

**Adaptable Public Services
Barriers to Service Access for Roma Communities in
Govanhill, Scotland**

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Abstract

This study explores how local services are addressing the needs and barriers Roma communities face in accessing services within the Govanhill locality in Glasgow, Scotland. Focussing primarily on the experiences of organisation staff working directly with Roma communities, this study centers around three key research enquiries: Firstly, we will aim to uncover what support staff perceive to be the barriers to Roma communities accessing their services. Secondly, we will explore the difficulties that staff experience in delivering services to Roma communities. Finally, we aim to understand the areas where service delivery has overcome barriers and is adequately meeting the needs of Roma communities. We begin by exploring who the Roma people are, their history, and the overarching prevalence of discrimination against the group. We continue by understanding the political initiatives and policies that have been developed in Europe to support the Roma. We then discuss the 'situation of the Roma' within a Scottish context and how this related to Roma communities in Govanhill. The study is conducted within a transcendental phenomenological research design of in-depth, semi-structured interviews following a qualitative methodology. Analysis of the research indicates that Roma communities are generally well supported in the area, but that there still exists extensive barriers preventing some Roma from successfully accessing basic services. These barriers include practical elements such as poor language and literacy skills, but also more complex issues such as a lack of role models and the impact of Brexit. We also examine positive ways that service providers are improving service provision for the Roma through innovative communication strategies and the inclusion of Roma voices in service development. This study concludes with a discussion surrounding the potential for further study on the topic, as well as recommendations for improved service delivery.

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Table of contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	4
Chapter 1 - Literature review	8
1.0 - Roma origin and global diaspora	8
1.2 - Roma and Gypsy Travellers	9
1.3 - Roma people - European perspectives	10
1.4 - The situation of the Roma in Scotland	15
1.5 - Mapping the Roma demographic in Scotland	18
1.6 - Roma in Govanhill and local perceptions	21
1.7 - Roma discrimination and antiziganism	25
1.8 - 'Folk devils' and Roma as 'the Other'	27
Chapter 2 - Research methodology	30
2.1 - Research Approach	30
2.2 - Research methodology	31
2.3 - Sample	34
2.4 - Strategy for analysis	37
2.5 - Strengths and Limitations	40
Chapter 3 - Research analysis and presentation	43
Introduction	43
3.1 - What do service staff believe to be the barriers faced by Roma people accessing services?	44
3.2 - What are the barriers that organisations face when delivering services?	48
3.3 - What are services doing to mitigate these barriers?	55
Chapter 4 - Conclusion	60
References	67

Introduction

This study explores how local services are addressing the needs and barriers Roma communities face in accessing services within the Govanhill locality in Glasgow, Scotland. Having migrated to the area after the ascension of many Eastern European nations in the early 2000s, local services in the area have had to adapt and evolve to meet the unique service needs of the Roma communities. This study focuses primarily on the experiences of support organisation staff working directly with Roma communities and centers around three key research enquiries: Firstly, we will aim to uncover what support staff perceive to be the barriers to Roma communities accessing their services. Secondly, we will explore the difficulties that staff experience in delivering services to Roma communities. Finally, we aim to understand the areas where service delivery has overcome barriers and is adequately meeting the needs of Roma communities.

With the expansion of the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2006 respectively, many Eastern European nationals migrated into central Europe and the United Kingdom (UK) in the hopes of finding better living and working opportunities. Amongst these were a significant number of Roma who face hardship and discrimination in their home nations. Roma prejudice has not, however, been limited to origin countries, but continues to prevail wherever groups settle and has in recent years sparked debate, policy change, and the emergence of many organisations supporting integration efforts. Research addressing the measures of Roma integration within Scotland have been conducted

primarily with the purpose of demonstrating empirical data exhibiting comparative levels of success across standardised evaluative frameworks. This study aims to observe the 'situation of the Roma' from within a qualitative transcendental phenomenological framework to extract experiential evidence of the impact of Roma integration efforts from the perspective of support organisation staff within the City of Glasgow locality of Govanhill where Roma people make up over 45% of the population (SCRJG, 2016).

This paper begins by considering the theoretical knowledge that already exists within this subject area with the purpose of positioning the study within an appropriate contextual framework. We will start by outlining who the Roma people are, from where they originate, and identifying the locations of their diaspora. We will also address the nuances within Roma people and their cultures, as well as the distinction between Eastern European Roma and the British Gypsy/Traveller communities. We will additionally map how Roma people have experienced marginalisation, discrimination, and persecution throughout history; from slavery and indentured servitude, to mass genocide and systematic oppression. With history as a backdrop, we will then view the '*situation of the Roma*' from within a European policy perspective, and continue on to understanding the migration patterns and policy surrounding Roma communities within Scotland. By analysing existing studies conducted on Govanhill's Roma diaspora, we will recognise areas of research saturation and thereby identify where further study may be required. This chapter concludes with the theorising of Roma people within the discourse of Cohen's classic study of *Folk Devils*, and Hegel's philosophical work of '*the Other*'.

Chapter two will continue with a reflexive discussion of the transcendental phenomenological methodology employed during this study, beginning with a clear outline of the methods used. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were identified as the most appropriate research tool for this study, and an analysis of how participants were recruited through a 'snowballing' technique is discussed. This is followed by a discussion surrounding the dynamics and execution of the interviews within the context of researcher and participant, as well as a practical description of the chosen approach. Next, a description of the participant sample is given, accompanied by a description of the organisations and professional roles of the participants, as well as a thorough synopsis of how the research data is analysed through the use of qualitative tools such as '*horizontalisation*', '*clustering*', and '*textural descriptions*'. Finally, we will consider the entire methodology within the context of the research subject by reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the methods applied in this study.

The analysis of the research data is presented as a combination of generalised experiences and *in verbatim* quotes chosen from the interviews. This complementary approach is chosen to provide the reader with both an analytical understanding of the wider themes emerging from the data, as well as an insight into the experiences and terminology used by the participants as they occurred. The data analysis is presented within the premise of the three areas of inquiry identified above, with a particular focus on participant experiences, and the relationship between staff, the delivery of the

service, and the Roma clients. A further discussion of the data and wider implications is held within the final concluding chapter of this study.

Chapter 1 - Literature review

1.0 - Roma origin and global diaspora

The Roma people are a traditionally itinerant Indo-Aryan ethnic group, primarily residing in Europe and the Americas and are widely thought to have originated from the northern Indian subcontinent regions of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan, now modern day India (Broughton, et. al. 1999; Hancock, 2002; Goldberg et. al., 2015). Genetic findings reveal that the Roma left northwestern India and arrived in Europe approximately 1,000 years ago (Kenrick, 2007).

Recorded in over 30 countries across Eastern, Southern and Northern Europe, Central Asia, Southern Africa, and North and South America, Roma people exist within many subgroups and cultures. In many countries the exact number of Roma people is an estimation due to many Roma people choosing not to register as such due to fear of discrimination and persecution (Chiriac, 2004). In some cases descendents of Roma people have intermarried and no longer identify as Roma, and in other countries it is impossible to know how many Roma people reside there as population data is not collected by ethnicity. Therefore, census records of Roma populations can vary wildly. In Europe, for example, official numbers vary between 3.8 million to as high as 14 million, making Roma people the largest ethnic minority in Europe (Pan, et. al. 2003; Council of Europe, 2007; FRA, 2019).

The name *Rom*, meaning man or husband, is widely accepted as a common origin by many Roma subgroups to distinguish themselves from *Gadjo*, or non-Roma (Hübshmanová, 2003). Derived from the word for 'black' in the Roma language, Romanes, *kalo* or *calo* is additionally a common name. Another possible origin of the Roma ethnonym is from the Sanskrit word *doma*, meaning a member of a lower caste of travelling dancers and musicians (Fraser, 1998). The English term *Gypsy* or *Gipsy*, the French term *Gitan*, and the Spanish word *Gitano*, stems from the debunked belief that Roma people originated from Egypt, however, this is a misnomer that continues to live on (Soulis, 1961; White, 1999). The wide use of terms such as *Gypsy* is believed by many to be pejorative due to its association with illegality and irregularity (Randall, 2013).

1.2 - Roma and Gypsy Travellers

When speaking about Roma people in Scotland, it is important to do so without mistaking their identities as that of the Scottish Gypsies and Travellers. In today's Scotland there are groups who are self-described as Gypsies, Travellers, and Scottish Showpeople who, although similar to the Roma, are by no means one homogenous entity, but rather are a collection of communities with rich variation in culture and history. Within each of these groups are a multiplex of attitudes and varying levels of association to the wider Roma diaspora. A report mapping Roma diaspora in Scotland indicates that these groups generally tend to rebut any linkage with the recent Eastern European Roma migrants, with many Scottish Gypsies and Travellers challenging the assumption that they fall under the 'Roma' category (SCRJG, 2016).

