to be a reluctance for Gypsy Traveller children to access education, and those who do have a low G.C.S.E pass rate (Mulcahy, *et al* 2017).

Gypsy Travellers are said to be in the poorest health compared to all other minority groups in the UK (Cleemput 2012). According to Allerbury (2010) this is because the Gypsy traveller community frequently face barriers when needing to access health care, registering for GP services when needing to receive provisions such as immunising children or maternity care or healthcare in general are often left until their situation has become critical. Allerbury (2010) suggests a lack of communication is one of the main causes, explaining how many gypsy travellers struggle with filling in forms and having the ability to provide adequate proof of address, further suggesting the discrimination towards this community is unacceptable when needing to access health care. Van Cleemput (2012) accuses the Gypsy Traveller culture of dictating how travellers should assess health care, suggesting it causes them to be reluctant to access health care for as long as possible, with this then having a detrimental affect on the community. According to Allerbury (2010) these barriers are from within the healthcare service due to the prejudice perceived regarding Gypsy Traveller communities, who are often referred to as ‘Roadsters’ and the common misconception that they are ‘difficult’ to deal with or are ‘troublemakers’. This leads to many preferring to access health care through Accident and Emergency departments. Van Cleemput (2012) agrees further, suggesting that Gypsy Travellers view society as being hostile towards them, perceiving themselves as being treated with hostility. Two cultural traits described in Andersson and Tighe (1973) when providing medical care was how gypsy women needed to ‘display high levels of vanity’ and a need for modesty are still hugely relevant in more recent years. This can cause extreme anxiety for Traveller women, they are notoriously obsessed with personal hygiene and cleanliness, and due to shame and modesty it would be unacceptable for a woman to discuss ‘women’s problems’ with a man (Van Cleemput, 2012). There is a truly relevant gender divide within the Traveller community and a belief that it is unacceptable to discuss health care issues with strangers (Allerbury, 2010).

Despite their strong culture Corbett (ND) argues Gypsy Travellers are severely misunderstood becoming stigmatized and shunned from society. It can be seen that Gypsy Travellers have always been the victim of stigma, Goffman (1968) defines stigma as a “physical or social

attribute that devalues someone's social identity disqualifying them from social acceptance". This quote shows intense labelling, which provokes a sense of humiliation for those who are victims of stigma. For Gypsy Travellers who have suffered years of being stigmatized, this goes some way to explain why they chose to live a private life away from society, in order to protect their families from the 'outside' world where they appear to be despised (Slattery, 2003). ni Shuinear (1997) questions if Gypsy Travellers are stigmatized as a result of then travelling from place to place. However, Vanderbeck, (2003) disagrees arguing that the Gypsy Travellers who chose to settle in one place and live in a house still face to same stigma, further suggesting that the stigma is attached to their ethnicity. According to Richardson, (2006b) the negative discourse or 'othering' of Gypsy Travellers is more prominent within society than other ethnic minority groups, thus enabling discriminatory practice of questioning Gypsy Travellers position within society, arguing that media and political institutions are complicit in the stigmatization. This stigma James (2020) argues is the reason many Gypsy Travellers are increasingly becoming the victims of 'hate crimes' and are victimized on the basis of their identity. Further arguing that many of these crimes go unreported due to the resilience and culture of the Traveller community. 'Hate crime' has recently evolved from petty vandalism to being conducted online, according to *The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers* (A.C.E.R.T) online 'hate crime' has they believe increased dramatically since Brexit with their support site receiving 400 complaints within one year.

When using a cultural lens, it can be seen that all cultures are relevant within social interaction, Erikson, (1995) argues that ethnicity is synonymous with culture, claiming it is a communication of distinct different cultural groups. A failure to recognise that there are many dimensions of culture risks, emphasizing that cultural differences influence social identity. Every culture has different social grouping, each with their own distinctive cultural attributes. This cultural background influences many aspects of people's lives and behaviours impacting family structure (Erikson, 1995). The Gypsy culture is one that has evolved over years spent travelling the roads, self-employment persecution and miss-trust of authority. As (Cassin ND) suggests this discrimination imposed on gypsy travellers through their culture differences has encouraged feelings of shame and humiliation within their communities. Miller (2011) argues culture allows each new generation to learn from the previous, providing gypsy travellers with a lens through which they can make sense of the world around them. Through their culture, the Gypsy traveller community create strong bonds, simply having the use of the caravan sites that have been used for generations previously creates a sense of belonging.

