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To balance representation between congealed social relations

Examining Pavee Point's position paper on "Traveller Men's Health" and its discourse on Irish Travellers, Traveller men and Irish society.

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Abstract:

This thesis examines how the Irish Traveller organisation Pavee Point balances representing Irish Travellers, while simultaneously working closely with Irish authorities, and calling for funding from the EU and the Irish state. This is realised through critical discourse analysis of a position paper from Pavee Point, on Traveller men's health. Power is a complex issue, especially in this case; Irish Travellers are the most discriminated ethnic group in Ireland, with the Irish state being on the top of the hierarchy and Pavee Point a link between both. As such, they represent both. The findings from the analysis concludes that the text examined has a pattern of avoiding agency when presenting claims of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, while structuring the grammar differently when describing previous work by Pavee Point. Linguistically, there also exist traceable *othering*, which could possibly be argued as showing signs of internalised othering. The analysis further confirms that the social relations of power traceable in the text, shows a wide gap in status between Irish Travellers and any kind of officials from the Irish state, including healthcare workers. The conclusion is that there is a gap in status between Irish Travellers and the organisation Pavee Point, and that these positions may be the reason behind the linguistic avoidance of agency in the text.

Keywords: Irish Travellers, Critical discourse analysis, Ireland, ethnocide, othering

”As a nation, we had long known the experience of being othered. We are still viscerally acquainted with the shame and helplessness of being seen and treated as inferior by the “superior” colonial power; stupid in contrast to learned, backward versus civilised and irrelevant as opposed to significant. Since the inception of the State we have been repeating the relational patterns of colonisation, a distinctive pattern called internal colonialism.”

/ Elaine Martin, Patrick Nevin¹

”I think that in modern society, social control is increasingly practised, where there is feasible, through consent. This is often a matter of integrating people into apparatuses of control which they come to feel themselves to be part of (e.g. as consumers or as owners of shares in the ‘share-owning democracy’).”

/ Norman Fairclough²

¹ Elaine Martin, Patrick Nevin, “Contemptuous neglect of Travellers inflicts cultural trauma”, *Irish Times*, September 16, 2022. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2022/09/16/contemptuous-neglect-of-travellers-inflicts-cultural-trauma/>

² Norman Fairclough, *Language and power*, (New York: Longman Group UK Limited, 1989), 36.

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1. Introduction, power relations and policies against discrimination:

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (from here on the FRA), there is widespread discrimination and hostile attitudes in the EU towards ethnic minorities of Roma and Travellers³, and one of the most exposed ethnic groups, in terms of discrimination and racism, are the Irish Travellers.⁴ However, discrimination isn't simple or uncomplicated to cease and control, due to power being a multilayered phenomenon. Power is a complex subject regarding social relations and hierarchies in society. Even in democracies, with laws installed to secure Human Rights, discrimination still occurs. This is certainly true regarding the European Union and the FRA,⁵ taking Human Rights seriously, building them into public administration through this specialised agency. However, this ambition compared to reality has a discrepancy with 'progress', where attitudes towards, here Travellers and Roma are still hostile. These subjects thus benefit from a closer analysis, functioning to discover hidden assumptions on discourses, regarding groups subjected to othering.

The Irish state officially objects to racism and discrimination⁶. Likewise, many citizens, policymakers and as in the material for this thesis, health care workers, would probably express support for human rights and disapproval of discrimination and racism. Still, a high number of Irish Travellers express in the FRA's survey that they *do* experience discrimination. A well-known, established Traveller organisation, Pavee Point, has published evidence of alarming rates of mental health problems as well as experienced discrimination⁷. Ergo, existing policies do not appear to be completely sufficient.

This thesis argues for the use of critical discourse analysis to start a process of deeper understanding of existing discourses in Ireland around norms of settled people and Travellers. Critical discourse analysis can help identify new perspectives and discover hidden assumptions, that can be challenged in a nuanced way, or give new insights, in addition to existing work of policy making and research. Furthermore, the assumption of this thesis is that the foregoing hypothesis is also applicable within the EU, wherever work for equality

³ "Roma and Travellers in six countries", FRA, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, last modified March 30, 2021, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/roma-and-travellers-six-countries-technical-report>

⁴ "Travellers in Ireland – key results from the Roma and Travellers Survey 2019", FRA, 3.

⁵ FRA, website. <https://fra.europa.eu/en>

⁶ "Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination", Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/08/Ireland-and-the-Convention-on-the-Elimination-of-All-Forms-of-Racial-Discrimination.pdf>

⁷ International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights Ireland,"Joint alternative Report by a Coalition of Traveller and Roma Organisations, Pavee Point et al., January 2014, https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pavee-Point-Traveller-and-Roma-Centre_ICESCR-Ireland-Traveller-and-Roma-2024-Final.pdf

seems to be ‘stuck’ and there is a discrepancy between policies and outcome. Perhaps the problem is not agreed goals and values, but deeper subconscious ideas about truth.

1.1 Disposition and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to deeply examine a position paper from the organisation Pavee Point, “Traveller Men’s health”, using critical discourse analysis, to find possible hidden assumptions about Irish Travellers, and to identify cues of power relations in the text. Critical analysis theory and method can appear very critical, because it is, however, the purpose of this close reading approach is here to serve as an addition to existing discourse, to add complexity and make structures visible that may have been ‘invisible’ and made into discourse of common sense. The stance of this thesis is that critical discourse analysis is valuable in general when researching democracy, segregation, or social sustainability. It is useful in European studies due to the complex history of nations, nation-states and nation-state building in Europe, where it can add a dimension of transparency through layers of congealed social relations and transgenerational trauma.

