

ROAR, the University of East London Institutional Repository: <http://roar.uel.ac.uk>

This article is made available online in accordance with publisher policies. Please scroll down to view the document itself. Please refer to the repository record for this item and our policy information available from the repository home page for further information.

Author(s): Daniel Briggs

Title: Los Gitanos (Gypsies) in La Coruña, Spain: Neither socially included nor integrated?

Year of publication: 2010

Citation: Briggs, D. (2010), 'Los Gitanos (Gypsies) in La Coruña, Spain: Neither socially included nor integrated?' *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 23(2), pp.111-122, DOI: 10.1386/ijis.23.2.111_3

Link to published version:

http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/ijis.23.2.111_3

Publisher statement:

Information on how to cite items within roar@uel:

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/roar/openaccess.htm#Citing>

<CTL>Los Gitanos (Gypsies) in La Coruña, Spain: Neither socially included nor integrated?</CTL>

<COPAU>Daniel Briggs</COPAU> <COPAFF>University of East London</COPAFF>

<AH>Abstract</AH>

<AUIP>Historically throughout Spain, the *gitano* (Gypsy) culture has been met with racism, discrimination and persecution. In recent years, however, there have been increasing efforts to integrate *gitanos* into mainstream Spanish society. However, little attention has been paid to the progress in La Coruña in Galicia. While *gitano* numbers do not match those in other parts of Spain, in La Coruña over the last 30 years, increasingly the gypsy population has been associated with illicit drug markets, crime and damaging drug use. In the face of protest from the local non-gypsy community, the local council has adopted coercive measures to relocate the *gitanos* throughout different areas of the city centre in an effort to integrate them into mainstream Spanish society. However, there is still clear division between the local community and the *gitanos*, and the level to which they are integrated in the local non-gypsy community is not clear. This article explores these issues in detail and offers some preliminary findings from ethnographic research that is being undertaken in La Coruña.</AUIP>

<KDH>Keywords</KDH>

<KD>Gitanos (Gypsies)

culture

drugs

crime

political inclusion

social exclusion</KD>

<H1>Introduction</H1>

<UIP>Based on preliminary findings from ethnographic research in the city of La Coruña, Spain, this article examines the current status quo of local Gypsies, and considers efforts to integrate them into mainstream Spanish society. The article will show that policies designed ‘to include’ *gitanos* have in fact been exclusionary in nature – evidenced by the *gitanos* geographical ostracism on the outskirts of the city and lack of upward social mobility across education, training and employment. The local non-gypsy community, to some degree, is aware of this but this is conveniently forgotten when the media draw their attention to the negative stories of ‘failed integration’ and ‘drugs and crime’. This, along with the advent of the drug market, increased competition with other socially excluded citizens to earn a living and increased regulation of their activities, appears to have exacerbated the already fragile position of the *gitanos* in La Coruña. I will first turn briefly to discuss the socio-economic position of the *gitanos* in Spain.</UIP>

<H1>The position of *gitanos* in Spain</H1>

<UIP>Gypsies have often found themselves living outside other people’s cultures – as ‘people without a history’ (Wolf 1982). The racist treatment towards them can be traced back to the advent of the modern period (Bauman 1998; Brearley 2001). As countries across Eastern Europe, the ex-Soviet Union and the Third World underwent a process of rapid modernization, Gypsies and other nomadic groups found themselves pushed even further to the edges of European society (Cudworth 2008; MacLaughlin 1998; Smith 1997). Having moved throughout Europe, escaping discrimination and oppressive policing in Eastern Europe, they encountered similar treatment on arrival in parts of Western Europe (Bangieva 2007; Hammarberg 2006).</UIP>

<IP>It has been suggested that this historic rejection has meant that Gypsies have become highly capable of cultural adaptation in settings

where they have had to survive (Gamella 1999) – interacting in reciprocal contact with hostile host communities in a process of acculturation (Cozzanet et al. 1976). They have, as Sway (1984: 83) has noted, ‘a flexible and successful way of exploiting the economic margins’. This has, therefore, often promoted unique ways of determining gypsy customs, so much so, that some suggest many of the behaviours considered unique to their culture have actually been caused by situations related to social exclusion (Quintero et al. 2007), with no roots in gypsy traditions (Gamella 1999).</IP>