Additionally, there are some strong objections to using 'Roma' as an overarching nomenclature to encompass Scottish Gypsies and Travellers in official policies and programmes. Scottish Gypsies and Travellers have a faceted history of fighting to be considered as an official minority group in Scotland. This battle may contribute to their dislike of being referred to as Roma. It is therefore imperative that discussions concerning the appropriate defining of these groups in Scotland, and further afield, continue (Shelter Scotland, 2019). Within this research study all mention of Roma will be in reference to Roma people who have migrated to the United Kingdom as a result of the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2006 unless otherwise stated.

1.3 - Roma people - European perspectives

There is an estimate of up to 14 million Roma people living in Europe, making them the largest trans-national minority group (Pan, et. al. 2003). Roma people in Europe frequently face discrimination, intolerance, prejudice and social exclusion within their daily lives (Sime, et. al. 2014). Across many EU Member States, Roma people live in extremely poor and marginalised socio-economic conditions. The discrimination they face often results in living situations of deep poverty and limited access to acceptable healthcare and housing. For example, many Member States have reported how Roma people live in housing that is substandard, overcrowded, lacking in access to basic sanitation and utilities, and is often segregated from the general population. A combination of poor education and discrimination in the labour market has also led to high unemployment and Roma people working low skilled and low paid jobs (Sime,

2015). This is particularly concerning given that Roma people represent a size-able portion of working age adults and that their relatively young demographic suggests this proportion is likely to rise. Due to the vulnerable position of Roma people, women and children are also at risk of exploitation, violence, and trafficking (The European Council, 2009).

These issues have raised significant political attention from the European Commission and other political bodies. Within the Europe 2020 Strategy, Roma inclusion is a prioritised goal and has been agreed upon by all institutions of the EU (European Union, 20113). The strategy provides particular impetus to fighting social exclusion and poverty by aligning common targets between member states. These include:

- Increasing attainment of basic education and employment levels;
- Reducing the number of Roma pupils leaving school ahead of completion;
- Reducing the number of Roma people at risk of social exclusion and poverty;

As such, Roma inclusion is deemed to be an essential target for the EU and its Member States. The strategy implies that each Member State is required to have inclusion of Roma people as a priority in their Partnership Agreement. Since, each Member State has developed and submitted national strategies outlining how they will proceed and find sufficient funding (whether EU, national or other) in order to achieve wider EU goals of Roma inclusion. At a high level, it is widely accepted amongst Member States that it is both a moral and economic imperative to actively work to integrate Roma people

(SCRJG, 2016). At a lower level, this directive will require a fundamental and deep change of mindset amongst wider society, but also with Roma people themselves.

A 2010 study into the costs of Roma exclusion by The World Bank concluded that the investment cost in Roma people was significantly smaller than the revenue it generated. The report stated that the economic and social arguments for the investment were too strong to be ignored (World Bank, 2010). Despite this, a follow up study published by the bank in 2019 concluded that a *“more integrated approach is needed to break down the numerous barriers that Roma face”*, such as better provisions of essential services, benefits, and interventions (World Bank, 2019). Monica Robayo points to major gaps between Roma and their non-Roma neighbors living within 300 meters of each other as evidence. Her concern arises from the fact that families living in such close proximity should have similar outcomes, which is not the case as seen by education and labor market indications.

Policies addressing Roma-specific issues have been in existence for a long time. The first EU Roma Summit held in 2008 was particularly significant due to the high number of top level European decision-makers in attendance. The event additionally was an inaugural moment in bringing both politicians and Roma activist organisations together to jointly work to overcome the racism, deprivation, exclusion and oppression faced by Roma people. The outcome of the summit was outlined as a set of 10 Common Basic Principles for effectively tackling the exclusion of Roma people across Europe, with the purpose of guiding EU Member States in designing and implementing new policies and

projects. These 10 basic principles include (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (European Commission), 2010):

1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies
2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting
3. Inter-cultural approach
4. Aiming for the mainstream
5. Awareness of the gender discrimination
6. Transfer of evidence-based policies
7. Use of European Union instruments
8. Involvement of regional and local authorities
9. Involvement of civil society
10. Active participation of the Roma

The enlargement of the EU in 2004 has changed the profile of Roma policy significantly. A wide range of EU policy frameworks, key EU documents, new institutional mechanisms, European Commission Communications, European Council Conclusions and European Parliament Resolutions have been developed specifically addressing Roma people. Challenges lie in getting to a position where the exclusion and segregation of Roma people is widely acknowledged by key policy makers in the EU, and in international organisations more generally, is a hard and onerous process (European Commission, 2014). Such work demands a large effort and places a huge

strain on community organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the countries where Roma people are facing the biggest disadvantages (SCRJG, 2016).

Much of the work aimed towards generating Roma-friendly policy still lies in better educating policy-makers in the non-homogenous nature of Roma people. Doing so highlights the interconnectedness and complexity of Roma people and underlines the often intergenerational levels of discrimination and exclusion they face. Unfortunately, this process is demanding of the time and resources of civil activist groups, and reports indicate that very little has changed in the living conditions of Roma communities. For the majority of Roma people living in Europe today, very poor living conditions, social and economic exclusion, racism, and health disparities have not improved. In the most extreme cases, the situation has continued to decline.

Since the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, the Western European Member States have more or less viewed the receding conditions of Roma people with contempt (Saul, N; Tebbut, S, 2005). For many Western states, the situation of the Roma was very much considered a problem of Eastern and Southern states. For more than ten years since the expansion of the EU, the 'situation of the Roma' has gradually been pushed to the forefront by Roma people increasingly choosing to reside in old EU Member States and exercising their rights (Euro Cities, 2017). Moving an entire family comes with significant challenges, and research indicates that it is not necessarily the poorest and most marginalised of Roma families who choose to move.

Often multiple push and pull factors combine to determine Roma people's choices in where to immigrate to, with the UK and Scotland being popular destinations for many. Evidence indicates that, generally, unacceptable living conditions and poverty are the push factors contributing to Roma people leaving their home countries, whilst a promise of better overall living conditions and job prospects are a major pull factor (FRA, 2019). Research conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights recognises that often times the pull factors are closely linked to the experiences of family members or acquaintances already residing in the destination country. The report notes that in some situations the pull factors may be as tenuous as a person hearing of someone's perceived success in an area, prompting the desire to move.

1.4 - The situation of the Roma in Scotland

Since the beginning of the century there has been a significant increase in Roma people settling in Scotland. The largest migration numbers were observed as arriving from Eastern Europe at the point of the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and again in 2006, however, it must be acknowledged that some Roma people have resided in Scotland for much longer, with some having escaped prosecution and discrimination in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (SCRHG, 2016). This demographic predominantly arrived in the UK seeking asylum protection from 1989 and onwards. In response to this, Scotland's government has outlined its own chapter in The Europe 2020 Strategy Partnership Agreement that states Scotland's funding requirements for addressing the long-term challenges facing Roma integration (Scottish Government, 2013).

The accession of the A8 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) in 2004 and the A2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania) in 2007 generated a larger demand to migrate to the UK than was anticipated, with some migrants from these countries identifying as Roma. With initial restrictions on A8 and A2 countries, allowing entry to the UK but with 'no recourse to public funds', many arriving from these countries were not able to take up legal employment or have access to welfare benefits (Shelter, 2019). Conditions for remaining within the UK were determined by a person's ability to be 'self-supporting', something that has been shown to have negative implications for many A8 and A2 nationals. Restrictions on A8 and A2 countries have since been removed in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

According to a 2013 report by Glasgow City Council (GCC), the conditions in which many Eastern European Roma in Scotland are living in today, are similar to those which inspired the European Commission's 2020 strategy (Glasgow City Council, 2013). For example, the report states that Roma people tend to live in large family groups in overcrowded accommodation often lacking in basic sanitation and without adequate connections to local education, health and other basic services (p.12). When interviewed, many Roma people said they tolerated such conditions as they were an improvement on the ones they suffered in their country of origin. As such, the main barriers faced by Roma people and the municipalities they live in tend to fall within a familiar four areas: housing, employment, education, and healthcare. As is anticipated,

these areas are deeply complex and interconnected, and have been shown to impact negatively on public perceptions of Roma people (p.21).

The result of these intersectional barriers to accessing an adequate quality of life is a vicious cycle of poverty that is cross-generational, which in turn catalyses wider social discrimination and further limits access to vital services, education, and employment opportunities. It is evident that there are multiple characteristics present within how Roma people are perceived that impact their standing in Scottish society. Within this context, Kimberle Crenshaw's (1989) work describing how multiple aspects of social stratification interlock to limit social and political equity is a useful framework to consider, with race and class being of particular interest. Crenshaw's concept links closely with the theory of internalised oppression commonly used within the social justice discourse. When considering the Roma experiences through such a lens, it is not surprising that some Roma people continue to live in poor conditions, or feel the need to turn to unofficial and unsafe sources for employment, or to participate in criminal behaviour to provide for their families, ensuing the negative stereotyping of the entire Roma population as a result.