Research questions:

1. What can the chosen theory and method find that gives cues on power relations between the organisation Pavee point and Irish Travellers, as well as between Pavee Point and the Irish state?
2. How are those differences in status and power within the context of Ireland balanced?

1.2 Terminology

Othering: According to the Cambridge Dictionary online, othering is “the act of treating someone as though they are not part of a group and are different in some way”⁸. The phenomenon can produce/reproduce social hierarchies⁹ and includes centring a “we” as a norm versus the *other*. This process has potential for dehumanisation.¹⁰

⁸ “Othering”, Cambridge dictionary, accessed May, 17 2024, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/sv/ordbok/engelska/othering#google_vignette

⁹ Johnson, J. L., Bottorff, J. L., Browne, A. J., Grewal, S., Hilton, B. A., & Clarke, H. (2004). “Othering and being othered in the context of health care services”. *Health communication*, 16(2), 255–271. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327027HC1602_7

¹⁰ “The process of othering”, Montreal Holocaust Museum, <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/the-process-of-othering/>

Discourse: According to Oxford reference online, “Discourse” is “A continuous stream of spoken (and sometimes written) language longer than a sentence. [From Latin *discursus* argument, from *discurrere* to run to and fro, from *dis-* apart + *currere* to run]”¹¹

Norman Fairclough defines the term in “Language and power as: “language as a form of social practice”¹². In this thesis, the term is used as the collection of established norms, assumed truths and common ways of thinking and describing something.

Travellers: “Travellers” may refer to ethnic groups who traditionally have been nomadic. Often, they are grouped with *Roma*; in Sweden, Swedish Travellers are also Roma, but in Scotland and Ireland, Travellers are native ethnic groups and not of Roma descent. The organisation Pavee Point works for the rights and community development for both Travellers and Roma in Ireland. In this thesis, ‘Travellers’ refers to *Irish* Travellers who are an Irish, ethnic minority with their own customs, language (Shelta, related to Irish Gaelic¹³) and religion, that have been distinguishable from the general population on Ireland since centuries.¹⁴

Ethnocide: According to Jaakko Heskanen “ethnocide” is a term that has been used by Indigenous Rights movements in contrast to genocide. He also notes that “genocide” has been popularised by western democracies while ignoring the more widespread occurrence of ethnocide connected to the very foundation of the ideals of civilisation that as he puts it, more universally is a natural part of “post-war international order”.¹⁵

The Merriem Webster dictionary online (part of Encyclopædia Britannica¹⁶) simply explains it: “the deliberate destruction of an ethnic culture”¹⁷.

1.3 Background: brief context of Ireland and Irish Travellers

A greater context around an ethnic minority, in this case Irish Travellers, is relevant for two reasons. First, to be consistent with this thesis’ theory, where discourse does not exist in a vacuum, but as in relation to its wider context and full society of social relations. Second, due to Irish Travellers and Ireland’s settled population’s shared past and having lived on the same

¹¹ “discourse”, Oxford Reference, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095721304>

¹² Norman Fairclough, *Language and power*, 20.

¹³ “Rare language fact file: Shelta”, The language shop, accessed May 2024, <https://languageshop.org/rare-language-fact-file-shelta/>

¹⁴ Ostberg, R.. “Irish Travellers.” Encyclopedia Britannica, May 16, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Travellers>.

¹⁵ Jaakko Heiskanen. (2021) “In the Shadow of Genocide: Ethnocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and International Order”. *Global Studies Quarterly*, Volume 1, (4) <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksab030>

¹⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/>

¹⁷ Merriem Webster, “ethnocide”, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnocide>

geographical space for centuries. Critical discourse analysis views social relations as products of and creators of discourse, a discourse which in turn affects the subjects living within that reality, (not objects), subjects with agency interpreting discourse. In the process of interpreting reality and how perceived and imposed truths are behind how society and social relations are built; these subjects also become contributors to the creation of discourse.¹⁸

Irish Travellers and the settled, general population share DNA and history on the geographical space of the island. Around 367 years ago, the two started to separate from each other according to findings¹⁹, evidence which came to counter a previous theory that Travellers deviated from the settled population due to the Famine²⁰. That merely proves *when* the separation between current day's settled and Travellers happened, and from that it is possible to imagine that ancestors of modern day's Irish Travellers could have had any occupation in the foregoing past, or perhaps they were still a separate group culturally or occupationally, but as an *isolated* group according to the research of DNA, that genetical separation happened around the mid-17th century, as referenced in footnote 14. There is no scientific conclusion of Travellers in Ireland, as an ethnic group, before colonisation.

1.4 Ireland before colonisation

The following section of the thesis will give a brief introduction to Ireland's rich cultural heritage. This is relevant because Irish culture was consistently forbidden, denounced, and presented as inferior, primitive, and uncultivated by the English²¹. Therefore it is part of the context of power and social relations also for Travellers. This form of ongoing, institutionalised othering has for centuries affected Irish identity, settled and Traveller Irish, even after independence from England²²

Before becoming colonised by England, Ireland had their own language, culture, and religion. Ireland also has an impressive literary past. Between the 5th to the 12th century, Ireland had the most varied and broad range of vernacular literature in Europe, in both Latin, Old and Middle Irish as well as bilingual poetry, and a substantial number of other genres²³.