<IP>In Spain, the *gitanos* have historically suffered varied forms of social persecution, racism and legal discrimination (Jover and Reyero 2000; O’Toole 1994; Poveda and Marcos 2005; Teasley 2005) across education, health, employment, housing and the judicial system (Rodríguez et al. 2009). Some suggest that this has been exacerbated by complex urban restructuring processes in city centres over the last 30 years, which has reduced the opportunity for interaction with local non-gypsy communities in Spain (Keenoy and Stanton 1985; Poveda and Marcos 2005). While known for their conventional norms and values, there is a popular perception that *gitanos* are associated with illicit drugs and crime networks (Jalon and Rivera 2000; Sanchez and Gamella 1999). This perception damages the entire community’s image, making integration efforts even more difficult (Rodríguez et al. 2009). Despite this, there have been increased efforts to integrate *gitanos* into mainstream Spanish life across Spain (Tomás et al. 2004) and in some parts of Galicia (FSG 2006). This article is concerned with analysing some of this progress.</IP>

<IP>The data within the article were gathered from a research project. The principle research methods were ethnography (open-ended interviewing and observations). Thirty-two open-ended, qualitative

interviews were undertaken: twelve with Gitanos, ten with local residents/workers and community members, two with social worker professionals and eight frontline educational workers involved in the delivery of educational courses for Gitanos. Interviewees were identified through current contacts throughout the city.¹ Observations were also conducted in Gitanos communities with the help of frontline educational workers.</IP>

<H1>Inclusion and exclusion in La Coruña</H1>

<UIP>La Coruña is a small city and the principle port of Galicia on the North West coast of Spain. Traditionally, the region has been politically ostracized and over the last 50 years has flourished far slower than the rest of Spain. For these reasons, the region continues to suffer from higher rates of poverty than the rest of the country (Roseman et al. 2008). It is only recently, over the last 30 years, that La Coruña has started to prosper and expand its city boundaries. Here, stigmatized groups tend to fall into three main categories/communities: *los negros*, as the locals say (African immigrants from Sub-Saharan countries – ‘African immigrants’ hereafter), *los gitanos* (the Gypsies) and drug users (who are considered to be low-class Portuguese or Spanish and/or *gitanos*).</UIP>

<IP>Yet there appear to be some differences between the groups. In the eyes of local residents, African immigrants work hard selling a number of illicit goods such as fake-brand sunglasses, handbags and perfumes mainly in and around the Calle Real (the main shopping street in La Coruña) and in the weekly street market in O Vioño. Moreover, local residents have sympathy for the African immigrants. African immigrants appear to offer some function to the community through cut-price

<EN>¹ The author has been visiting La Coruña for the last five years and has extensive social networks in the city.

consumer goods that may appeal to the local city resident. When there is police action directed against these groups, it is temporary and their illicit businesses in the principle shopping spaces of the city are, to some degree, tolerated by the police. For example:</IP>

<EXT>No, it's different [for African immigrants]. They have a job. It's not like major problems, major social problems like drugs. They have no local mafia. They are not asking for anything. We see them in the street but at least they are working.

<SRC>(Marta – Resident)</SRC></EXT>

<UIP>The drug users who line the streets are not really acknowledged by the local community and the *gitanos* are rarely seen – especially in the city centre. Most non-gypsy residents and businesses, however, perceive the *gitanos* as troublemakers – involved not only in petty crime but also in drug dealing and drug use. They make this association because of the reputation of Peñamoia – said to be Spain's principle drug market and the principle drug-dealing haven populated by *gitanos*. Because of this, the *gitanos* are also thought to make up a high proportion of the drug-dealing and drug-using population in the city – although this is hard to quantify. This has resulted in negative media portrayals that associate *gitanos* with drugs and crime which does little for their reputation. As a result, they are considered to be a threat to family welfare and community safety.</UIP>

<IP>I will now briefly turn to examine how *gitanos* came to settle in the area and how they became associated with drugs and crime.</IP>