In the UK, the National Roma Integration Strategy has been accepted by the European Commission, however, it fails to acknowledge the challenges emerging from the arrival of further Roma diaspora (The Scottish Parliament, 2013). The strategy places focus on Gypsy Traveller education policies, rather than highlighting the poor conditions in which Roma people migrating to the UK are increasingly facing. Additionally, the strategy does

not sufficiently address the specific situation of Roma people in Scotland, focussing predominantly on policies and interventions in England. This overview suggests there may be an underlying risk of Roma inclusion not being prioritised in the UK as a whole, something that is a particular area of concern in Scotland, who currently have no approved Roma integration strategy.

1.5 - Mapping the Roma demographic in Scotland

There are approximately 225,000 Roma people living in the United Kingdom and an estimated 5,000 Roma living in Scotland. Of the 3,500 Roma living in Glasgow, an estimated 3,000 live within the 0.82 square kilometer locality of Govanhill in the Southside of the city (SCRJG, 2016).

Few comprehensive studies of the lives of Roma people in Scotland exist. Published in September 2013, a report mapping the Roma communities in Scotland was produced by Glasgow City Council, with an updated report published in 2016. The report aims to provide evidence to better understand the service needs and demographic profile of Roma people in Scotland to illustrate how the objectives of the European Commission's Roma inclusion agreement have been applied. Contributing to the report is a mixed methods research methodology, including workshops, focus groups, and online consultations from across all 32 councils in Scotland. The report currently remains the only extensive study of Eastern European Roma in Scotland and, as such, significant findings of the report will be detailed within this section.

Significantly, the City of Glasgow overwhelmingly generated the largest response within the mapping report, with the majority of participants stating that they had direct contact with Roma people in the area of Govanhill in the city's Southside. Within other councils, respondents reported working primarily with Scottish Gypsies and Travellers, and may in some cases have misinterpreted questions to reflect the situation of the Gypsy/Traveller communities rather than the Roma (p.10). It is important to note that the information presented within the mapping report is based on incomplete responses and estimated figures, and therefore the actual geographical spread and number of Roma in Scotland is likely to vary from the published data.

Despite the several thousand Roma living in Scotland, the majority of councils in Scotland were unable to provide any or very little data on the Roma population, with many responding 'can't say', or 'don't know' across multiple questions. This may be attributed in part to a very low number of Roma people in the council area, or to the council having little-to-no contact with the community (p. 17). The report additionally indicates that there was a 'feeling' that numbers were increasing in the months leading up to September 2013 among those working closely with Roma people, indicating that even when accounting for out migration the number of Roma in Scotland is likely to be higher than the official number. Counter to stereotyped perceptions of Roma being a hyper-mobile people, the report highlights that the majority of Roma people in Scotland are 'settled' (p. 31). This is particularly true in Glasgow, but also within areas of Fife, Falkirk, and Lothian. Movement was reported to occur predominantly within a work

context, with evidence of daily travel from Govanhill in Glasgow to, for example, South Lanarkshire and Ayrshire to work in chicken factories and potato farms.

When considering responses from councils, most supported the principle of equal opportunity in access to services, but many appear not to be prepared to support the additional costs of tailoring services to support Roma needs, especially in areas where Roma populations were small. Not only does this attitude limit how Roma people access services, but it may additionally excentuate the discrimination they face. Something that is compounded further by the lack of information gathered about new arrivals settling in small communities. The Mapping Report states that some council employees identified new arrivals of Roma by “*seeing people [who they] assume to be Roma*”, prompting a significant need for these councils to work to include more Roma-specific training and policies into their operations (p. 15).

A particular area of intrigue within the report is the unwillingness of some Roma people to self identify as such (p. 17). Some families living in Clydebank, for example, did not self identify as Roma due to not wanting to attract attention to issues such as bullying or public harassment. In regard to the responsibility of the council, this point of view is problematic as it further perpetuates the councils inaction in providing proactive strategies to support Roma needs. With the exception of Fife Council who reported that the Roma population were “*almost fully integrated into the community*” the report indicates that across all councils the barrier to accessing services faced by Roma people are similar. If there is one fundamental take-away to be had from the Mapping

Report, it is the emphasis that for the majority of Roma families living in Scotland today, the biggest challenge is the daily struggle for equal and non-discriminant access to basic services.

1.6 - Roma in Govanhill and local perceptions

Within the City of Glasgow, the Roma communities reside predominantly in a concentrated number of streets in the area of Govanhill. Comprising predominantly of people from Slovakian and Romanian origin there are, however, other, smaller, groups of Roma coming from Poland, Latvia, Czech Republic, and Bulgaria. It is imperative not to view these multiple Roma groups as homogenous, and despite sharing many of the same needs, service delivery is required to take their differences into account. It has been identified that within the Slovankian Roma community that the majority of people have arrived predominantly from two towns - Michalovce and Pavlovce (SCRJG, 2016). Meanwhile, Romanian Roma tend to originate from the Arhad city in Bihar Province. Since arriving in Govanhill, some Slovankian Roma families are reported to have moved to neighbouring localities such as Govan, Ibrox, Springburn, and Knightswood, but also further afield to areas bordering the Glasgow council jurisdiction. This indicates that Slovakian Roma are generally better integrated than other Roma groups due to the additional time spent in the UK.

Due to its long history of migration, Govanhill is now regarded as the most ethnically diverse community in Scotland and within an area comprising of 13 housing blocks over 50 languages are spoken (p. 12). Although it was predominantly Roma families from

Slovakia and the Czech Republic who first moved to Govanhill in 2004-5, there are now other Roma communities settled in the area, such as Bulgarian and Romanian Roma who arrived in 2007-8 (Clarke, 2015). In its early days, Govanhill was already a popular destination for those seeking better opportunities. Beginning with the migration of Low and Highland Scots in the 1800s fleeing poverty, this was shortly followed by Irish immigrants from primarily Donegal (GCDT, 2019). The first and second World Wars brought Jewish, Italian, and Belgian refugees fleeing persecution, with economic migrants from the Punjab and other parts of the Indian subcontinent arriving in the 1950s. From 2000 onwards, new communities of former asylum seekers and refugees have settled in the area, including the majority of Roma communities. This history of migration has resulted in ethnic minorities comprising of up to 45% of the local population.

Due to barriers to accessing social housing, Roma people tend to reside in privately owned rental properties of which there is a high proportion in the area (Clarke, 2015). Significantly, Govanhill also has the highest population density in Scotland that compounds pressure on public services and the local environment. Difficulties that Roma people have experienced in settling in Govanhill are widely believed to have been made so by the inadequate response, and in some cases obvious discrimination, by the UK's public authorities such as The Department for Work and Pension (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), as well as local government departments in charge of administering welfare benefits (SCRJG, 2016). A 2011 research study in access to benefits and services for Roma Communities arriving in Glasgow undertaken

by Oxfam's 'Law into Practice Project' and the Govanhill Law Centre found that (Patterson, et. al., 2011):

- 53% of cases had been refused welfare benefits on the basis of an erroneous decision of a public authority body;
- 56% of cases were found to have an unreasonable delay in the authoritative body providing a decision that resulted in prejudice and detriment to the customer;
- No less than 44% of cases related to HMRC were dealt with without the customer's knowledge by the 'Compliance Team', resulting in further delays in claims for tax credits or child benefits;
- 23% of cases were subjected to further delays once a favourable decision was made (for example, after a customer had waited two years for a favourable decision to be made, a further four month delay was described before the initial benefit payment was received).

Evidence of discrimination against Roma people by HMRC and DWP was found to be contradictory to the values of the 2010 Equalities Act and contravenes the rights of Roma people under EU law. The implications of these failures and inactions have had real and lasting impacts on Roma people, with an increased risk of homelessness, destitution and poverty among the many consequences. Furthermore, a report on The Roma Community in Scotland published in 2016 describes how Roma people have experienced exploitation by non-Roma individuals from Slovakia and Romania also

living in the area (SCRJG, 2016). Such experiences have mainly been associated with individuals setting themselves up as agencies aimed at helping new Roma migrants by charging huge fees to register for work, national insurance, taxes, and other benefits. Often newly arrived Roma people are not aware that such services are provided free of charge by public and third sector organisations.

In 2016, 20% of the population in Govanhill comprised of self-identified Roma. The Roma Community in Scotland report outlines how the balance within the community has shifted since the Mapping Report was conducted in 2013. There has been an increase in Romanian Roma and a decline in Slovankian Roma - why this is the case is not described within the report (p. 22). This has additionally been observed by the Govanhill Community Development Trust, a local organisation, stating that their caseloads and participation in provision for the community appears to evidence this shift. A more up to date report on the situation of Roma people in Scotland was not found during this study, and it is likely that many aspects of Roma integration have changed since.