¹⁸ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 39.

¹⁹ "Gene study reveals Irish Travellers' ancestry", The University of Edinburgh, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/usher/news-events/news-2017/gene-study-reveals-irish-travellers-ancestry>

²⁰ For further information about The Famine, see Ireland's Great Hunger museum, [Learn | Ireland's Great Hunger Museum \(ighm.org\)](http://www.ighm.org)

²¹ Katherine Marie Green, "The Colonization and Representation of Gaelic culture: Elizabethans in Sixteenth Century Ireland" (Master of Arts Thesis, Arizona State University, 2015) i.

²² Kumar, M. S., & Scanlon, L. A., Ireland and Irishness: The Contextuality of Postcolonial Identity, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 109, no. 1, (February 2019), 3-4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2018.1507812>

²³ Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*, (Department of Old Irish Publications, 2000), 1.

Storytelling and expressions of art, such as poetry, music, film, and literature are still an integral part of Irish culture, for both settled and Traveller Irish.

Regarding mobility, there were laws for travelling through the country²⁴, and there were the customs of “Booleying” which consisted of travelling every summer with livestock, and then back again after summer²⁵. Different roles of work and identities are mentioned in the medieval literature, such as merchants who travelled to trade their goods, travelling craftsmen²⁶, Saints;

”Travel is also a very common literary motif in *Vitae* as a genre. The physical journey is taken as the symbolic counterpart of the Saint’s life, “itself a journey in this world”, and this is most clearly visible in the *immrama* genre.”²⁷

There were the Druids, Bards and Poets, different musicians, entertainers, among whom Druids, Poets and Bards were the learned classes²⁸ and mobility aligned with these occupations and roles. Ireland in the same period, 5th-12th centuries, consisted of smaller kingdoms, around 150, and these were called *túaths*²⁹. According to the laws of the time, only the learned classes could travel *freely* between *Túaths*³⁰. In that sense, a “settled life” versus a more mobile lifestyle did not have the same status positions as they have in modern Ireland, where being fully settled is norm. The learned classes with the highest status in the old Ireland were occupied with poetry, music, spirituality and religion, genealogy, and history³¹. This is mentioned in the introduction and background section of this thesis due to the stereotype of the Irish, introduced by the British empire from the 17th century and forward; of the Irish being “wild” degenerates and how their culture was degraded and their language forbidden. This was motivated with Irish culture not being “civilised”. In a comparable way, Irish Travellers have been degraded, their language forbidden and they have been portrayed as “wild”. In that context the stereotypes about the Travellers resemble those older of the Irish from colonial times. Some current discourse in Ireland is currently being produced and discussed where “internalised othering” is argued as a link between those two phenomena, and I will present this in the end of the thesis.

²⁴ Jim Slemmer, “*Travel in early medieval Ireland: the practical and legal aspects*”, (Thesis, Utrecht University, 2023)

²⁵ Dr Eugene Costello, “The lost art of 'booleying' in Ireland”, *RTÉ News*, August 2021, <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0831/1211486-booleying-ireland-summer-migration/>

²⁶ Slemmer, “*Travel in early medieval Ireland: the practical and legal aspects*”, 11–14.

²⁷ Slemmer, *Travel in early medieval Ireland: the practical and legal aspects*, 15.

²⁸ Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Introduction to Early Irish Literature*, (Four Courts Press, 2009), 10–13.

²⁹ Fergus Kelly, *A guide to Early Irish Law*, (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2016) 3.

³⁰ Kelly, *A guide to Early Irish Law*, 4.

³¹ Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Introduction to Early Irish Literature*, 10–13.

1.5 English colonisation

England started to colonise Ireland through brutal invasion and war in the 17th century, under the lead of Oliver Cromwell³². There had been English settlers in Ireland before this, there had been Viking invasions and Norman invasions, but the Gaelic culture had survived this with some added influences. It was during the 17th century that British protestants started to see the Irish as inferior, racially.³³

The invasion and conquest are of course worth studying on its own and requires more space than a few lines. However, in this thesis, it is part of a brief background for social relations in Ireland. That in turn help explain the complexity of this country's past and collective memory of oppression and brutalisation of their people and culture. Further back in time, settled and travellers were not as separate as of today, given DNA studies that have revealed that Travellers became an isolated group around 360 years ago, thus, were not always as isolated from the settled group as of today.³⁴

1.6 Previous research

There exists extensive research on Irish Travellers and Irish history separately. Ina Ruckstuhl resumes in the working paper for the International Migration Institute that previous research on Travellers in Ireland has had two different tracks; one that views Travellers as a social class of poverty, not having gone through the same process of modernisation as settled people. The other track has distinguished Travellers as a separate ethnic group, but she argues that the latter alternative has been used in Irish nation-building to 'other' Travellers and create a 'modern' nation-state and narrative of the Irish nation.³⁵

Jim Mac Laughlin, Irish political geographer, often cited in modern research about Irish Travellers, in the article for the academic journal "Sociology", "*Nation-building, social closure and anti-traveller racism in Ireland*"³⁶, theorises that social relations between settled Irish and Travellers in the 19th century was strongly affected by nationalism and social