<H1>The *gitanos*, drugs and crime nexus</H1>

<UIP>La Coruña started to experience the arrival of *gitanos* during the early part of the twentieth century. The first news reports described *gitanos* as 'suspicious people in caravans', 'who live badly' and as people who 'need to be watched' (Tomás et al. 2004). Many *gitanos* were murdered in Coruña during the civil war years of the 1930s and there

remains little documented evidence of early *gitano* settlements in the city during this period. However, by the 1950s, they had started to populate the city centre – some settling in San Diego Park (near Orillamar). By the end of the 1960s they had settled at the old station of Ferrocarril (O Vioño) and subsequently expanded to Labañou, Roel, Oleoducto and Casablanca during the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, a substantial number of *gitanos*, however, established themselves at A Cubela – the current site of El Corte Inglés.</UIP>

<IP>For the local council, however, the population of *gitanos* at A Cubela was problematic and interfered with new commercial and residential aspirations. In the mid-1980s, the council coercively relocated the *gitanos* at A Cubela in Peñamoa – an area that had no social infrastructure on the outskirts of the city. For example:</IP>

<DLG>Carlota: Well Peñamoa, it's the place where the Xunta [regional government] sent the *gitanos*...

Ingrid: Ah, they sent them there.

Daniel (Author and Interviewer): We knew something about that.

Carlota: They were in the site of El Corte Inglés around 25 years ago, around 1984.

Ingrid: But it was done in an unofficial way.

Carlota: Of course, not official. But years ago, when they were on the site of El Corte Inglés, it was a peaceful area but it's all [the surrounding area] changed now with the construction of El Corte Inglés.²</DLG>

<UIP>It was at this stage that some *gitanos* relocated to As Rañas and purchased land, while others consolidated settlements in O Pasaxe and O

² Open-ended focus group with local council social workers. The conversation took place in a café setting in the centre of La Coruña on 8 April 2010.

Portiño. At Peñamoa, however, *gitanos* were left with little social support. With the advent of the drug market in the 1980s and 1990s and diminishing opportunity in conventional industries such as the recycling of *chatarra* (scrap metal sales) and *la venta ambulante* (street markets), social problems merely amplified in Peñamoa.</UIP>

<IP>The social repercussions of the *gitanos* displacement to Peñamoa soon became evident during the latter half of 1980s, when the heroin market expanded across the city and, in the 1990s, with the advent of the cocaine market. Drug dealing presented some *gitanos* at Peñamoa with an opportunity to earn money given that many were also spatially ostracized on the fringe of the city and were continually discriminated against by companies.³ Indeed, this is still commonplace today. Celia said:</IP>

<EXT>The problem is that the country doesn't want to employ us [*gitanos*]. My father has done so many courses, so many different things to try and make himself part of society. He has been to interviews and done so many applications. Most people turn him away.⁴

<SRC>(Celia – Gitana)</SRC></EXT>

<UIP>However, there were also other factors to consider. During this period, those *gitanos* that had work were not familiar with the new bureaucratic processes associated with permits required to sell *chatarra* and *la venta ambulante*. Many also had to pay taxes on their meagre wages⁵ and were also in competition with other socially excluded citizens

³ La Voz de Galicia (2010), 'More than 100 chabolas have been destroyed in Peñamoa' 26 February 2010.

⁴ Open-ended interview with Celia, a gitana living in As Rañas. The interview took place in her home in As Rañas on 7 June 2010.

⁵ La Voz de Galicia (2009), 'Gitanos this side of the wall' 8 November 2009, Supplement Section 2.

(African immigrants, Chinese and other South American communities) to earn a living in markets and other improvised outlets. In short, it became very difficult for *gitanos* to earn money for their families and communities. Meanwhile, greater numbers of *gitanos* from the region moved to Peñamoa, so when the drug market took a stronger grip on the city during the 1980s and 1990s drug dealing, for a significant number of *gitanos*, became a way to earn a living. This pharmacy worker appeared to suggest this was the case:</UIP>

<DLG>Pharmacy worker: I was very young when the drug market came to La Coruña but the *gitanos* seemed to get into it more since the move from the site of El Corte Inglés.

Daniel: So before then, they didn't sell drugs?

Pharmacy worker: No, they mostly sold videos, or things in street markets.

Daniel: Right.

