

Necropolitics and Necroresistance: A Qualitative Research with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Authors.

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Abstract

In this article based on participatory research, we demonstrate how members of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma communities experienced the pandemic during a period of increasing criminalisation. Our investigation of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic among community members was enriched by having a criminologist from a Gypsy/Traveller background as part of the research team. The rich data gleaned during interviews provided insight into the broader context of the lives of Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma communities during the pandemic. Using Mbembe's theory of necropolitics to consider how these marginalised communities were experiencing the pandemic, we illustrate *necroresistance*, small acts of resistance to the pandemic and Governmental responses by communities and individuals. This article explores how individuals took responsibility for their families and broader networks' survival during the pandemic in conditions exacerbated by escalating systemic hostility.

Introduction

In 2021, the National Institute for Health Research Policy Research Programme funded a research project to explore the experiences and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic among members of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and migrant workers in precarious employment. The Dialogue, Evidence, Participation, and Translation for Health (DEPTH) research team undertook participatory qualitative research with community members to gain insights into their responses to COVID-19, focusing on testing, contact tracing, and vaccination. The main health-related findings from the work are published in a report "Routes: New ways to talk about COVID-19 for better health" (Marston et al., 2022) and several journal articles (Kühlbrandt et al., 2023; Renedo et al., 2023; Miles

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et al. 2023). This article discusses findings that came to light during the interview phase because of the inclusion of a criminologist from a mixed Traveller/Gypsy background, thus providing crucial insights into the lives of marginalised communities who were experiencing increased criminalisation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Including a criminologist from a mixed Traveller/Gypsy background with close family ties to her community and familial connections to Roma community members enriched the research team's participatory and interdisciplinary nature, which included researchers with backgrounds in sociology and public health. The richness of the data discussed in this article demonstrates that researchers from marginalised backgrounds with connections to the communities they research are better positioned to access hard-to-reach data than researchers who do not share commonality with the communities they are studying (Zavella 1996; Zinn 1979). The inclusion of a researcher from a shared background highlights the importance of including marginalised researchers in all stages of research to allow "new perspectives from previously obscured angles" (Hall and Winslow 2015, p1) to facilitate greater insight into complex underlying structures that are systemically and inherently harmful (Hall et al., 2020, p5).

Criminalisation and COVID-19

According to Achille Mbembe (2003, p49), his theory of necropolitics compensates for what he describes as the inadequacies of Foucault's theory of bio-power to account for "forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead". Mbembe (2019, p34) describes democracy as having a history of consigning marginalised populations to racially stigmatised and stigmatising liminal spaces that he describes as "outside social existence"; spaces he posits as both literal and figurative, situated at the very edge of life (ibid p96) and which he describes as "dead spaces". We posit that Gypsy and Traveller communities in the UK are being pushed into "dead spaces" by being subjected to similar marginalisation, exclusion and criminalisation as irregular migrants and refugees (Round & Kuznetsova-Morenko 2017; Davies, Isakjee, & Dhesi 2017).

The process of forcing groups and individuals into "dead spaces" results from power-infused, dynamic assemblages of institutions, policies, and social forces working in tandem to discipline and ultimately force populations into the margins (Grenfell et al., 2022). The notion of assemblages has been explored by Jagannathan and Rai (2022), who accuse the neo-liberal state of using the COVID-19

pandemic as an opportunity to marginalise and criminalise populations that exist on the margins of society to deflect from its abdication of responsibility in making healthcare accessible to vulnerable members of society. They describe necropolitics embedded in "neoliberal frameworks as states and corporations collude to create precariousness for marginal communities" (ibid 2022 p429). They argue that necropolitics is embedded both within the neoliberal state and on its margins, theorising that Mbembe's dead spaces within neoliberal economies are created through the structuring of precariousness, inequality, state violence, deregulation, the weakening of trade unions, and nationalism.

Members of the Roma community have long dwelt in Mbembe's "dead spaces", having experienced enslavement, ghettoisation, enforced assimilation, and genocide periodically during their 800-year history in Europe. Perhaps the most significant episode to date is the Holocaust of the twentieth century when a substantial proportion of European Roma was murdered (McGarry, 2017). James (2014, p242) describes the exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation experienced by Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities as part of historical "othering" processes that function to provide settled communities with an "acceptable scapegoat for their fears and insecurities" (ibid p237). According to James, the extreme levels of social harm experienced by the different communities are "multiple and varied, normalised and complex" (James 2020, p503). She (2014, p241) asserts that state agencies are complicit in the exclusion and social harm experienced by Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma, which is exacerbated by the racial hatred Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma experience due to public belief in stereotypes of their criminality, lifestyles, and mobility (James 2014, p242).