There is evidence to suggest the Gypsy Traveller language originated in India, Wayrauch (2001) suggests that over time and as Travellers roamed the world, the language became mixed into the accent they use today. Their language and accent are very distinctive often resulting in their needs becoming confused. According to Scott and Marshall (2009) language is “any verbal or non-verbal communication by humans, animals or machine”. The language of school, however, has been an obstacle to the education of migrant, and minority children. These children are said to be disadvantaged by not growing up with the standard dialect of the language that is preferred within the mainstream population, including teachers and students (Matras, 2005). The linguistic complications of the original Roma Gypsy Travellers language were developed due to the language itself not being spoken, however, Gypsy Traveller communities are all familiar with the vocabulary. Matras (2005) argues the Gypsy language is a ‘grammatical paradigm’, as the language of Roma Gypsy is a mixture of separate entities, suggesting that the Roma language has evolved through years of tolerance as a communicative necessity to sell their wares, become employable and access health care. According to Willems, (1997) the Roma language is inadequate, he believes their language is only used to their advantage and when there is a need for political gain or to enclose themselves from others keeping themselves exclusive. Gypsy Travellers language changes according to their native ethnicity, the English Gypsy Travellers language is called Angloromani, it is also referred to as a ‘Pidgin’ language (Bakker 1994). According to Pickard *et al* (2013) ‘pidgin’ refers to when the language is simplified with a “loss of grammatical inflection and morphosyntax”. Created through ‘inter group’ communication and the learning of a separate language, Angloromani has become an admixture of Romani and the absorption of the local dialect.

The Dale farm eviction case was supposed to be about homes that had been built illegally, being erected without being passed through the relevant planning laws, however, it became so much more than that. The eviction they experienced consisted of ownership and use of developmental land. Although the gypsy travellers owned the land, the local public authority argued that the eventual planning application could not be approved due to possible urban regeneration in rural areas. This resulted in the travellers being denied access to their land, concluding that securing the land for nature was of greater importance than the owners’ rights to their property and family life (Home 2012). Within *Caravan Sites Act (1968)* local authorities became required to provide “adequate accommodation for Gypsy’s residing in their area” and to “make adequate provision of gypsy sites”. This was abolished in the *Criminal*

Justice Act (1994) who decided to remove the “designation of adequate area” section from the Act. The response from the Gypsy Traveller community was to buy their own land and take their chances with the planning (Home 2012). The Gypsy Traveller community was of the opinion they were entitled to live on the land they owned, or occupy land that met their needs, resulting in deep cultural conflict and proving that they view themselves as an elite (Everton, 1975). This was supported by the *European Courts of Human Rights*, who confirm Gypsy Travellers as a minority group and special consideration should be made in regard of their different lifestyle, however, this continuous conflict led to a government review and the implementation of the *Housing Act (2004)* which required a review of Gypsy Traveller sites.

Dale Farm demonstrates how the Gypsy Traveller community suffered greatly at the hands of local and national Government, however, some would say they deserve it. Quarmby (2013) spent much time in the local village discussing the eviction, she found many local residents were unhappy with the settlement, comments such as “who wants to live in a village that is ruined” and “people feel intimidated, some won’t speak up against them” was another, with a large amount complaining of anti-social behaviour, drunkenness and dangerous driving at the top of their lists. Anderson and Tighe (1973) agreed, arguing gypsy travellers are restricted by their own culture and a refusal to accept authority, further suggesting Gypsy Travellers struggle to integrate into society is their reality associated through their own ethnocentricity, claiming they encounter many problems in society due to their own prejudices and struggles to comply with regulations. According to Quarmby (2013) professionals suggested they had difficulties working with the Gypsy Travellers as they had little regard for regulations and were on occasion ‘light fingered’. In comparison to the negativity that Gypsy Travellers receive, Corbett (ND) explains that family is a great source of pride within the community, older members are well cared for rather than put into residential care. Another way the families support each other is by encouraging the boys to accompany their father to work in preparation for learning the trade (Quarmby 2013)

To conclude as an ethnic minority group, Gypsy Travellers have suffered much discrimination over many years for being what society considers to be different, described as one of ‘acceptable hatred’ Clempit, (2010). It can be seen through the Cabinet Office (2018), Gypsy Traveller children are amongst the poorest performing in education, some reasons behind this have been explained through their exclusion and cultural differences. Their lack of education

has created a divide socially with other cultures. Having a separate language separates the cultures, with the suggestion that the use of this language is one of convenience that is only used to their advantage. Rebuilding trust is vital and a need to find more trusted pathways are needed when dealing with 'close nit' communities, suggesting once one member has a bad experience, this news soon spreads throughout the community having a detrimental effect. As a community, the gypsy Travellers are hugely driven by their culture, as this essay explains, this deep culture has become a barrier when there is a need to access health care. Conclude that much of the problems this community has suffered is of their own doing, they suggest it is their culture that stops them going to school and it is their choice to attend the local Accident and Emergency department, when they could access health care in their local Health centre. It can be seen what is valued by one culture may not have a value to another, however, learning is connected to one's culture and the situation of where it is learned, passed down through generation to generation the adults connect to their children through generations of history. It can be seen that there is a connection between the Gypsy Traveller community having a poor education, when common problems are analysed in regard to the struggles they experienced with medical forms and understanding the formalities of the planning application forms and its repercussions. "The principle behind ethnocentrism lies in creating a single fixed and unifying in-group identity through exclusion and hostility to other cultural groups" (Edwards, 2005). we The Gypsy Traveller community have suffered over many years of stigma that has shaped their feeling of exclusion. The Dale Farm is a prime example of their ethnocentrism, they believe it is acceptable to live as they please regardless of the repercussions, these same beliefs are handed down through generations.

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