Pharmacy worker: But the council built some small houses in Peñamoa and they sent them there, and I suppose when the *gitanos* arrived there, away from everything and the drug market seemed to increase and they were able to do the drug dealing freely.

Ingrid: So basically the council and the police said they could go about their business freely.

Pharmacy worker: The thing is they were looking for business because they were not able to support themselves and since no one was there to support them, the problem just grew, and grew and grew.

Daniel: And in the 1990s, it got worse.⁶</DLG>

⁶ Open-ended interview with a pharmacy worker who had collaborated with various *gitano* welfare projects across La Coruña. The interview took place in her office on 3 March 2010.

<UIP>At the turn of the twenty-first century, increased efforts were made to integrate the *gitano* populations across the region. Because of this, the social activities of Peñamoa started to attract more attention from the council. Numerous news articles reported that its ‘days were numbered’. Law enforcement agencies also started to exercise a greater presence around Peñamoa, which resulted in stop-and-search operations on those entering and leaving the settlement – predominantly drug users and *gitanos*. However, these actions did little for the circumstances of the *gitanos*, as many of them ended up in the criminal justice system. In 2005, the council once again made promises to ‘eliminate’ the *chabolas* of Peñamoa, but little was achieved. At a city council meeting the following year in 2006, the president of the *gitano* community and the *Unión del Pueblo Gitano*⁷ spoke out in defence of the *gitanos*. They criticized the punitive sanctions directed at *gitanos* and said the gypsy community was still not being given opportunities to work and was still underrepresented in local schools.</UIP>

<IP>The local authorities made an offer to support *gitanos* in the integration and relocation process. However, relocation and integration plans were only devised for the least problematic settlement in O Pasaxe. The families welcomed the money the local authorities offered to leave the O Pasaxe settlement but had nowhere else to relocate and instead established a new community a few hundred yards from the former site.</IP>

<IP>However, the area that had the most complex social problems, Peñamoa, continued to be ignored. A 2007 council report on the state of Peñamoa, once again, outlined intentions to knock down the *chabolas* and

⁷ Unión del Pueblo Gitano is a non-governmental organization concerned with bringing equality and rights to the Gypsy community.

relocate and integrate *gitano* families. This time, however, there was an additional motivation because the council wanted to construct *la tercera ronda* – a new ring road that would improve the transport connections to and from the city. To achieve these goals, a new independent committee responsible for social, housing and health support was established – The Chabolismo Eradication Programme.⁸ By 2008, however, little had been achieved by the committee, and local *gitano* experts continued to indicate that the problem of relocation and integration was about not only drugs and crime but also that the *gitanos* had still not been given adequate tools for integration.</IP>

<IP>Nevertheless, this was not the message the non-gypsy community were given. Given the lack of day-to-day interactions with the *gitanos*, the non-gypsy community tended to rely on news items reporting on the problems of integration and the *gitanos*' associations with drugs and crime which confirmed their suspicions that the *gitanos* were directly responsible for the drug problem. These residents said:</IP>

<DLG>Paloma: The problem with *gitanos* is drugs – people that go up there [Peñamoá], injecting in the place, injecting in front of everyone, robbing local residents. We always see it on TV. One drug addict robbed a neighbour and took everything to sell to the *gitanos*. Drugs is the main problem.

Marta: The *gitanos* are the drug dealers.

Paloma: It's their way of life.⁹

So most of the media stories are about crime and drugs and that the council have 'done everything they could' to integrate the *gitanos*

⁸ The Programme is due to conclude in 2011.

⁹ Open-ended focus group with residents living near the Peñamoá site. The focus group took place in one resident's home on 26 April 2010.

but it's that 'they don't want it' and they [the council] say 'we don't know what to do next'.

(Roberto – Resident)¹⁰

Yet higher up the drug market, the non-gypsy communities appeared to be directing proceedings. Jorge, a gitano from As Rañas, said:

Daniel: What do you think of the *gitanos* that sell drugs?

Jorge: Like anyone that works, they have to make money from an opportunity. It is a business like everyone has and like everyone needs. That is just what they have to do.

Daniel: Do you know *gitano* drug dealers?

Jorge: Many, yes.

Daniel: What do you say to them about it?