All communities we interviewed are currently over-represented in the criminal justice system, a "dead space" *par excellence*. The 2022 Bromley Briefing identified that 5% of men and 7% of women in prison said that they were Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller despite comprising an estimated 0.1% of the general population in Englandⁱ. More than one in seven children (15%) in secure training centres said they were Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller—over a hundred times their proportion.ⁱⁱ A further 8% of children in Youth Offender Institutions are also identified as Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller, and they are also over-represented in the care systemⁱⁱⁱ. In 2017, Gypsy/Roma children and those of Irish Traveller heritage were 2.55 times more likely to live in care than children from other ethnic groups (Brassington 2022). This situation has been exacerbated by the introduction of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSCA). An act that effectively criminalises Travellers/Gypsies who wish to pursue their traditional nomadic lifestyle. Part Four of the PCSCA changes "trespass" from a civil to a criminal offence;

Gypsy/Travellers stopping anywhere outside of government-endorsed sites are now breaking the law. The PCSCA carries a tariff of up to three months imprisonment, a fine of up to £2,500 and grants police the power to confiscate vehicles, including caravans, effectively rendering those prosecuted potentially homeless (Brassington, 2022).

Utilising the theory of necropolitics as a framework to highlight the marginalisation of the communities we researched through the lens of health provision during the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted an inherent weakness in Mbembe's (2003) theory. Namely, Mbembe's apparent assumption of a passive acceptance by those individuals and communities who find themselves in the dead spaces or that resistance, when Mbembe acknowledges it, is posited in terms of grand-scale resistance such as terrorism. This work draws from the work of Rodríguez Madera (2022) to discuss the notion of necroresistance and its manifestation in small but significant acts of resistance. A theory that is itself drawn from the work of Skorzak (2019), who argues that the strategies of survival and endurance in the necropolitical dead spaces are embedded in the everyday activities of those whose lives are considered "disposable".

Methodology

Between October 2021 and February 2022, RS and CK interviewed 45 participants who identified as either Roma, Traveller, or Gypsy or articulated that they identified as a combination of those ethnicities. A further two participants were later interviewed by a researcher who also identified as Gypsy/Showperson, bringing the total of participants to 47. The majority of Interviews (n.45) were conducted in person at locations convenient to the individual participants. Often, these were home spaces; we conducted interviews in people's apartments, caravans, and chalets. Sometimes, these were on private or council-owned sites; other times, participants opted to be interviewed on the premises of activist groups. All interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. We interviewed in five geographical locations across England (East, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and West Midlands). Interviewing in person allowed us to overcome restrictions placed on some communities by digital marginalisation and poverty and maximised the advantage of having insider researchers. Using technology would have diminished the ability to develop rapport and adhere to cultural observances. We often spent considerable time talking with participants about mutual connections and extended networks before interviewing, which would have been difficult with remote interviewing.

Responses to key topics, including COVID-19 testing, self-isolation, test and trace, vaccination, and demographic information, were explored via *a priori* questions. However, we allowed time within the interview setting for the organic pursuit of spontaneously shared data about participants' lives beyond COVID-19. We analysed the data using a combination of deductive *a priori* codes and inductive, thematic coding of issues that had spontaneously surfaced during the interviewing process. The team discussed preliminary findings with members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and community stakeholders in dialogue sessions and subsequent publications, which were circulated with community stakeholders and community members for feedback. What follows is a discussion of data revealed during the interview phase that fell outside of issues of testing, isolation, and vaccination, which are discussed in our other outputs (Renedo et al., 2023; Kühlbrandt et al., 2023; Marston et al., 2023; Miles et al., 2023).