There are at least fifty organisations and statutory services available to the Govanhill population. The majority of the organisations are located within Govanhill, while others are located outwith the area boundaries but deliver services within. Collectively, the organisations offer an extremely broad spectrum of activities and services, such as, children's care and play groups, family support and advice, housing support, destitution prevention, community engagement, foodbanks, a community children's orchestra, bike maintenance classes, legal advice, language and work preparedness courses, and

much else. Of these, six organisations were identified as hosting activities and groups specifically aimed at addressing the needs of Roma children and adults, although it must be noted that it is highly likely that Roma people are accessing services with wider remits.

1.7 - Roma discrimination and antiziganism

The Roma have long been targets of discrimination, with numerous countries historically passing laws to suppress, enslave, and exterminate the Roma as far back as the 13th century. Many Roma activists assume terms such as *'antiziganism'* or *'antigypsyism'* to illustrate prejudice against what leading specialist on the Romani language, Hristo Kyuchukov (1962), describes as discrimination against the *'conceptual Gypsy'* - an opaque and often misinformed stereotype that is commonly projected onto the Roma (Allen, 2016).

Roma discrimination has been found occurring as early as the Byzantine times, in which early ancestors of modern day Roma were describes as *"wizards [...] who are inspired satanically and pretend to predict the unknown"* (Crowe, 2004). Whereas in the 16th century, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire saw Roma deemed as possessing *"no visible permanent professional affiliation"* despite their reputations as skilled craftsmen, musicians and soldiers. Since, the Roma people have been expelled from land, families enslaved, legislation passed against them, and often freely killed by ruling order (Achim, 2004; Crowe, 2014).

In recent history, the horrors of the Second World War resulted in what is called the 'Porajmos' ("devouring" or "destruction" in Romanes), or the Romani Genocide. The Porajmos has been described as one of the most deliberate acts of anti-ziganism in modern times (Davis, 2015). Occurring simultaneously to the efforts to exterminate the Jews, Nazi Germany classified the Roma people as "*enemies of the race-based state*" within a supplementary decree of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 (USHMM, 2011). The exact number of Roma people exterminated by the Nazi state is not known, but estimates range between 220,000 and 500,000 Roma, although some historians attest that the number killed may be up towards 1.5 million (Hancock, 2005).

Despite the introduction of stronger EU human rights frameworks, extensive policy efforts, and several large-scale and local initiatives, the majority of modern day Roma report experiencing targeted racism (Humphris, 2017). Factors such as discrimination, the current political and economic climate, a lack of positive visibility of Roma amongst wider society, and little-to-no engagement between Roma people and the general population have all been shown to contribute negatively to the perception of the Roma. A report published by Glasgow City Council (p. 9, 2013) notes that in countries "*where the concept of 'community engagement' is not well understood*" Roma people consistently report experiencing aggressive policies of zero-tolerance. This is particularly noted to be the case in new Member States where there has been a significant rise in reported anti-Roma sentiment, however, unreported cases are expected to be higher.

Regardless of whether Roma people have arrived recently or been present in a country for centuries, many factors that exclude Roma people from wider society remain largely the same. Roma people who are recently migrated often bring with them the impact of years of discrimination, exclusion, and poverty - factors that ultimately influence their attitudes and behaviours in their new location. These attitudes typically are manifested as a general lack of trust and reticence towards the wider population and in particular towards authority, public services and government. Often the burden of discrimination and exclusion is experienced regardless of where Roma people find themselves, and have a very real and significant impact on living conditions and life opportunities available to Roma people in receiving countries.

1.8 - 'Folk devils' and Roma as 'the Other'

Unfortunately, anti-Roma sentiment is present within the UK largely due to what Clark notes as *"national anti-Roma statements from 'moral entrepreneurs' such as politicians and newspaper commentators"* (Clark, 2015). Roma mothers in Manchester reported their constant anxiety and fear of their children being taken into care based on 'crude assumptions of racial profiling' by police and social workers, something that has been similarly reported by parents in Govanhill (Matras; Robertson, 2015). It is advisable here to reflect on Cohen's classic study, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), as well as Hegel's (1807) philosophical work on 'the Other', and what this may tell us about contemporary perceptions of the Roma.

In an ethnographic study on Govanhill conducted by Clark, 'soundbites' were collected from conversations with non-Roma residents. Whether their concerns were real or imagined, the perception of Roma presence in the area is overwhelmingly negative, with some conversations featuring such pronouncements as: "*They are probably all criminal*", and, "*This place is Ground fucking Zero [...] Govanhell*" (Clark, 2015). The language and terminology adopted to speak about the Roma in Govanhill appears to draw similarities to other areas in the UK where Roma have settled, such as in Page Hall in Sheffield (Shute, 2011). However, when viewed objectively, Grill (2012) argues that such claims are rarely supported by conclusive evidence by police or other statutory bodies who work with Roma communities in the area. This mismatch between evidence and fact, and the rhetorical power of such statements draws on some of the arguments of 'moral panic' presented by Cohen (1972).

Cohen argued that when an identifiable 'threat' occurs, whether real or imagined, a 'panic' is created that contradicts accepted societal norms and values. Such a 'panic' becomes the symptom of a national or localised 'concern' towards a group as being in some way detrimental to the 'good' of society. Often this concern is demonstrated through the hostile dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them', and is legitimized by the perpetuation of such hostile behaviour throughout all levels of society (Thompson, 1998). This public misconception between lore and fact brands the targeted group as what Cohen calls 'folk devils'. More often than not, the consequences of such branding is gravely disproportionate to the perceived 'threat' (Ben-Yehuda; Goode, 1994). Although Cohen's study was focused on the societal interpretations of 1960s British

youth culture, the theoretical framework from which his work is underpinned is arguably a useful tool for understanding the societal positioning of Roma communities in Govanhill. Particularly because, as Clark puts it, the Roma *“habitually face extreme scorn and contempt while doing little more than moving to Britain to improve their prospects”*.

Complementing Cohen is Hegel’s work on the concept of ‘Othering’. Hegel’s concept insists that *“any concept or identity requires the establishment of a distinct and external other against which it is defined”* (Sharpe, 2019), or, that identity is a manifestation of difference rather than unity. Othering is in direct opposition to ideas of identity being constructed through natural or essentialist definitions, instead viewing all identities as societal constructions. As such, Hegel argues that categories of identity are not timeless, fixed, or preexisting, but rather emerge from particular social environments and times. In Kligman’s (2001) paper *On the Social Construction of “Otherness”*: *Identifying “The Roma” in Post-Socialist Communities*, the author argues that there is typically a disjunction between those who are ascribed the identity of Roma and those identified as non-Roma. The ‘identities’ projected onto, but also often internalised by, the Roma are generally marked as negative stereotypes and may also be situationally variable, reinforcing Hegel’s theory. Kligman highlights that often Roma people are perceived as darker skinned than dominant populations amongst who they live, stating that *“to many, they are Europe’s “Blacks”*”, resulting in the identity of ‘the Roma’ being essentialised into a relationship between their purported ‘race’ and poverty.

Chapter 2 - Research methodology

2.1 - Research Approach

The scope of this research project is to better understand the experiences of support organisation staff in Govanhill in assisting Roma communities to access public services.

The research has been conducted with three questions in mind:

1. What do service staff believe are the barriers faced by Roma people accessing services?
2. What are the barriers that organisations face in delivering services?
3. What are services doing to mitigate these barriers?

This research is focused on staff within non-statutory organisations in Govanhill who work directly with members of the Roma communities, with a primary focus on individual experiences of service delivery. As such, this study is conducted within a transcendental phenomenology framework through the use of in-depth interviews with individuals identified through the use of '*snowballing*'. As highlighted within the literature review, previous studies on the Roma have centralised mainly on the difficulties Roma communities in Scotland have faced when accessing public services from a quantitative perspective, ie. the percentages of Roma within a council area; the number of Roma accessing public funds or social housing; etcetera.

Clark's (2015) study on moral 'othering' of the Roma is the closest example of a qualitative study aiming to examine the Roma experience, however, this was very much conducted with the exclusive intent of describing Roma 'othering' from the perspective of non-Roma individuals. No significant studies were found regarding the Roma experience of accessing public services in Govanhill, and no qualitative studies were found addressing the experiences of service staff working with the Roma communities.

2.2 - Research methodology

Developed within a twentieth-century philosophical movement, Transcendental phenomenological research is based on the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl, and allows for the researcher to delve into the perspectives, perceptions, and feelings of those who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon of interest. By studying the experiences of multiple participants, a researcher is able to analyse these experiences and draw out generalisations of what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon. Husserl promoted a "*returning to the self*", as Moustakas (p. 26, 1994) writes, "*to discover the nature and meaning of things as they appear and in their essence*". Strongly rooted in the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, researchers conducting phenomenological studies are typically interested in the lived experiences of humans, and as such the methodology lends itself well to the discipline of sociology.