³² Ireland's Great Hunger museum, [Learn | Ireland's Great Hunger Museum \(ighm.org\)](http://learn.ighm.org)

³³ "Britain's Blueprint for Colonialism: Made in Ireland", Livia Gershon, January 2022, <https://daily.jstor.org/britains-blueprint-for-colonialism-made-in-ireland/>

³⁴ "Gene study reveals Irish Travellers' ancestry", The University of Edinburgh, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/usher/news-events/news-2017/gene-study-reveals-irish-travellers-ancestry>

³⁵ Ina Ruckstuhl, "The making of the Irish Traveller Community: Mobility discourse, settlement policies and the Irish state 1950-2010", IMI Working Papers, February 2015, 4. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272684795_The_making_of_the_Irish_Traveller_Community_Mobility_discourse_settlement_policies_and_the_Irish_state_1950-2010

³⁶ Jim Mac Laughlin, "NATION-BUILDING, SOCIAL CLOSURE AND ANTI-TRAVELLER RACISM IN IRELAND", *Sociology* 33, no. 1 (1999) 129-151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/S0038038599000073>.

Darwinism, which posed them outside of the ongoing modernisation process due to racialisation and defamation³⁷.

”This in turn meant that Travellers were located outside the moral and political structures of the Irish state and placed at the 'hostile' end of a continuum running from tradition to modernity. As a result of renewed modernisation through industrialisation in the 1970s through to the 1990s, new strategies of social closure have emerged which are causing Travellers to be located at the outer edges of Irish society.”³⁸

In his book “*Reimagining the nation-state, The Contested Terrains of Nation-building*”³⁹, Mac Laughlin further connects nation-building in Ireland, nationalism, classism, imperialism, and devaluation of nomadism and ethnic minorities. Mac Laughlin has in general written about how the project of modernisation from the enlightenment and forward, has come with the devaluation of nomadism, in Europe and colonies over the world.

The FRA, the European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights has conducted research on perceived discrimination, on social conditions, health of and the general population’s attitudes towards Travellers and Roma, including Ireland.⁴⁰ The findings of their surveys are widely referenced in several documents by for example the Traveller Rights organisation Pavee Point, such as the “Joint Alternative Report by a Coalition of Traveller and Roma Organisations January 2024”⁴¹ This survey, and similar kinds of publications from FRA about Travellers and Roma in Europe do not discuss context of history, or nation-building, but focuses solely on collecting data from Travellers and Roma and comparing the results to the general population.

Una Mc Crowley focuses in “*Liberal rule through non-liberal means: the attempted settlement of Irish Travellers (1955-1975)*”⁴², like Ina Ruckstuhl mentioned above, on how Irish Travellers were *imagined* and “reconstructed” through, very, intentional politics in between 1955 and 1975. She argues that the politics during these times was extremely and all-consuming controlling of Travellers but was also part of a political direction and attitude that

³⁷ Mac Laughlin. “NATION-BUILDING, SOCIAL CLOSURE AND ANTI-TRAVELLER RACISM IN IRELAND”, 1.

³⁸ Mac Laughlin. “NATION-BUILDING, SOCIAL CLOSURE AND ANTI-TRAVELLER RACISM IN IRELAND”, 1.

³⁹ Jim Mac Laughlin, *REIMAGINING THE NATION-STATE, The Contested Terrains of Nation-building* (Pluto Press, 2001)

⁴⁰ “Roma and Travellers in six countries”, FRA European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma and Travellers in six countries..

⁴¹ Pavee Point et al. “Joint Alternative Report by a Coalition of Traveller and Roma Organisations”. , Pavee Point et al.

⁴² Una M.Crowley, “Liberal rule through non-liberal means: the attempted settlement of Irish Travellers (1955-1975)” *Irish Geography* 38, no. 2, (2015) 128-50. <https://doi.org/10.55650/igj.2005.336>.

she means had “profound effect” on the entire Irish population, but in particular Irish Travellers.⁴³

2. Material of analysis:

The material for this thesis is a position paper by the Irish Traveller and Roma organisation Pavee Point, aimed at “public policy makers, service providers and other stakeholders”⁴⁴. Pavee Point⁴⁵ is a Traveller and Roma rights organisation in Ireland, whose work, according to their website (from where all following information about them has been retrieved) for the most part involves community development and opinion building. It was founded in the 1990s by Travellers and members of the settled community, in cooperation with Irish authorities, and that dynamic remains. Pavee Point has 357 published documents on their site, consisting of position papers, brochures, reports, information material, etc. and the documents are largely aimed at policy makers.

To begin with I was analysing a longer text from Pavee Point and seven other Traveller organisations, a “Joint Report” addressed at the ‘International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ (ICESCR)⁴⁶. Something that stood out in the text was information about Traveller men that suffered to a larger extent than Traveller women and the general population, from poor mental and physical health. It was especially their suicide rate that was alarming. At the same time, the report only suggested specific programs aimed at Traveller *women*, and this made me wonder if Pavee Point had some kind of project or other document explicitly designed for/directed at Traveller Men. I then found a position Paper on Traveller Men’s health from 2016. In contrast to the original choice of the ‘joint report’, which was quite succinct and written in the imperative form, the position paper is rich in ideological descriptions. The position paper therefore gave more information than the original choice, which makes it more suitable for analysis.

“Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health” has twelve pages and present statistics on life expectancy, health data, and integration/segregation for Traveller men compared to Traveller women and the general population. In all areas of health, the paper shows, Traveller men have poorer results than the control group. The paper also informs about the work of Pavee Point

⁴³ Crowley, “Liberal rule through non-liberal means: the attempted settlement of Irish Travellers (1955–1975), p.1” 129.

⁴⁴ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, Pavee Point, 7. <https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PP-Position-Paper-on-Traveller-Mens-Health.pdf>

⁴⁵ Pavee Point, <https://www.paveepoint.ie/>

⁴⁶ Joint Alternative Report by a Coalition of Traveller and Roma Organisations

and calls for further funding of their aimed projects for Traveller Men, as well as funding for new projects.

3. Theory and method; Critical Discourse Analysis according to Norman Fairclough

Since Critical Discourse Analysis is both a theory and a method, this thesis chosen theory is also its method. I have worked with the book “*Language and Power*”⁴⁷ by Norman Fairclough. The choice was made due to his detailed and systematic explanation of critical discourse theory as a tool to decode assumptions of truth and ‘common sense’. This precisely captures what I thought was needed in order to analyse how Pavee Point balances representing Travellers and Roma in Ireland, while *also* consisting of members of the public *and* collaborating closely with Irish authorities.

‘How do we recognize the shackles that tradition has places upon us? For if we can recognize them, we are also able to break them’⁴⁸, Fairclough starts the introduction chapter with a quote from anthropologist Franz Boas⁴⁹. The quote summarizes Fairclough’s intention with Critical Discourse Analysis, and it summarizes my motivation for using it; the belief that this deconstruction of language and analysis of social relations and power can be valuable in understanding what is working in a society and country, and how to improve social sustainability. Thus, the intention with this theory and method is not solely to describe something and expose it as a curious phenomenon or a ‘dry fact’, but the motivation is to search for possible keys to improve ‘social sustainability’, to see if and why an organisation or a state working towards such a goal is failing to reach their determined goals. Fairclough makes the stylistic choice to use the pronoun “I”, to be transparent with his own agency as a researcher, he also writes that it is important to be transparent for a researcher in social science, with own values and beliefs about society.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

⁴⁸ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1.

⁴⁹ Tax, S.. "Franz Boas." Encyclopedia Britannica, March 29, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Franz-Boas>.

⁵⁰ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 5.

3.1 "Hidden power behind discourse" and how discourse is being reproduced

Fairclough summarises the essence of his theory in this quote; "The gist of my position is that language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power".⁵¹

The theory is organised in to four chapters that focuses on language and discourse, discourse produced and reproduced through public institutions, social class, and power in capitalist society. He argues that there is an exchange of discourse that reproduces continuity of existing hierarchies, and concepts of common sense in society, as well as change of.⁵² Fairclough views the hierarchical system of social class as a foundational structure in society, but does not stop there. He mentions social relations between ethnicities, generations, sexes, and thinks it is too difficult to measure these different factors to equivalently.

"On the other hand, class relations define the nature of the society, and have a fundamental and pervasive influence on all aspects of society, including these other relations, so that it is no acceptable to regard gender, race, and so forth as simple parallel to class. I shall regard class relations as having a more fundamental status than others..."⁵³

As made visible in foregoing quote, he views social class as the heaviest factor of social relations. An important stance in *Language and power* is the idea that to understand discourse, it is not sufficient to only study structures in society, or to think that structures in society is mere a result of discourse.

"As far as the social world is concerned, social structures not only determine social practice, they are also a product of social practice. And more particularly, social structures not only determine discourse, they are also a product of discourse"⁵⁴.

As an example, the structures of schools are used. The roles and hierarchy in schools are established and widely known, there are the teachers; and by starting to work as a teacher in school one *becomes* a teacher and is expected to fulfil that role according to an established template. The same happens when children *become* students. In this way structures of social relations are reproduced by discourse (the person starting to work as a teacher becomes a

⁵¹ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 14–15.

⁵² Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 17.

⁵³ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 37.

⁵⁴ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 38.

teacher according to already determined guidelines and structures, the children become students according to established structures), and they, in turn, reproduce discourse.⁵⁵

3.2 Member resources (MR) and common sense

A vital tool in Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is MR, member resources.⁵⁶ The term represents the tools and 'glasses' every individual possess to understand and interpret the world, news, information, literature, whatever it may be the individual reads, hears, watches and process into interpretation. These set of tools or glasses consists of their collected assembly of experiences, learned knowledge, (also subconsciously), in every aspect. Thus, when people, like students drafting a thesis, or citizens in Ireland reading the newspaper etc., are interpreting a message, they cannot simply 'decode' it in a completely objective way, but their interpretation will get filtered by, affected by their own 'MR'. This is a difference to traditional idea analysis, where the interpreter uses tools to decode the text and present an analysis of the message. In Critical discourse analysis, all actors are considered, not just the text but the text producer and their own social relations and MR, the history of their society and social relations, the perceived readers, and the interpreter. For that reason, the 'background information' consisted of a collective history for both settled Irish and Travellers, since the thesis concerns Pavee Point's role of balancing representing Travellers and Roma with being close to Irish authorities and the state. This in turn, of course is a choice that I as a 'text producer' of this thesis has made in relation to my own MR.