It should be noted there was a heavy emotional burden on the insider researcher; the sometimes-extreme examples of marginalisation and criminalisation were often distressing, particularly for her, and gave rise to many discussions among the team about the researcher's positionality. The insider researcher deemed the opportunity to share the experiences of the communities she identified as belonging to was worth the emotional toll. The project highlighted for the team that employing researchers from marginalised communities, although vital, can be problematic for those researchers because of the additional emotional burden and the self-perceived weight of responsibility. Neither should it be assumed that the presence of a researcher from one of the communities that fall under the umbrella term Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller will facilitate equal access to all communities. Wherever possible, researchers from the separate communities should be included in projects to explore the very different issues experienced by the various communities. This approach will also challenge the problematic situation that sees these communities grouped under the initialism GRT as homogenous, thus disguising the different issues the separate communities experience.

Experiences of Marginalisation.

Participants described how, before the pandemic, they experienced levels of marginalisation and discrimination that resonated with James's (2014, p237) observation that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities experience some of the highest levels of discrimination in Europe. A seventy-year-old man responded "gyppo" when asked how he self-identified and discussed how he perceived he was viewed by society, "you're the manure pile of society, right? We're the shit of society". A sentiment

that his daughter, who was in her forties and who identified as a Traveller, expanded on when she described the marginalisation she experienced, "you get racism if you're a Traveller, you're a minority, you're labelled a lower class, that's the stigma that you're stuck with every single day, and you're not even allowed to break the mould". Their experiences highlighted the prejudice described as insidious and embedded in British society so that overt "vilification of Gypsies and Travellers remains routine across institutional, public and everyday settings" (Taylor & Hinks 2021, p269). A male respondent in his twenties who described himself as "Pikey, Gypsy, Traveller, whatever you want to call us...I live in a trailer" described his experiences shopping in the town close to the site where he lived "When you go into a shop, people can't half tell you're a Traveller, just by the way you look and talkso yeah, it's a bit shit going into the shops because everybody's watching you like you're shoplifting".

One woman who identified as Gypsy and Traveller described a Traveller Liaison Officer employed by her local council displaying overt hostility towards Travellers by denying their heritage.

She don't class my children as Traveller children; she classes them as Gorger [Non-Gypsy/Traveller] children, and I asked how are they Gorger children when they live with two relatives who are Travellers. It's their heritage, you know. When you come to the pitch now, if you apply, you've got to prove your status, that you've travelled for so many years or so many months, and once you've proved that you've travelled, once you move on here and you're settled, and you've got a mobile, [static trailer] they take that Traveller status away.

Before the pandemic, participants described culturally insensitive and sometimes discriminatory behaviour from individuals within institutions charged with supplying medical care. A female participant who identified as an Irish Traveller described how, when she was seventeen, her concerns about fertility were treated disrespectfully and dismissively when she sought advice after being diagnosed with a reproductive health condition that can affect fertility. Her GP told her to "come back when you want kids, which won't be long". She described how she felt her concerns were being disregarded because "they hear your accent; they don't take you seriously because you're a Traveller.... they think you're an Irish Traveller and you're ignorant".

Along with unsatisfactory medical care, interviewees discussed how they were marginalised and targeted by the police. One British-born woman who identified as both Gypsy and Traveller described being pulled over by police who claimed they had received an anonymous call that she was transporting drugs. She was not arrested or charged; the following incident occurred when the participant was in the car with her three teenage children.

They picked me up; they carried me across the road into the back of the van. They took me up to the police station and stripped me. I was embarrassed like hell cos I was on my period at the time. When they realised I had nothing, they searched my car, ripped my car to pieces, and stripped me naked; I was so embarrassed. And they didn't do it in a cell; they did it in an office room with cameras. I am scared to death that they got that on camera, you know. But they don't give a shit... left my three kids on the side of the road whilst they were searching the [car brand] and whilst they could take me to a police station and strip search me.

The levels of policing that participants experienced before the pandemic meant that for some, the COVID-19 lockdown offered a respite, and several described the lockdown as a favourable time because it allowed them to escape police attention. A female participant who also described herself as a Gypsy Traveller detailed the lockdown in positive terms, "I'm quite a homebody anyway, and to tell you the truth, I was quite glad we all had to stay in, my kids and me because I knew that they'd be safer in here than they are out there because of the police". Other participants also highlighted the benefits that they felt the lockdown facilitated. A Slovakian Roma woman told us how the lockdown had been a positive experience for her family, allowing her children to re-connect with cultural values she felt were being eclipsed by schooling; "it had some advantages, the kids were much cooler because when they're in school, they get crazy, but when they're home, they are taught their morals and standards of behaviour".