Participants within this were recruited mainly through the use of '*snowballing*', and the majority were recruited by attending two monthly meetings hosted by the South East Integration Network - a collection of third sector organisations who work across the

South East of Glasgow. During these meetings, I was able to get a good understanding of the variety of organisations within the network and the issues they were tackling, as well as present my research intentions to the group. Both meetings were attended by approximately 30 individuals from about 20-25 different organisations. Attending the network meetings was the primary method used to recruit participants for interviews, and served particularly useful as participants recruited from the meeting were able to recruit for me additional participants. This tactic was applied for all successful recruitment with the exception of one organisation, whereby I attended the location of the organisation and requested to interview a staff member. Where necessary, I met up with and discussed my research intentions in person with potential participants in order to build up trust and rapport.

Prior to all interviews, participants were emailed copies of the research outline, as well as the consent form, and both documents were provided in paper format before the interview began. This was done to ensure to the best of my abilities that participants were fully aware of the intentions of the research, the research topic, and why they had been selected to partake. With the exception of one interview, all participants were interviewed in a comfortable and safe space within their organisations during business hours. Due to an adequate prior relationship having already been established with one of the participants, one interview was conducted within the participant's house as the participant sometimes chose to work from home. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to one and a half hours and was audio recorded using an application on my

phone, which the participant was made aware of prior to beginning, and placed unconcealed on the table.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the core method for conducting this research as it was deemed to be the most appropriate method for capturing the experiences of participants. Interviews typically began by asking the participant to introduce themselves and their role within the organisation. Although I had prepared some guiding questions within a notebook, these were used only to prompt certain topics that had not yet been covered. For example, if I felt that the conversation was moving away from how an organisation was addressing the needs of the Roma communities, I would ask questions such as, *“can you give me an example of how ‘X’ has impacted Roma people?”*, or, *“in your experience, what are the most common issues that Roma people come to your organisation for?”*, in order to recentre the conversation. The semi-structured nature of the interviews I experienced to be beneficial in many ways. Firstly, it allowed for conversations to flow more naturally and comfortably - unrestricted by a ‘shopping list’ of questions that had to be asked. Secondly, I felt that I was more easily able to build trust with the participant as I was allowed to share my own personality and anecdotes where appropriate which generated a more human engagement and equalised power imbalances.

There is a fine balance that must be managed by researchers in ensuring that research is conducted in conditions that are above all else safe and comfortable for the researcher and participant. It can be argued that safety and comfort are not just

elements of physical space, but also of behaviour, demeanour, appearance, and relatability between researcher and participant, hence an aspect of 'give and take' is often a useful tool for allowing participants to feel they can speak openly about a topic. Therefore, an aspect that contributed significantly to the success of the interviews was that I intentionally made participants aware that I was a resident within the area, without disclosing my full address. The disclosure of this and other low-risk personal information, helped to ensure participants that I not only held an academic interest in the subject, but also had personal buy-in as well. I hoped this would eliminate the image of the researcher as 'outsider', or my being perceived as taking advantage of the research subjects for the sake of achieving academic merit as much as possible. At the end of interviews I made participants aware that once transcribed, the word-processed documents would be emailed to them as a courtesy with the purpose of providing the opportunity for participants to make amendments or retract information they had disclosed during the interview.

2.3 - Sample

Within this study, eight interviews were conducted with nine participants across seven non-statutory organisations. The organisations included:

Organisation	Participant Roles	Number of interviews
Govanhill Housing Association /Govanhill Community Development Trust (GHA / GCDT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community development worker - ESOL teacher - Sustainable communities coordinator 	3
Bike for Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community cycling coordinator 	1
The Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community development worker (x2) 	1
Community Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community development worker 	1
SwapMarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shop manager 	1
South East Integration Network (SEIN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community development coordinator 	1
		Total interviews: 8 Total participants: 9

The sample was selected based on the criteria that the participants had experience working directly with Roma communities, or had extensive knowledge of how the organisation had developed their service provision to meet the needs of Roma

communities in Govanhill. Seven of the participants reported that their roles included direct contact with members of the Roma communities. Two participants reported that their roles involved the coordination of community development projects, including projects that involved Roma people.

The organisations from which the participants were involved included:

- **Govanhill Housing Association / Govanhill Community Development Trust (GHA / GCDT)** - GHA is owned and controlled by the community and GCDT is a subsidiary of the housing association that supports their community development and regeneration work (Govanhill Housing Association, 2019).
- **Bike for Good** - a cycling-specific organisation offering a range of services including bike training and maintenance classes, free bike lending, 'Bikeability' sessions in schools, and a weekly Kids Club (Bike for Good, 2019).
- **The Space** - a faith-based, Christian support organisation offering family support, community drop-in sessions, and community building and integration (The Space, 2019).
- **Community Renewal** - an anti-poverty charity working to enhance local assets by delivering a Roma employability project, a Community Canteen offering high-quality, multi-ethnic cuisine, and training individuals to become community activists and leaders (Community Renewal, 2019).
- **SwapMarket** - a community shop where locals can share ideas, resources, knowledge, cultures, and items without the need for money (SwapMarket, 2019).

- **South East Integration Network** - a network of community groups and organisations who work across the South East of Glasgow to deliver services and activities that promote diversity, support, and community integration (SEIN, 2018).

It must be mentioned that the original intention for this study was to include the experiences of both service staff and Roma people. The latter group, it was quickly found, was substantially more difficult to recruit for three main reasons: first, I had no pre-existing relationship with any individuals within the Roma communities. This raised concerns about the ethical impact of establishing relationships with individuals with the sole purpose of recruiting them as participants. Second, it became apparent when speaking to service staff that the language barrier would likely be a major challenge. Within the three month timeframe of the project it was unlikely that I would be capable of overcoming this effectively enough to conduct detailed interviews. Third, there was a personal concern for my comfort and safety. Within my role as both a resident of the area and as a researcher, I did not feel confident that my own right to anonymity and privacy would be kept intact.

2.4 - Strategy for analysis

As described earlier in this paper, primary data in this study was collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Despite a typically smaller sample size, phenomenological research tends to generate a significant quantity of data. Although phenomenology in its purest form attempts to simply describe the data, it is common amongst sociology researchers adopting the discourse to take a step further to explain and interpret the data, adding an interpretivist element. Not only does this approach allow the data to be used as a basis for theory, but it also permits the research to be

used in ways that may challenge structural or normative assumptions. Additionally, within this study, it may even be used to either challenge or support policies that are integral to the experience of the phenomenon being explored.

To begin my analysis interviews were first processed through a digital auto-transcription tool¹. The digital word transcription was then manually checked against audio recordings for correctness. This process allowed me to gain a first impression outside of the interview of what the participant had said. Transcriptions were done after each interview, therefore allowing me to get an understanding of new topics that were of relevance and should be explored with upcoming participants.

Once the interviews were completed, all transcripts were printed and carefully reviewed. I spent a significant amount of time reading and rereading through the material in order to get a feeling for what participants had said about their experiences of the phenomenon and how this may relate to the theoretical literature covered in Chapter 1. Following on from this, a process of '*horizontalisation*' was conducted whereby significant statements were identified within the transcripts that directly described the elements of the experience (Adams, p. 78, 2001). Adams describes horizontalisation as, "*dependent on our ability to identify and deal with our assumptions*", or in other words, our ability to view our participant through eyes other than our own is equal to its success. Through this, the emerging themes and topics were identified and written on Post-It Notes where they were organised into '*clusters*' of larger, overarching themes.

¹ The auto-transcription tool used in this study was 'Otter.io'.

Within the analysis of this data, it was important to keep the research organised.

Qualitative data is significantly more difficult to structure, as it often deals with multiple elements simultaneously rather than binary categorisation that is typical of quantitative research. A helpful tool that I applied to break down the data into broader categories was the use of '*codes*' to identify similar themes within the transcripts. Not only does coding assist in developing themes, but if the researcher is attentive to where their biases lie, it may help in making the process more objective.

Having identified initial themes, topics, and '*significant statements*' within the data, I was then able to dive deeper into the analysis of the research. By focusing my efforts on organising the data '*clusters*', I was able to draw out emerging themes to develop a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon. It is significant to mention that at all times the analysis approach should be fluid, following the natural course of the data and allowing directions to be determined by the process. It is important that the researcher considers all aspects of the data from multiple viewpoints. These may include things such as physical surroundings, the emotions being expressed, a person's belief or value system, or objects and people present during the interview. The aim of this exercise is to identify commonalities between participant experiences, something that can be challenging due to the nature of the data. A guiding rule that was followed at this stage was to consider that themes are elements of the experience being described that cannot be changed without losing meaning. If an aspect of the experience can be changed without the meaning being lost, then the aspect is not essential to the theme.

Coupled with the significant statements that were identified in the previous step, I was able to begin to write down '*textural descriptions*' of what I observed the participants experiencing. Also called '*imaginative variation*', textural descriptions were used to describe the context and setting that influenced how the participant experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This was applied first as an '*individual textural description*' from the context of each participant and was then combined to create a '*composite textural description*' in order to integrate all the experiences into a universal interpretation of the phenomenon. The textural descriptions within this study are represented as passages of text coupled with quotations evidencing *in verbatim* the experiences of the phenomenon.