Jorge: It doesn't bother me. I don't sell drugs but those I know don't think of me as one of them; they think they are superior to me because they have a little more money than me. But I tell you one thing: if *payos* [meaning non-gypsy whites in calo language] didn't bring it in, we wouldn't sell it. Who organises shipments? *Payos*. Who distributes it? *Payos*. They don't seize thousands of kilos from *gitanos*. All *payos*. The *payos* put the blame on the *gitanos* when in reality, it's the other way around.¹¹

Since 2001, the local council has attempted to transfer *gitanos* from *chabola* settlements into stable housing. This has been partly

¹⁰ Open-ended interview with Roberto, a resident living in La Coruña city centre. The interview took place in a café on 25 April 2010.

¹¹ Open-ended interview with Jorge, a gitano from As Rañas. The interview took place in a local parish church on 23 April 2010.

motivated by national social policies to deliver adequate housing for *gitanos* but also because of the high value of city-centre land that *gitanos* have occupied in key strategic sites for redevelopment. For example, the 34 families who were moved from the original Orillamar settlement into a purpose-built block of flats in 2001 were initially occupying land worth €721,214.53. However, the fact that *gitanos* were offered such plush, new apartments created resentment among the non-gypsy community. In fact, under the Chabolismo Eradication Programme, *gitano* families who gave up their *chabolas* were prioritized in housing waiting lists, promised stable housing, work, social security payments and financial incentives to take up integration programmes. For most local non-gypsy residents this was difficult to accept:</UIP>

<DLG>Marta: You have to get in the queue for housing. They [*gitanos*] pay nothing and ask for everything. All the benefits as well.

Paloma: I saw a TV programme and all it said was they just want housing: ‘I want this, I want that’.

Paloma’s Grandma: They take care of them more than they take care of us. We are forgotten.¹²

They are in the *chabolas* and they are offered a house, and what about me and my mortgage? They don’t take the rubbish out – I don’t want them to disturb me at 3 am in the morning or bring odd things up and down the stairs, these are the problems I have with them living with us.

(Monica – Resident)¹³</DLG>

¹² Open-ended focus group with residents living near Peñamoia.

¹³ Open-ended interview with Monica, local resident. The interview took place at a party in a flat in the centre of La Coruña on 23 April 2010.

<UIP>There have been some positive steps towards integration. Some *gitano* families in O Portiño and Orillamar continue to thrive through *la venta ambulante* and *la chatarra* and appear to pose no direct problems for surrounding non-gypsy communities. This does not mean there is no discrimination against these gypsy communities or that drug dealing and drug use are not endemic, but they do not seem to trouble the immediate non-gypsy community as much. Other examples of integration attempts have also been made at As Rañas, where university student volunteers have developed good relations with the *gitano* community. They deliver classes on a Sunday when weather permits – the classroom is a section of wasteland just outside the *gitano* camp. Some *gitano* children in this community attend a local school significantly outnumbering the few non-gypsy children who attend, which raises questions over the extent of integration said to have been achieved. While the council consider As Rañas to be a success story, it appears that the *gitano* community there still remain bereft of some social support. One *gitana* said:</UIP>

<EXT>My house is stands strong thanks to my father not the council. It's not a good house [...] I don't have a bedroom. The problem is the council promised to invest in the whole area [As Rañas] but this has not happened. Only five years ago, did we get clean water to the settlement.¹⁴

<SRC>(Lourdes – Gitana)¹⁵</SRC></EXT>

<UIP>However, a substantial number of *gitano* families and communities have rejected the offer for relocation and integration, and, along with

¹⁴ Open-ended interview with Lourdes, a gitana living in As Rañas. The interview was undertaken in a community centre on 22 May 2010.