The 'MR' term affects the individual's or a society's sense of 'common sense', so a part of the analysis of a text with this theory and method, comprises unravelling hidden MR of 'common sense', that are ideological, but for the text producer and reader may pass as mere 'logic' or 'natural' if not closely read and dissected.⁵⁷

3.3 Terminology in the analysis chapter

As a method I have used Fairclough's chapter five, in 'Language and Power', which is a practical chapter with grammatical tools to do a text analysis.⁵⁸ In this chapter I will explain the terminology used in the chapter for results, analysis and discussion.

⁵⁵ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 38.

⁵⁶ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 10-11.

⁵⁷ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 24.

⁵⁸ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 110-111.

Experiential values dissect how words reflect values of ideology. Fairclough uses two examples regarding routines on a psychiatric ward, described from two different angles. For example the *choice* to use either “restraints” or

“immobilizing people by tying them into wet sheets and then exhibiting them to staff and other patients; other physical restraints on body movement; drugging the mind against the client’s will”⁵⁹

These are ideological options that the text producer *chooses*, to describe an event, a work routine, facts, a suggestion for policy etc. How *Travellers* have been named and name-called are examples of experiential values, for example the degrading and racial slurs “*Pikeys*” or “*Knackers*” are ideological choices, versus “*Travellers*” which is the now official term used by Travellers and authorities, (although there are those to object to even categorising Travellers and settled differently, like the Podcast and organisation TraVision/Outside the Colony⁶⁰). In their own language; Cant, Travellers calls themselves Mincéirs⁶¹. In a text that in any way names these people, the word choice of “Mincéir”, “Traveller”, “Tinker” or slurs are all examples of *experiential value*.

*Overwording*⁶² is a term for when a word, synonyms or words with similar meaning, on the same theme, is repeated during the text. This, according to Fairclough, can be a sign of struggle ideologically; it is repeated a lot because it needs to be repeated, in order to win the reader over, to ‘sell’ something, meanwhile showing that the text producer has experienced difficulties getting heard or reaching some sort of goal.

Relational values explain the signs of social relationships between different actors in the text, as well as how the word and grammatical choices reflects creation or reproduction of social relations.⁶³

Experiential values in grammatical features describes how grammar can reveal agency in a text, which in turn may expose what accountability the text producer wants to take, give, or hide, either from themselves or from the actor in question, through the removal of an actor from a sentence.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 113.

⁶⁰ “Beyond the Colonial Labels”, Outside the Colony, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JVCGRP8z40>

⁶¹ “A Brief History of the Institutionalisation of Discrimination Against Irish Travellers”, Dr Sindy Joyce, Irish Council for Civil Liberties, November 29, 2018, <https://www.iccl.ie/news/whrdtakeover/>

⁶² Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 115.

⁶³ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 116.

⁶⁴ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 121, 123-124.

Relational values in grammatical features, like above term, may indicate social relations and hierarchies of power through specific words of various claims of absolute truth, versus careful choices. It can be the use of imperatives, where ideally the reader is supposed to comply⁶⁵, or it can be the choices of pronouns. Is the text producer a clear agent that is visible through “I” or “We”?

Expressive values in grammatical features further analyses assertions of truths and facts, through small grammatical choices like writing in present form; something *is*, by using words like “are/are not”. In comparison the choice is made between foregoing examples and “probably is, could be, may be a possibility” etc.⁶⁶

Cohesion/How are simple sentences linked together, is the name of “Question 8” in the methodology chapter and used in the analysis. It focuses on finding “*logical connectors*”, who may bear witness about ideology-based assumptions. Fairclough provides the example: ”I’ve never been out with anyone even though mum says I’m quite pretty”⁶⁷. “Even though” is the clue there, because it shows an assumption that a “pretty girl” should have been on dates. This question also involves textual structures in terms of how different sections of a text are placed; *what is the problem, what happened, what caused it, what long-term effects* did it have. The “*what caused it*” in this thesis material of analysis, is mostly missing, which I will return to.

4. Results and analysis

In the following pages I will present the results of the text analysis, with an additional discussion involving the context introduced in the background section of the thesis.

Interpreting text in critical discourse analysis is a *process* of interpretation, therefore the results cannot be separated from the analysis of the results. They are followed by a discussion that further reason the results and interpretations of them. The analysis has been worked with the tools explained in foregoing chapters, taken from chapter five in “Language and Power”⁶⁸.

The interpretation result has been extensive and left a larger quantity of answers to the method questions than was possible to include in the thesis. Therefore, only the most relevant results responding to questions about agency, hidden assumptions, ideology and MR are included in

⁶⁵ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 126.

⁶⁶ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 129.

⁶⁷ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 131.

⁶⁸ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 109-139.

the result and analysis chapter, since the essence of Fairclough's model revolves around those themes.