2.5 - Strengths and Limitations

As with all research methodologies, a phenomenological approach has both its strengths and weaknesses. Overall, it can provide an insight into a rich and detailed human experience which is why many researchers choose to apply it. It offers a unique perspective of how someone perceives a phenomenon that is often detailed and profound. However, its success does, of course, depend on the articulateness of the participant, the objectiveness of the researcher, the acknowledgement and reduction of bias when interpreting the data, as well as other factors which will be discussed within this section.

Establishing a reliable and valid research design within a qualitative phenomenological approach that is purely objective is exceedingly difficult. The subjective nature of

phenomenological research lends itself to the interpretation of the researcher, making researcher bias extremely hard to detect by the reader, and demanding to mitigate by the researcher. This can be attributed to the typically small-scale set of interviews that are preferred as the individual experiences being explored is deemed more valuable than a larger set of data with responses to the same questions. This means, however, that a quantitative or mixed-methods approach has been sacrificed that might otherwise have yielded its own set of invaluable insights. It must also be noted that even within larger qualitative sample sizes results are not statistically reliable and do not produce generalisable data broader than the participant group. As such, purely qualitative phenomenological research begs a rather uncomfortable and glaring question: can we truly be certain that the experiences of a small number of participants is replicable amongst others experiencing the same phenomenon?

Similarly attributed to the research method is the difficulty in recruiting participants and the extended time it takes to gather the data. Within this study, I was fortunate to be able to establish a prior relationship with one of the participants, and with them discuss my ideas and thoughts surrounding the research topic prior to beginning the study. This person was then able to introduce me to other potential participants and was instrumental to the success of the research. Whether the participants whom I interviewed were also the individuals who held the most insightful information is within the scope of this research impossible to say. The snowballing recruitment method has a tendency to present participants who are often the most willing, but perhaps not always the most knowledgeable on the subject, and it is sometimes the case that as a

researcher you must 'take what you can get', something that is further compiled by the restricted time to complete the research phase. This is not to suggest that the participants within this study come with less experience or present misleading or false insights, but serves more as a reminder that the data presented within this study is a representation of the experiences of the researched group, rather than that the experience is necessarily typical amongst a wider demographic.

Chapter 3 - Research analysis and presentation

Introduction

The analysed data collected during the research phase of this study will be presented within the following chapter as a combination of generalised accounts, *in verbatim* quotes, and interpretations of how the data relates to the research aims. As stated within the methodology chapter, the data is presented in a way that has been generalised to give the reader an understanding of what it is like experiencing the phenomenon in question. Unless it is necessary to the understanding of the experience, all interviewees will be referred to as the 'participant', and all organisations will be referred to as the 'organisation'. With respect to my participants, this is an intentional act to ensure that to the best of my abilities all participants remain anonymous. This is of particular importance given the concentrated physical location and area of profession in which the research took place.

Golden-Biddle and Locke (1997) state that the "*major task of writing [about research] involves working out how to make contextually grounded theoretical points that are viewed as a contribution by the relevant professional community of readers*". As such, the following analysis aims to not only answer the research questions, but to highlight themes, topics, and phenomena that have not been made visible through other bodies of work. It additionally means that some themes have been omitted from this study as they are deemed not to contribute any further insight into what has already been discussed in the literature review chapter.

3.1 - What do service staff believe to be the barriers faced by Roma people accessing services?

Language, literacy, and Roma-specific needs

Across all participants, poor language and literacy skills were identified as being a fundamental barrier to accessing services for Roma communities in Govanhill. Not only was this cited as a core challenge preventing service staff from assisting Roma people, but it was also perceived as limiting the opportunities available to the Roma due to either the lack of knowledge of services available, or their ability to engage with them. In comparison to other migrant populations which participants interacted with, it was noted that language and literacy was particularly low amongst Roma communities, however, it must be said that within this study, this has not been corroborated by conclusive evidence. One participant described the challenges in delivering adult English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes:

“Some of them have, like, never held a pen before. And, yeah, it's difficult. And not everybody comes along. And I think our teachers do get a little bit disheartened and frustrated with how little progress they're making.”

Contrary to this, it was found that language skills were significantly better amongst younger Roma. A participant at Bike for Good who ran a Kids Club noted that Roma

children typically spoke *'perfect'* English, but that this was in sharp contrast to the language abilities of Roma parents with whom, *"there is, like, language issues with most of the moms I've met, like, they don't speak any English at all"*.

One participant who was an adult ESOL teacher recounted how some of her Roma students struggled to participate effectively in lessons due to what she described as *'undiagnosed learning difficulties'*, and that it was difficult to assist these students due to the language barrier.

It became evident across many of the selected organisations, but particularly those delivering educational services such as adult ESOL and employability classes, that Roma engagement was strongly dependent on whether additional support was offered. One participant noted that in addition to translation provision, *"if you're asking women to come to volunteer, there's always going to be childcare issues"*. Childcare support, such as having a creche, was considered a key element of attracting Roma women to activities such as ESOL classes and Community Conversation session at the housing association. It was also noted that Roma women's own obligations to care for children was a factor that limited their ability to seek employment, but that this was seen to be changing. One participant who delivered work preparedness training outlined why he perceived this to be the case:

"Some ladies who just trying to get back to work never worked before. It's kind of cultural stuff in the Roma community, that man is working and women are looking

*after the children and household. But you can see it's changing over the time.
And because there is opportunities, why not use the opportunity.”*

This observation may be in direct correlation to the lack of gender parity recognised by two participants. One participant described how the majority of Roma people accessing their service were women, and that “*admin tasks*”, such as taking children to doctors appointments and filing benefit claims, are typically perceived as “*women’s work*”. Another participant described how, although there was a desire from Roma men to attend English and employability training, it was often difficult to recruit them because of unsociable and exhausting work commitments.

Poor knowledge and understanding of Scottish services and social norms

It was evident that despite services being available to the Roma communities within the area, support staff perceived the Roma as facing difficulty accessing them due to either poor knowledge of their existence, or a misunderstanding that they were not entitled to access them. This was identified by two participants as making some Roma people vulnerable to exploitation. One participant described a situation that had emerged:

“There were a couple of women who had started life as, like, interpreters, and had been seeing welfare advisors do well for work and had decided that a better buck could be made from doing that themselves, despite having absolutely no formal training. [...] But they could have just as easily said, you know, I'm an

interpreter, [...] you can go to Samaritan House, or Govanhill Housing Association, who do have welfare advisors who will do this work for free.”

There was an understanding that this situation was not only misleading to clients, but was also undermining the work of support organisations. Another common example of Roma exploitation that was described was in relation to poor living conditions and evictions. With many “*Roma families [consisting] of 9, 10, 12, 14*” people, overcrowding continues to be a serious issue in Govanhill. Along with this, problems with “*bedbugs, cockroaches, missing facilities like washing machines*” was generally considered by housing association staff as being attributed to ‘*bad*’ or ‘*rogue*’ landlords, and that a mixture of ‘*fear and misunderstanding*’ made the demographic a particular target for exploitation.

There was a perception among the participants that some Roma struggled to participate in what one participant described as ‘*Scottish social norms*’, and that this was a source of conflict between ‘*Scottish*’ people and Roma. This included examples outside of service access, such as, having poor or no understanding of civic waste disposal, “*congregating on street corners*”, or, “*scream[ing] at each other across the street*”.

Roma attitudes towards waste management was an issue of particular conflict, and was raised by four participants as an aspect of ‘*Roma behaviour*’ that was especially difficult to manage. Two participants identified that this was an element of ‘*Roma culture*’ disliked among non-Roma locals.

Among support staff, however, accusations made against Roma people were often defended. One participant explained that often during home visits, “*we were [...] trying to explain about recycling and oftentimes it’ll be the first time ever that they are faced with recycling*”. This perceived ‘*disrespect*’ for public spaces and misuse of waste management facilities, even when services and education were readily available, was described by the same participant as stemming from discrimination and marginalisation experienced by Roma people in their origin countries, and that “*they just wouldn’t have any understanding to not do that*”. It may be that nuances of Scottish civic behaviours which are apparent to those ‘*in the know*’, are not always obvious to new migrant groups where the behaviour does not otherwise exist and require prolonged exposure and effort by communities and organisations that support them.

3.2 - What are the barriers that organisations face when delivering services?

Non-mainstream service delivery and information sharing

Participants reported that they experienced Roma communities as having a high dependency on local third sector and statutory services. This was an overarching theme that was represented, whether explicitly or implicitly, across all research participants. There was a distinct identification amongst participants in community support roles that

the needs which Roma people were requiring assistance for were *'basic'* in their nature, in the sense that participants felt they did not require particular skills or advanced knowledge to attend to them. Although this demand was noted across all Roma communities, it was especially Romanian Roma whom service staff identified as requiring higher assistance. When discussing the types of needs that a colleague, a Romanian community support worker, was attending to, one participant noted that:

“Quite often, it's just, “what's this letter? I don't know what this is”. And, and that can be even like the school newsletter from January, that someone's just found in the bottom of their kid's bag and they're like, “this has got the school logo on it, it must be important, what is this?”. Oh, it's saying your kid had a trip two-three months ago, you know, to bring an apple for, but you know... so it's really low-level stuff.”