¹⁵ Open-ended interview with Lourdes, a gitana living in As Rañas. The interview was undertaken in a community centre on 22 May 2010.

them, forms of educational and housing welfare programmes. This rejection or impossibility to live as one is expected to in the eyes of the local residents only exacerbates local non-gypsy community outrage. Why would they not want to live like us? Why would they say ‘no’ to free welfare support? Indeed, such questions often surface during community protests. While there appeared to be some resistance to the relocation plans for *gitano* settlements in the years leading up to 2008, greater opposition from non-gypsies evolved when plans to relocate *gitanos* from Peñamoa were made public: for residents it was a matter of drugs and crime, and community safety. This division between local government and residents resulted in a number of lengthy demonstrations against gypsies. This social services worker recalls these demonstrations:</UIP>

<EXT>With Peñamoa they tried to shift some families to a new block in the city two years ago but the people protested there every Wednesday with signs like ‘No *gitanos*’, ‘We don’t want *gitanos*’. They did it every Wednesday.¹⁶

<SRC>(Social services worker)</SRC></EXT>

<UIP>The conditions of *gitano* relocation and integration stipulate that they must cease involvement in crime or illicit activities to qualify for welfare support and economic benefits. This was difficult to envisage given the poor levels of support and limited work opportunities for *gitanos*. Those *gitanos* that have jobs often work on a temporary and intermittent basis and are often the first to be released – they are the most disposable workers. Here Jose, a gitano from As Rañas, explains the situation:</UIP>

¹⁶ Open-ended interview with local council social worker. The interview was undertaken in a café in La Coruña on 8 April 2010.

<DLG>Daniel: What do you need to improve the situation?

Jose: A decent job like anyone. I am unemployed. I only work in summer when the dock call me. Probably because there are lots of us [*gitanos*] who would take work, we always are the first to lose the work. It is good money but not enough.

Daniel: Is it sufficient for a year?

Jose: No, I don't pay electricity or water but when they finish these houses [in As Rañas], we will have to start paying.¹⁷</DLG>

<UIP>At the time of writing in April 2010, the local council had destroyed 105 *chabolas* in preparation for the construction of *la tercera ronda*; had successfully 'integrated' around 40 Peñamoa families; and were preparing to move an additional 38 families. There remains, however, a core of 20 *gitano* families at Peñamoa who refuse to move. These families do not appear to meet the criteria for social support and are still living on the site next to the construction of *la tercera ronda*. The council have indicated that these families will be removed by force by the police if they do not move. But the question remains as to where will they go if they do not qualify for social support or reject it?</UIP>

<IP>In addition, one has to wonder whether all possible support mechanisms are in place to carry the *gitano* relocations, because there appears to be little strategic linkage between the local council and the *gitano* agencies. None of the main *gitano* agencies has offices or strategic links in La Coruña (e.g. Chavós or Fundación Secretariado Gitano). Moreover, while there are university student volunteers who give educational classes in As Rañas and O Portiño, the only council-funded provision for Peñamoa ceased to exist in December 2009. In fact, there

¹⁷ Open-ended interview with Jose, a *gitano* from As Rañas. The interview was undertaken in his home on 24 April 2010.

had only ever been one person from the local council dealing with the complex social problems of Peñamoá. This *gitano* outreach worker said:</IP>

<EXT>We used to have more social workers there [in Peñamoá] but I don't know what they do now. We have had three different people in the job so it's a little limp. First we had someone, they left, and soon after a second person but they didn't stay long and third came. But now there is no one in the job [...] I don't know if there is any help in Peñamoá – the council are not interested. They are only interested in the road [la tercera ronda]. They are not interested in offering intervention. Peñamoá has existed for 30 years and no one has done anything. It's the police and councils' fault but more the council's because they direct provision. It is also political as well. A little to the left and they might help but as long as it is a right-wing local government, no one wants to help.¹⁸

<SRC>(Gitano outreach worker)</SRC></EXT>

<H1>Conclusion</H1>

<UIP>This article has shown that over the last 30 years, an increased economic agenda in La Coruña has coercively moved *gitanos* from central parts of the city, where they had their livelihood and businesses, to poorer, substandard conditions on the fringes of the city. While some gypsy communities appear to have secured some stability, most remain spatially ostracized from the city still lacking basic social support and still experiencing discrimination from employment and training (Jover and Reyero 2000; O'Toole 1994; Poveda and Marcos 2005; Rodríguez et al. 2009; Teasley 2005). They are still in competition with other socially

¹⁸ Open ended interview with a gitano outreach worker. The interview took place on 23 April 2010 in a café in La Coruña.</EN>

marginalized groups to earn a living and struggle in the face of increased bureaucratic processes to sell *chatarra* and *la venta ambulante*. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that some *gitano* families from Peñamoa remain sceptical about the promise of housing, work and benefits when there are ‘integrated’ *gitano* communities which still require basic support mechanisms and still experience barriers to employment.</UIP>