Marginalisation Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

While for some participants, the lockdown provided respite from interactions with hostile institutions, for others, the state-led responses to the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the marginalisation that Gypsy/Traveller and Roma communities were experiencing. One woman who identified as an English Traveller and who lived in a council property described how her neighbours used the police to harass her family: "I'm in a house now, they (neighbours) all kept on ringing up the police, and the police kept on turning up at my house". She further described how the police were continuously "turning up,

saying that there were people who shouldn't be in the property" despite only her family being present. She described police behaviour as somewhat contradictory, given that the police were not wearing masks on at least three occasions when they came to her home during the lockdown.

For participants living on council-run sites, the lockdown was particularly onerous, and one woman who described herself as being of both Traveller and Gypsy heritage shared that when her husband became seriously ill with COVID-19, the ambulance could not access the site because the fixed bars intended to keep out non-approved trailers could not be opened. Her brother cut through the lock with an angle grinder to allow the ambulance access. He has since been threatened with legal action by the Traveller Liaison Officer attached to the site where they both live. Another female Traveller described the experiences of her elderly father, who was hospitalised during lockdown because of an existing heart condition. She described how her frail 70-year-old father was forced to leave the hospital at 3 a.m. at the height of the pandemic. When he protested, police were called, and he was forcibly ejected from the hospital despite being unwell. Another woman who identified as an Irish Traveller described how her elderly father fell out of his bed while in hospital and was left lying on the floor. On another occasion, she described how, despite her father suffering from an acute bowel condition, he was left unattended and rang his daughter crying, "I've been ringing the buzzer for hours to go to the toilet, and they're not allowing me like they're just saying yeah, one minute we'll be over" he relayed that "they're just sitting there talking, he said they're not doing anything, no one's coming to help me".

While basic medical needs were not being met for some community members, others described increased hostility from police and other agencies. An English-born man who described himself as a Traveller described police harassment - under the guise of enforcing COVID-19 regulations - when attempting to comply with a police request. He described how he often acted as an appropriate adult for younger community members when the police arrested them. He described receiving "a £400 coronavirus fine from the courts" after a minor was arrested and the police contacted him to be the appropriate adult (a person over the age of 18 who needs to be present for the police to interview someone under the age of 17 or who is identified as vulnerable)^{iv}.

He got arrested, so they rang me up and asked, "Can you be his appropriate adult? Because I'm the one that does all the police station

for the younger lot. I've gone down to be his appropriate adult, I've got it on video, and then they've ended up pulling me over, they put the handcuffs on me, searched my car, and then give me a fine for breaching Coronavirus regulations. They've rung me and asked me to go down there, as well. Old Bill [police]rang me up and asked, "Oh, can you come down and be XXXX's appropriate adult, please? He's been arrested.

It is important to note that this occurred in a small town where the participant was known to the police as a community representative. A Slovakian-born Roma woman in her late 20s who had lived in the UK for 18 years described her experiences with immigration authorities during the lockdown. She had twice appealed a deportation order and had the order overturned by a judge. She had to travel to London frequently to report to immigration officials during the lockdown period because immigration elected to ignore the court order. She described the anxiety she experienced as a single mother with a young son: "I'm just waiting to see if the immigration is going to appeal the Judge's decision again". Not only was she facing leaving her son behind but her whole family, given that she had lived in the UK since childhood along with her extended family, "I'm thinking, like, oh, if they do deport me, what am I going to do? I haven't got nowhere to go; I don't know no one there. I can't even speak Slovak properly because we speak Gypsy".

Taking responsibility for family and community during COVID-19.

Participants spoke of shouldering the responsibility of ensuring that family members remained safe because government communications were inaccessible for some community members. A British woman who described herself as a Traveller explained the difficulties that COVID-19 presented for her family members. She highlighted internet literacy and communication issues when English was a participant's first language, but they had insufficient literacy to understand essential communications that could be vital to their continued well-being, a disadvantage exacerbated by digital exclusion; "My in-laws ain't got no one, no manner around technology whatsoever, and nor has our mum. My dad can't even text". An Irish Traveller woman described taking responsibility for ensuring that family members could access the pandemic-related resources they needed because she felt that if she did not provide the support they needed, it would not be met by the available government provisions.