The same participant identified that, although there were similarities in the type of needs presented across all Roma groups, Slovakian Roma's tended to be more established within the community, had started businesses or held long-term jobs, had better language capabilities, and whose children were more likely to have *“come through a full cycle of education”*. It was the participant's understanding that this was due to Slovakian Roma's having spent a longer time *'embedding'*, whereas Romanian Roma's were still within a phase of *'survival'*, an observation which may correlate with the order in which Slovakia joined the EU in 2004, followed by Romania in 2006.

The high dependency on support services within the area I found to be interlinked with a complex relationship between three elements: first is the continuous demand for assistance from within the Roma communities. Second is the physical ease of access to these support services. Third is the high demand, yet low availability of the skills and resources required to meet those needs. It was identified that Roma people generally tended to possess a low knowledge of how Scottish public services functioned and how to access them. The daily tasks of several of the participants were heavily dedicated to helping Roma people, for example, access public services such as the Job Centre, or to process benefit applications.

Two participants described how *'mainstream'* methods of information sharing did not typically work to engage some Roma people. This was strongly attributed to the language barrier, but also to poor digital literacy skills. One participant described the challenges their organisation encountered in assisting some Roma people with online applications:

"They won't be able to complete anything online, unless it's in Slavic language, or their own language. Because they don't understand what the question is asking."

Another participant described how she felt that the inflexibility of current systems and policies was neglecting to take into consideration alternative methods of engaging with Roma communities. She explained that:

“The methods that work in other countries, we're not making use of them. People are used to them. And it would work for people who are used to their ways of doing things. No, the system is as it is. It's mainstream. It doesn't cater for individuals like that, who might have different ideas.”

Roma perception of self and the impact of Brexit

Four participants identified that they perceived an absence of positive role models that could help to change the perception and social mobility of Roma communities in Govanhill. One participant expressed how only a few positive examples could “*show just a different [...] outcome*” for what Roma people are capable of achieving, particularly in areas such as education and employment.

There was a perception amongst a few of the participants that ‘*bad behaviour*’ (e.g. littering; loitering) was being internalised and reinforced by a general lack of responsibility for civic space, but that this behaviour was simultaneously disliked by the communities. One participant described a conversation she had held with a group of Roma women on finding a solution to the improper waste disposal issue in the area:

“So usually, when you kind of challenge people on that, and you, you pose the question back to them, it's like, well, you know, okay, what do you not like about living in this area? And everybody says, “it's kind of dirty”. And then you ask, well, why? Why do you think it's dirty? And what do you think we could do? Things like, “oh, well people are littering and throwing things all the time, and kids are

throwing things all the time, you know, grown men". And, like, most of them, people will say, [...] "we should tidy up, we should do it". Like, collectively, we should organise litter picks. [...] But when it has come to literally organizing the litter picks and asking people... A bunch of people would say they can't come and a bunch of people would promise that they'd come and then they don't show up. [...] I think there's still, like, a ways to go to be, like, this is also your thing. This is also your responsibility."

For one participant, this issue of Roma perception by society and media, but also of themselves, seemed to stem from a broader combination of factors: firstly, that Roma people have left countries where they are often excluded and marginalised from mainstream society, and in many ways this marginalisation has continued in Govanhill. Secondly, that Roma family structure is '*traditionally patriarchal*', meaning that behaviours expressed by men in the community is not challenged, and, thirdly, that Roma communities felt that "*there is no enforcement*" by police when people were caught.

Five of the participants highlighted that they felt that Brexit was having an impact on how Roma people perceived themselves as '*welcome*' in Scottish society, but also that the public and media perception of Roma people was negatively impacting their ability to deliver long-term strategies. There was a particular desire amongst this group for their work to transition from reactive to preventative solutions, but that this effort was

being hampered by the current political climate and a diminishing desire for Roma people to settle in Scotland. One participant expressed her frustration:

“So a lot of my job is like firefighting.[...] I feel like I'm just stemming the tide, I'm just pushing my hand on a leak which is how it often feels.”

Castles et. al. (2013) describes how in times of economic crisis and conflicts, it is often immigrant groups who are first to be blamed for problems and face racism and discrimination. This was also a narrative that the participants described having witnessed in varying degrees, and felt that perceptions of Roma by non-Roma people were impacting long-term integration efforts such as improving language skills or obtaining permanent employment. One participant who self-described as Roma explained how he felt that he was *“still not integrated”*, and that this was a feeling that was being echoed across the wider Roma demographic in Govanhill.

“Well, I'm still thinking, will I go home? Should I buy house here? Should I built my house in Slovakia? [...] I think it's been hard for many people. And some people still thinking, what's happening with the Brexit? Do we need to leave the country?”

There was a feeling amongst many participants that the integration and settlement of Roma people in the area was precarious due to the rumors, misconceptions, and fears generated by the unknown consequences of the Brexit referendum. This issue could additionally be seen to contribute to the difficulty in recruiting Roma people into

volunteer and paid roles within organisations in the area and significantly hamper the efforts to shift from the current reactive service delivery to more long-term and sustainable delivery strategies.

Perceived lack of support for staff and difficulty demonstrating impact

Five participants felt that, apart from external factors, there were internal politics and policies that impacted how they were able to deliver services. One participant expressed that they felt they were not being sufficiently supported by management within their organisation, and two participants felt that some funders were not considerate of staff needs. One participant described an ‘*undertone*’ of resentment felt by some staff working across Govanhill, and explained:

“I think funders when they're giving money sometimes are not thinking, “okay, these people are going to be working with other people. What do they need to, like... maybe they need support?” [...] Just to say, “how are you finding it? Are you taking it home?” [...] I think support for people, and an understanding of, like, the emotional stress involved would be helpful.”

Additionally, four participants said they experienced difficulties in demonstrating how their work impacted not just Roma communities, but the wider community in general.

One participant who worked at a management level expressed that his “*biggest failing*” in his role was “*failing to nail down a good monitoring system*”.

Another participant described how her organisation experienced difficulty in collecting accurate data from Roma people. She recounted how a particular question on a form provided by the organisation asking new members about the number of people within their household had made some Roma people uncomfortable. The participant explained:

“I think people react badly to it [the question]. Because often there are a lot of people living in one small, well, not small, but in one flat. [...] But there is a general perception that this is not okay. Or that it's something that other people don't like about them.”

3.3 - What are services doing to mitigate these barriers?

Staff recruitment and hyper-local services

Across the participant group there was an evident desire for organisations to employ more Roma people, as well as Slovakian, Romanian and Czech speaking staff. Of the participants in this study, one person spoke Romanian, one person self-identified as Roma, and one person was able to hold conversations across many Eastern European

languages. The remainder of the participants did not identify as speaking any of the aforementioned languages or identify as Roma, however, they expressed that an increase in Roma participation was fundamental to the development and delivery of services in the area.

One participant who was involved in the employment of staff described how he would “*specifically recruited people with language abilities*”, as well as, “*cultural awareness and cultural understanding*”. Another participant described that her organisation was currently working on “*diversifying the board*” to include members from migrant and asylum seeking backgrounds. Participants generally tended to have a positive view of the types of skills currently available within their organisations, and that this in turn was having a beneficial impact on their Roma clients.

The location of services within the community was also seen to be contributing positively to service access. Six of the organisations represented in this study were located within the boundaries of Govanhill, and one organisation was located on the boundary of Govanhill and Crosshill. Within Govanhill’s concentrated locality, these organisations may be considered ‘hyper-localised’, and exist within a walking distance of 15-minute or less from each other, other third sector and statutory services, and residential properties occupied by Roma people. One participant who taught English described the benefit she experienced:

“For us, having the lessons at Daisy Street or at Samaritan House is amazing, because it's in the heart of everything. So doctor's appointment, no problem, it's two or 5 minutes walk.”

Roma-inclusive service delivery and development

It was recognised by all participants that the most prolific method used by Roma communities to share and dispense information was by ‘*word of mouth*’. This was seen as a majority positive aspect of Roma behaviour, as it was perceived as a tool for building trust between organisations and Roma people, especially if the organisation employed a Roma person or someone who spoke a Slavic language. One participant explained that:

“A lot of it's [...] word of mouth, because that tends to be the way information is spread within the Roma community. And [...], for example, my Romanian worker is legendary, and is really famous, and, you know, people know that if they speak to her she'll sort things out for them, so that word gets round.”

One participant described a situation whereby a Syrian family was brought to the organisation by a Roma woman. Despite neither party being unable to communicate, *“they knew that they [the Syrian family] would get help here”*. Another participant recounted how they used this communication strategy to their advantage in recruiting and retaining ESOL pupils:

“Every time towards the end of summer, I text everybody I've got in my phone and say there are classes, tell your friend and please come.”