Experiential values: The document was found to contain a great collection of words with experiential value. They regard areas such as health (physical and mental), discrimination, international/EU perspective, othering, and a linguistic distance to Traveller men. Words connected to ideals from the Enlightenment, and words expressing a desire or preference for control over Traveller Men. Examples of overwording⁶⁹ were *development, progress, steps, process, further in process-slower in process, changing (at a slower pace), improved, community development, expand, improve, committed (committed to improve), continue to build/specific stage*. Synonyms to mortality, disease, social exclusion and mental health were also overworded: *Social exclusion, depression, loneliness, anxiety, isolated, inequalities, health inequalities, exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, clear gap between, poorer health outcomes, issues, respiratory conditions, heart disease, long-term illness, die, mortality rates, suicide, life expectancy, suicide rate (higher than in the general population), lifecycle, mortality, causes of death, death from external causes, excess mortality, statistically, significant higher than the general population, disempowerment, frustration, mental health, low self-esteem, main source of stress among men, feelings of negative self-worth*. The fact that words revolving development and mortality, mental health problems and social exclusion are overworded, can, with Fairclough's theory show traces of *struggle*⁷⁰ and be signs of the text producers struggling to be heard in matters of mortality, high rates of suicide, high prevalence of mental health problems and prominent levels of segregation in relation to Traveller Men. Simultaneously, overwording on themes of development and progress in relation to existing programs run by Pavee Point shows a struggle to boast how and what Pavee Point is doing about these severe issues, asserting that they can tackle it.

A theme in the text that can be traced from analysing experiential values is health in relation to social conditions, as well as the theme of international perspective/expecting an international audience. For example, this quote;

"Such a strategy should be cognisant of the social determinants of health and so must be developed and implemented in an inter-agency way, taking account of the impacts of discrimination, housing, employment, education and so forth"⁷¹

⁶⁹ Fairclough, Language and Power, 115

⁷⁰ Fairclough, Language and Power, 115

⁷¹ "Position Paper on: Men's Traveller Health", 11.

”Social determinants of health” is a theory developed by professor in epidemiology, Michael Marmot, for the World Health Organization; WHO⁷². The theory focuses on non-medical factors that influences our health as human-beings. That Pavee Point chooses to recommend social determinants of health as a tool for policymakers, is an example of how the organisation in the position paper shows alliance with international organs for health and human rights (FRA are also referenced in the paper). Furthermore, it raises questions if Pavee Point wants international recognition, to show that they are up to date with current policies within these organs (WHO and the EU), speaking to a greater, more international context of alliance and transnational work for public health, human rights and participation in democracy. A possibility is that this is related to funding. It could also matter if the text producers perceive policymakers of Irish authorities as liberal with values of holding international cooperation as something to desire and of immense value and status. The two largest political parties in Ireland, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, are both ideologically liberal, one slightly on the conservative side of the line, but both positive towards the EU.⁷³

Experiential values found in the text might reveal a tendency to view Travellers as victims of circumstances they cannot control. The high prevalence of bad health with Traveller men in relation to the general population and Traveller women, connects in the text with words like *exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, inequalities*. As I will return to further on in the analysis and discussion, agency is never mentioned together with these words, they are only presented as facts without any explanation or context. But the noun “discrimination” presupposes that the person/people *being discriminated against* are being discriminated by an actor. Someone is *doing* the discrimination, one *gets* excluded, by someone, by an actor, by a group. In the text there is no mention of the actor, only of the victim. Other examples of *experiential value* in relation to Traveller men are words that regard *culture* and *ethnicity*; in the following quote the words ”indigenous” and “minority”.

”Travellers’ health outcomes are not dissimilar to those of many other minority communities, most notably some Indigenous populations. What is clear from the international research and publications is that Indigenous and minority group men’s health requires both a mainstreaming and targeted approach.”⁷⁴

⁷² “Social determinants of health”, World Health Organisation. Accessed May 17, 2024. https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1

⁷³ “Ireland: polls and trends for the Irish election 2025”, Polit Pro. Accessed May 17, 2024. <https://politpro.eu/en/ireland>

⁷⁴ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 9.

These words in our modern-day discourse expresses respect and has replaced older terms with racist connections. With another agenda could older and outdated words have been chosen, but it aligns with human rights and liberal, democratic values, for example the well-known ‘soft power’ values of the EU, to use words like “ethnic minority” and “indigenous”. The term “ethnic minority” also functions as protection for Travellers as a group, against discrimination and against discrimination of Travellers being “acceptable”.⁷⁵ As a parallel, Travellers in Sweden, who are of Roma descent, got a form of protection against discrimination on ethnic grounds, when being officially recognised as an ethnic minority.⁷⁶ In addition, that Pavee Point chooses to compare Travellers to indigenous, native populations of New Zealand⁷⁷ and Australia, could be interpreted as another example of an awareness of the EU:S and FRA:s values of human rights⁷⁸. However, the section in the paper about Māori and Aboriginals in terms of *experiential values in grammatical features* reveal a persistent tendency to avoid specifying agency when doing the comparison to Travellers. The sentences are grammatically constructed through SVC; Subject, Verb, Complement⁷⁹, as seen in the quote below.