I'm lucky enough. I can read and write, but my sister has dyslexia and didn't know how to book a test, so I had to do that for her. But what

about if I couldn't do that for her? She wouldn't know how to; she was confused about how to do everything, so I did that for her. My mother and father-in-law can't read or anything, so we booked for them. They've had their vaccine, they've had their booster and everything else, but I think, if they didn't have someone who could read and do things for them, they would be a bit, they would be a bit lost

of how to get a test.

Most people who participated in this study had been vaccinated at least once, and the rationale they supplied varied. Despite misgivings, participants described compliance with government mandates, with one of the justifications for compliance being the importance of fully engaging in the cultural aspects that form part of their identity. An English Gypsy/Traveller described how he chose to vaccinate because he wanted to move back from his council-owned flat to his family-owned site during the lockdown, "our dad and mum was refusing me to come on to the site; basically, if I didn't have it done, if I didn't get it done, they were saying, you're barred, you're not coming in. So, it was either not seeing everybody or getting jabbed up". The justification for being vaccinated that several Roma described was family-orientated and related to being able to travel to visit dispersed family members. A Slovakian male Roma participant in his mid-twenties who works as a cab driver described his decision to be vaccinated as being influenced by his need to travel and his responsibilities to his family. It was "purely because I wanted to travel; I travel a lot. Especially with my wife's family, all of them are in [country]. That's why I got vaccinated. Not because I thought, oh, it's going to save me".

Discussion

Including several social scientists in a public health research project that sought to understand the COVID-19 experiences and engagement with the COVID-19 public health response among members of some of the UK's most marginalised communities was further enriched by one of those social scientists being a criminologist of mixed Traveller and Gypsy heritage. This inclusion facilitated a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the life experiences and wider context in which the COVID-19 pandemic was situated for these communities. Their COVID-19 experiences must be understood through and against this broader context and life experiences. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and this research occurred at a particularly seminal moment for members of the Gypsy/Traveller community who wish to pursue a traditional nomadic lifestyle.

The PCSCA represents an attack on the culture of those wishing to pursue a traditional nomadic lifestyle. Preventing Gypsy/Traveller communities from pursuing traditional lifestyles by criminalising those who pitch outside of government-approved stopping spaces while simultaneously failing to provide adequate stopping spaces is likely to see members of the Traveller/Gypsy community being pushed deeper into the dead spaces of incarceration. Before the bill's introduction, Gypsies/Travellers in the UK struggled to find pitches. In 2021, 1696 households were waiting for pitches, but only 59 permanent and 42 transit pitches were available.^v Families without a pitch were forced to live on the roadside; the PCSCA now criminalises those families. The legislation affects at least 10,000 people, including a high proportion of children (40 per cent of the Gypsy/Traveller community is under 20).^{vi} Evading prosecution, for instance, by pitching in isolated spaces, leaves individuals and family groups vulnerable to health issues related to homelessness, e.g., violence and criminal victimisation, as well as health issues related to lack of access to water and other services. The criminalisation of the nomadic lifestyle and the lack of site provision for nomadic communities is likely to see family groups pitching up in places where they can evade detection, and that is likely to put pressure on the extended family networks on which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have traditionally been able to rely for care and support.

Sandset (2021) describes the pandemic as entangled with necropolitical factors that preceded the pandemic and that these existing factors added to the disproportional vulnerability of marginalised communities. Our research supports this observation; we heard accounts of the COVID-19 lockdown being experienced as a relief from heavy policing for some whilst exposing those on council-run sites to increased surveillance. It also highlighted that living in the physically marginal space of council-owned sites where mail and other services were not delivered, and ambulances could not gain access increased vulnerability. Our research has echoed the observation made by Howard (2021, p2) that COVID-19 has brought necropolitics out of the shadows, making visible who in society is expendable by exposing them to avoidable death through a lack of basic healthcare provisions. Our findings also resonated with the observations of Jackson (2013, p209), who describes the difference between those members of society who experience the state's biopolitical power and those who experience the state as necropolitical as affected by their status as "other".

Both Jackson (2013) and Mbembe (2019) concur that biopolitics and necropolitics are not oppositional; instead, they operate along a continuum, with one form of power (i.e., biopolitics) enabling the exercise of the other (i.e., necropolitics). Our research reiterates the idea of a necropolitical continuum. At one end of the continuum, we observed the biopolitical intentions of the

Government being experienced as necropolitical when participants described family members being unable to access COVID-19-related information even when widely disseminated. People unable to access state-disseminated information because of digital exclusion or lack of literacy were experiencing the state necropolitically. Information designed to protect citizens in the event of a pandemic or more mundane health issues leaves some bodies vulnerable to disease and potential death when they cannot access that information or distrust information generated by the Government. At the other end of the continuum was aggressive and targeted policing and the introduction of the PCSCA, which is likely to put traditional family networks under severe strain.