Another participant described how their organisation was approaching information sharing of Universal Credit through the use of videos that would be available in key locations in the community. Although the video had not been released at the time of the interview, the participant explained that the informational videos were being created to target Roma people in the community. The participant described the purpose of the video format:

“[The videos will be] dubbed in people's languages, and with recognizable faces. And we're going to include some of us, like some of the staff, and we're hoping a couple of people from the community. Because you're gonna be like, “Oh, I know that guy”. [...] And then, like, you're gonna pay more attention, if anything.”

Six participants identified that their organisations adopted ‘burden sharing’ strategies across other third sector and statutory organisations both within and outwith Govanhill. Although collaboration between services was described as a generally positive behaviour, it was additionally noted that more could be done to improve communication between organisations.

One strategy to improve burden sharing and avoid project duplication was through monthly meetings held by the South East Integration Network. During the research phase of this study, I was invited to attend two meetings and experience first hand how members were encouraged to share their work and relay information about upcoming events and activities to other members. The network was also mentioned by two participants as a key channel for information sharing and dispersal through the network's meetings and monthly newsletter.

Additionally, three participants identified that the inclusion of Roma voices was pivotal in addressing Roma needs and reducing barriers to service access. Two participants described how some activities that they provided, although not intentionally, were considered '*social spaces*' for Roma people to meet and engage with each other. For these participants, this unintended outcome was often used to have conversations about how their service could be improved to meet Roma needs. One participant noted while he was explaining how his organisation had adapted their activities to incorporate this element that, "*really, people just want to socialise, that's a huge element of our programme*".

Chapter 4 - Conclusion

This research project set out to better understand the challenges faced in delivering services to Roma communities in the Glasgow locality of Govanhill, Scotland. The research was approached from the perspective of staff members working within support organisations who either worked directly with Roma clients, or who oversaw projects working with Roma people within the community and had managerial insight into service delivery challenges. The study addresses three interlinking enquiries within the broader scope of service delivery, mainly: What do service staff perceive to be the barriers faced by Roma people in accessing services? What barriers are services coming up against that are preventing them from delivering sufficient services to the Roma communities? Finally, what do service staff recognise as areas where services have been able to mitigate access barriers, as it is through recognising both the failures and successes of service delivery that a study such as this has the ability to demonstrate a rich, multifaceted view of the research area.

The main aim of this study was to view service delivery from the experiences of service staff in an attempt to enrich the existing research already conducted within the broader subject area. As shown within the literature review, the existing studies of Roma people in Scotland and Govanhill have been conducted from primarily a quantitative research methodology. The Mapping Report is perhaps the closest study to this one, whereby service staff across all councils in Scotland were consulted. Indeed a very useful study for understanding the broader Roma situation in Scotland, the Mapping Report, however, does not address the impact of working with the Roma community on staff

wellbeing, of how internal politics or funding within organisations influence what can be delivered, nor does it give an indication of how local services are working towards better Roma inclusion. This study, although small, attempts to give a detailed understanding of how service staff perceive themselves, their clients, and the environment in which they work.

Conducting this research has been an experience with both challenges and achievements. Beyond the immediate considerations surrounding the ethical barriers and limitations, I was conscious of two things throughout: Firstly, I was conscious of the importance of not fuelling the often racist and essentialist cultural stereotyping of Roma people within the Govanhill community, but instead to address the behaviours or perceptions associated as a '*Roma traits*' within the socioeconomic, political, and physical environments in which they occur. Secondly, I was aware of the hyper-localised area in which the study took place and early on in my research understood the likelihood of my participants not only working within close proximity of each other and collaborating across services, but also potentially living within the area. This led me to present the data in a way that was anonymised to the best of my abilities without losing the meaning of key quotes and described experiences.

Within the limitations of the project, I do believe that a transcendental phenomenological research design was best suited to the aims of the study. This is due to the small area in which the study took place, the small participants group, as well as the research aim and questions that were answered. It is not always clear at the beginning of a research

study how well the chosen methodology and methods, or indeed the research questions, will align to complete a unique and comprehensive view of the chosen subject area. As was the case within this study, it was vital to be both reflexive and flexible in both design and approach. Given more time, perhaps it would have been interesting to complement the experiences and perspectives of service staff with that of their Roma clients. Indeed, it can be argued that the results of this study are presented from the perspectives of only one demographic, however, given the language barriers and difficulty in recruiting participants within the Roma communities, I do not believe that in retrospect I would be the best suited researcher to conduct such a study. A continuation of this study would perhaps serve well to include an anthropological methodology by a researcher with a sufficient grasp of Romanes or Slavic languages, have an established relationship with the participant group, and be conducted over a significantly longer timeframe than the three months in which this study occurred.

The research questions within this study were answered and presented through an analysis that aimed to contextually ground the theoretical points in a manner that would contribute new and relevant themes and topics to the subject area. There was a deliberate attempt to address known themes where necessary, but not reiterate research points that have already been made visible through other bodies of work unless a new analysis perspective became evident. As such, it was possible to identify new themes and elements of the phenomena that have not been addressed within other studies and to provide a deeper analysis of these.

Within the analysis, poor language and literacy skills amongst Roma people was identified as one of the largest barriers limiting service access. It was a barrier that was identified unanimously across all research participants and is arguably the theme that overrides all access barriers within the Roma communities in Govanhill. Participants identified language and literacy to be particularly poor amongst Roma communities when compared to other migrant groups they encountered, but it was also identified that language skills amongst younger Roma people was of a significantly higher standard than older groups. It was additionally found that language skills amongst service staff was both prevalent and a highly desired skill during new staff recruitment.

The second largest barrier that participants identified was a low knowledge among Roma communities of how services operated or even existed. This barrier was perceived by some participants as stemming from the marginalisation, discrimination and isolation of Roma people within origin countries in Eastern Europe, and could contribute to the emergence of 'for profit' support services, as well as why some Roma struggle to adapt to 'Scottish social norms'. This theme is closely linked with why communication and information sharing amongst Roma people through mainstream methods has thus far proved inefficient. It was identified, however, that participants who were familiar with Roma culture and behaviour, and adapted their communication strategies to align with the 'word of mouth' methods of many Roma communities were successful in recruiting and retaining clients.

Many of the participants identified themselves as working in roles that aimed to support and enhance positive life outcomes for Roma people within Govanhill. They described how the absence of positive role models within the communities limited perceptions of what a Roma person might see themselves achieving. In areas such as education and employment, service staff found it particularly challenging to encourage their clients to pursue opportunities beyond typical outcomes of Roma people in the area. The result of this was linked to the high dependency of Roma people on basic support services in the area, but additionally the current political environment and the imminent countdown to Brexit was deemed to impact heavily on what opportunities Roma people felt were available to them.

Within organisations and their operation, some participants described how they felt unsupported in their roles and that it was challenging to demonstrate the impact of their work. Many of the organisations interviewed within this study described that their roles and the projects they worked within were determined by the frameworks and limitations set by funding bodies, and that often the wellbeing of staff was not adequately addressed. Although not explored within this study, it may be suggested that if staff felt better supported within their roles, they would go on to deliver services that are more equipped at aiding the communities they serve.

Where participants experienced that service delivery was succeeding were areas such as the hyper-local positioning of many organisations within Govanhill, the use of non-traditional communication strategies, and the inclusion of Roma voices within co-

creation of community projects. These insights suggest that a positive outcome can be achieved when the needs, behaviours, and inclusion of community voices are incorporated into service delivery strategies amongst migrant groups. Most participants within this study identified that the employment of Roma staff would additionally benefit service delivery. Although some organisations had successfully recruited Roma staff, there was an indication that more needed to be done to include members of the Roma communities in volunteer and paid roles.

It is clear from this study that within some areas there is a significant gap between policy and practice. This study shows that the reality of service delivery for Roma communities in the 'real world' requires an approach that is sensitive to the needs of Roma people in Govanhill as well as a good understanding by policymakers, politicians, organisations and their staff of the unique culture and history of discrimination that come 'part and parcel' with Roma communities. The inclusion of both service users and staff should be fundamental to the development, implementation, and continued sustainable strategy of any service, and it is imperative that this inclusion should not be 'tokenized', but rather seen as an integral and non-negotiable aspect of service creation and delivery.

There is additionally a need for policy and service providers to allow for a degree of flexibility in the delivery of services. This need was observed to be more easily achievable within third sector organisation, but is of particularly urgency within statutory services. Policy and service delivery should be approached with the understanding that

the element of choice is a defining factor to why some people may access a service successfully and others may not. What is meant by this is that modern service delivery within the public sector should provide multiple access channels, taking particular consideration to needs such as language and literacy, digital competence, and physical and mental ability. I firmly believe that the insights found within this study are not limited to service delivery for Roma communities alone, but have the potential to shed light on wider barriers to service delivery across Scotland and the UK.

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