<IP>The worst example appears to be Peñamoa, which is where *gitanos* were coercively moved with no social or structural support. At the same time, however, they experienced increased difficulty selling *chatarra* and engaging in *la venta ambulante*, and the drug trade started to present increasing opportunities for some *gitanos*. Tighter law enforcement measures did little to aid the problem and the local media tended to focus on the association between *gitanos* and drugs and crime. When local residents learnt of relocation plans, there were community demonstrations as a result. Taken together, this appears to have reinforced the *gitanos*’ fragile position in La Coruña. The fact that some *gitano* families turned down welfare support and relocation may signify that they objected to being moved once again and perhaps knew of the potential rejection they might experience from the local non-gypsy community once relocated.</IP>

<IP>The wider non-gypsy community have not been presented with any positive integration stories such as those of As Rañas or O Portiño by the media and have not been offered explanations for the high levels of drug and alcohol use and poor health among *gitanos*. Instead, they have been fed news reports of their ‘problematic behaviour’ in the form of drugs and crime (Rodríguez et al. 2009; Sánchez and Gamella 1999) and the ‘problems of integration’. This only appeared to feed already fragile feelings of discrimination and racism and played some part in how local

non-gypsy residents felt about the relocation and integration of *gitano* families – that they would infect the area and bring problems of drugs and crime (Jalon and Rivera 2000).

This article also shows a difference in how integration is interpreted. For the local non-gypsy community, integration appears less about equality or diversity but more about retaining a quality of life and equilibrium in the class status quo. The thought of *gitanos* being relocated to their areas stimulated fear and concern amongst non-gypsy local residents. Conversely, integration for *gitanos* hinges on pressing issues that have historically barred them from mainstream life: equality, access to opportunity and, fundamentally, recognition and respect. However, the local non-gypsy community tended to think it was *gitanos'* fault for not wanting to fully integrate when perhaps their situation was more aptly understood, as Cozzanet et al. (1976) suggest, through a process of acculturation – that is, interacting and in reciprocal contact with hostile host communities. This may explain why many of the behaviours considered unique to *gitano* culture have actually been caused by situations related to their social exclusion and may also indicate why some were involved in the drug market – precisely because they had to exploit these economic margins to survive (Sway 1984) when there were few other available opportunities.

Acknowledgements

The author would firstly like to thank the gypsy families and local residents and workers of La Coruña who allowed the author into their communities. Secondly, thanks to the two anonymous reviewers and Lourdes Melcion who made valuable comments on the drafts of this article. Finally, thanks to Fernando Leon Solis, Georgina Blakeley and Monica Threlfall for their consideration of the article. This work was

made possible thanks to a project funded in 2010 by the University of East London's Research Framework.</UIP>

<H1>Notes</H1>

<H1>References</H1>

Bangieva, B. (2007), 'Italy with special law against gypsies and travellers', <http://international.ibox.bg/news>. Accessed 10 April 2010.

Bauman, J. (1998), 'Demons of other peoples fear: The plight of the gypsies', *Thesis Eleven*, 54 (August), pp. 51–62.

Brearley, M. (2001), 'The persecution of the gypsies in Europe', *Behavioural Scientist*, 45: 4, pp. 588–99.

CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) (2005), *Población española de ambos sexos de 18 años y más, Study No. 2625*, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Cozzanet, F., Grieco, A. and Matthews, S. (1976), 'Gypsies and the problem of acculturation', *Diogenes*, 24, pp. 68–92.

Cudworth, D. (2008), 'There's a little bit more than just delivering the stuff: Policy, pedagogy, and the education of Gypsy/traveller children', *Critical Social Policy*, 28: 3, pp. 361–77.

FSG (Fundación Secretariado Gitano) (2006), *Annual report: Discrimination and the Roma community*, Madrid: Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

Gamella, J. (1999), 'Los gitanos andaluces. Una minoría étnica en una encrucijada histórica', *Revista Demofilo*, 30, pp. 15–30.