Helping family members understand government communications and other community responses to the pandemic (Renedo et al., 2023; Marston et al., 2023; Kühlbrandt et al., 2023) are examples of both a fight for survival and resistance. This form of resistance, ensuring that everyone can protect themselves by individuals taking responsibility for disseminating information, highlights one of the inherent weaknesses of the theory of Necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003). Mbembe appears to assume a passive acceptance of necropolitical conditions on the part of the individual or that resistance is expressed on a grand scale in the form of terrorism. Neither of these responses reflects the many incidents of micro-resistance that participants described to us. The term necroresistance responds to a reconceptualisation of resistance, which, instead of focusing on heroic or exceptional actions to challenge oppression, explores its manifestation in small but significant acts of resistance. Rodríguez Madera argues that necroresistance resides in the mundane manifestation of small acts and is where the transgressive nature of necroresistance is most evident (Rodríguez Madera, 2022).

Conclusion

Mbembe (2019,p.96) describes 'dead spaces' such as internment camps, reservations, and prisons as racially coded, stigmatised liminal spaces where the true nature of democracy is unmasked. In the dead spaces, biopolitics gives way to necropolitics because here, the state does not seek to protect life and, at times, facilitates death because democracy does not value the lives of those in the dead spaces in the same way as those citizens within the body politic. These are places where millions of people have been consumed by violence, overwork, and contagion but where some have survived and have done so through resistance. Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma people have long experienced life on the margins; their existence is a testimony to their ability to survive on the edge of society. We witnessed survival achieved through reliance on community and family ties rather than government assistance.

The resistance of the necropolitical state played out in small acts of responsibility, such as ensuring family members had the information needed to protect themselves from infection. One member of a network or family sharing information transmitted by government agencies in ways that were often inaccessible to communities that experience heightened levels of digital poverty and illiteracy could be viewed as an act of survival in a hostile environment. Small acts of resistance allowed the most socially excluded community members to access information that was beneficial but which they would have otherwise been excluded from if other community and family members did not support them.

The information that participants shared with us painted a picture of institutional assemblages, creating a situation where some participants we spoke with face a future where they risk being pushed deeper into Mbembe's dead spaces. Community members shared their experiences of heavy policing and inadequate and insensitive healthcare provisions, forming an assemblage of institutions that had already created a hostile environment before the pandemic. The hostility of the environment has been exacerbated by government responses to COVID-19, which our participants experienced in terms of aggressive policing, prevention of access to sites by ambulances and dissemination of health-related information in ways that were inaccessible. The introduction of legislation that criminalises the pursuit of traditional nomadic lifestyles along with a lack of provision of suitable stopping places exacerbates an already hostile environment, particularly when one considers the over-representation of the different communities in both the criminal justice and care systems.

Despite oppressive conditions exacerbated by governmental responses to COVID-19 and increased criminalisation for some participants, our research revealed necroresistance, rather than passive acceptance, in the acts of responsibility for family and other members of their community. In small but significant acts, necroresistance took place, participants getting vaccinated so they could continue to engage with their culture, ensuring that their relatives could take a test when testing information served to exclude those unable to engage. These are acts of resistance and survival, pushback against an assemblage of societal institutions that appear to be intent on pushing Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma communities beyond the margins of society and further into the dead spaces. However, necroresistance, not just to pandemics but to hostile institutional assemblages, may no longer be an option for nomadic members of the Gypsy/Traveller community, even on the micro level of communicating information to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. As their culture becomes

undermined by the PCSCA, even the micro acts of resistance that allowed community members to protect themselves and each other from infection may no longer be possible.

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Endnotes

ⁱ <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Winter-2022-Factfile.pdf> p.32

ⁱⁱ *ibid*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid* p.42

^{iv} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117682/appropriate-adults-guide.pdf

^v https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Briefing_Accommodation-issues-facing-Gypsies-and-Travellers-in-England.pdf

^{vi} <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/report-files/36005.htm>

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