García, A., Campos, B., Cardiel, B., Legal, I., del Pozo, J. and Laparra, M. (2007), *Informe sobre la situación social y tendencias de cambio en la población gitana. Una primera aproximación*, Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.

Hammarberg, T. (2006), 'The situation of Roma in Greece', <http://wcd.coe.int>. Accessed 10 April 2010.

Comment [Q1]: AU: 'CIP (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) (2005)' has not been cited in the text. Please check and provide.

Comment [Q2]: AU: 'García et al. 2007' has not been cited in the text. Please check and provide.

Hammersley, M. (1992), *What's Wrong with Ethnography? Methodological Explorations*, London: Routledge.

Comment [Q3]: AU: 'Hammersley 1992' has not been cited in the text. Please check and provide.

Jalon, F. and Rivera, A. (2000), *Salud y comunidad gitana. Análisis de propuestas para la actuación*, Madrid: Asociación Secretariado General Gitano.

Jover, G. and Reyero, D. (2000), 'Images of the other in childhood: Researching the limits of cultural diversity in education from the standpoint of new anthropological methodologies', *Encounters on Education/Encuentros sobre Educación/Rencontres sur l'Éducation*, 1: 1, pp. 1–28.

Keenoy, R. and Stanton, G. (1985), 'Confessions from Plaza Real: Ethnography and marginality', *Critique of Anthropology*, 5: 3, pp. 41–53.

MacLaughlin, J. (1998), 'The political geography of anti-traveller racism in Ireland: The politics of exclusion and the geography of closure', *Political Geography*, 17: 4, pp. 417–35.

O'Toole, F. (1994), 'Tackling travellers issue key test for coalition', *The Irish Times*, 23 December 1994, pp. 12.

Poveda D. and Marcos, T. (2005), 'The social organisation of a stone fight: Gitano childrens' interpretive reproduction of ethnic conflict', *Childhood*, 12: 3, pp. 327–49.

Quintero, G., Lilliot, E. and Willging, C. (2007), 'Substance abuse treatment provider views of 'culture': Implications for behavioural health care in rural settings', *Qualitative Health Research*, 17, pp. 1256–67.

Rodríguez, A., León, A., García, M. and Núñez, J. (2009), 'Attitudes of adolescent Spanish Roma toward non-injection drug use and risky sex behaviour', *Qualitative Health Research*, 19: 5, pp. 605–20.

Roseman, S., Herrero, N. and Fife, W. (2008), 'The cultural politics of tourism and heritage in Galicia: Anthropological perspectives', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 21: 2, pp. 73–86.

Sánchez, P. and Gamella, J. (1999), 'Viejos y nuevos estereotipos sobre los gitanos en los discursos de los escolares andaluces', *Revista Demofilo*, 30, pp. 133–58.

Smith, T. (1997), 'Racist encounters: Romani gypsy women and mainstream healthcare services', *European Journal of Woman's Studies*, 4, pp. 183–96.

Sway, M. (1984), 'Economic adaptability: The case of the gypsies', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 13: 1, pp. 83–98.

Teasley, C. (2005), 'Ambiguous legacy: Instituting student diversity at a Spanish secondary school', *Cultural Studies and Critical Methodologies*, 5: 2, pp. 206–29.

Tomás, E., Pérez, J., Tixeira, M., Suarez, J. and Velasco, C. (2004), *Erradicación del chabolismo y integración social de los Gitanos en Avilés*, Avilés: Univeristy of Oviedo.

Wolf, E. (1982), *Europe's People without a History*, London: Allison and Busby.

<H1>Contributor details</H1>

<UIP>Daniel Briggs received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Currently, he teaches criminology and criminal justice at the University of East London in Stratford. He has worked with a range of different social groups – from the most vulnerable to the most dangerous. His work has taken him inside prisons, crack houses, mental health institutions, asylum seeker institutions, hostels and various homeless services. He is currently researching the behaviour of British youth abroad on holiday and is writing a book for Routledge due for publication in 2011 titled *Crack Cocaine Users: High Societies and Low Lives in South London*. His research

interests include processes of social exclusion, culture and deviance, and identity and perceptions of the self.

Contact: School of Law, University of East London, Duncan House, High Street, Stratford, London, UK.

E-mail: d.briggs@uel.ac.uk</UIP>