”Māori face educational, economic and social disadvantages and experience continuing individual and institutionalised racism.”⁸⁰

Fairclough gives the example in a sentence with this structure; ”many peasants(S) are(V) dead(C)”⁸¹

As mentioned previously, there is a subject, an actor, with agency when people experience racism and discrimination, systematically as a group. *Who* creates that experience, *what* is the root, *why* does it happen, *how* did it become a systematic phenomenon; these questions are not posed nor answered in the position paper. The sentence structure of SVC is called an ”event”⁸². If, instead, the sentence above cited would have been structured “The general population/New Zealand authorities/society subjects Māori to racism and discrimination”, the grammatical structure would have been an *action*⁸³. According to Fairclough, these different grammatical choices may depend on assumptions of common sense, on automatic normative

⁷⁵ Martin, Claude & Bonnard, gaby. (2018). ESPN - Flash Report 2017-49 - FR - July 2017 (1).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323703951_ESPN_-_Flash_Report_2017-49_-_FR_-_July_2017_1

⁷⁶ Forum för Levande historia, Lars Lindgren, *ROMERS KULTURELLA OCH SPRÅKLIGA RÄTTIGHETER-VÄGAR MOT SJÄLVFÖRVERKLIGANDE*, 13.

⁷⁷ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 9.

⁷⁸ The European External Action Service, “Among the poorest in the world and richest culturally – EU protects rights of Indigenous Peoples” https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/49097_en

⁷⁹ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 121.

⁸⁰ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 9.

⁸¹ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 121.

⁸² Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 122.

⁸³ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 122.

ideas which make them *ideological*. The choices may also be intentional to deceive the reader or hide agency.⁸⁴

The example above is not the only place in the paper where choices to hide agency are made when discussing discrimination against Travellers, but it is consistent throughout the text when mentioning exclusion of any kind. This following quote shows a form of *nominalization*, an action expressed as an event, through compressing several words into a noun.⁸⁵

”Traveller men were also impacted by the insidious issues facing the Traveller community generally – low educational attainment, difficulties caused by poor housing or being moved to ‘settled’ housing, and endemic discrimination in society.”⁸⁶

”Low educational attainment”, ”difficulties” caused by ”poor housing” and ”endemic discrimination *in society*” (not *by society*) are all nominalizations from actions to events. Quoted sentence is also an *agentless passive sentence*, ”Agentless passive sentences leave causality and agency unclear”⁸⁷.

Another aspect of how Pavee Points avoids the question of *agency* in the position paper, is when they describe how Traveller men are similar to Māori and Aboriginal men in terms of poor physical and mental health. There is no mention of *why* Māori and Aboriginals have developed this high level of bad health. The organisation specify that these two groups are “indigenous”, they also names Travellers as indigenous⁸⁸, however, the fact is that Māori, Aboriginals and Irish Travellers haven’t had this high level of suicide and alarming crisis of poor health *always*, through all times, but these are in post-colonial discourse all problems linked to colonialism and the post-colonial countries for minorities who has been subjected to ethnocide. Aboriginals was not a minority facing problems with exclusion before colonialism. As mentioned in this thesis background section, older literary sources from before the Cromwellian led colonisation of Ireland, does not have a discourse of “Travellers” and “settled”, but there were multiple professions and figures in early medieval Ireland who would travel routinely (saints, bards, druids etc, see the background chapter and their sources) and in contrast it would have been people with little ‘importance’ who were not mobile at all. There is no mention in old Irish literature of a people called “Travellers” who suffered

⁸⁴ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 122.

⁸⁵ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 122.

⁸⁶ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8.

⁸⁷ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 125.

⁸⁸ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 4, 9.

immensely from bad mental and physical health in the large quantity of Irish literature before English rule. Additionally, the discourse in Ireland is that Travellers used to have professions and a lifestyle in mobility⁸⁹, being able to live as commercial nomads⁹⁰, thus having had more of an independent ‘function’ in society as opposed to how Traveller men in current day are described in the position paper;

“Many Traveller men have a loss of structure and meaning to their lives. They reported hanging around, searching for a means to earn extra money, or trying to find things to do to relieve boredom.”⁹¹

Pavee Point also mentions that Travellers have not always had these prominent levels of unemployment and passivity, but that this is an outcome of the modernisation of Ireland;

“Unemployment is a significant issue for Traveller men. The change from agrarian society, through industrialisation and modernisation meant that Traveller’s traditional employment became marginalised in a more automated labour market.”⁹²

Howbeit, Pavee Point excludes the draconian politics of the 1960s to intentionally commit an ethnocide, which Ina Ruckstuhl summarises as degrading mobility to a reactionary and backwards lifestyle, linking Travellers to poverty, stating that they did not have a culture and was not an ethnic group and creating laws intentionally to stop Travellers from continuing their nomadic lifestyle and “absorb” them, assimilate them into settled, modern Ireland.⁹³

Taking these factors into consideration, this thesis argues a vital similarity between the groups Māori, Aboriginals and Travellers, that Pavee Point in the position paper *avoids*, when suggesting them as comparable ethnic groups (colonisation), while simultaneously, grammatically avoiding *agency*.

Moving on to the next tool, *relational values* and formality.

“Formality is a common property in many societies of practices and discourses of high social prestige and restricted access. It is a contributing factor in keeping access restricted, for it makes demands on participants above and beyond those of most discourse, and the ability to meet those demands is itself unevenly distributed.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Patricia Wood, “Travellers, land management, and the political ecology of marginalisation in Celtic-Tiger Ireland”. *Irish Geography* 50, no. 1, (2017) 59–60, DOI: 10.2014/igj.v50i1.1258

⁹⁰ Karolina Cugier, “Alternativa levnadssätt, Moderna nomader – Travellers – det irländska resandefolket”, (Bachelor of Art’s thesis, Gothenburg University, 2014) 16.

⁹¹ “Position paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8

⁹² “Position paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8

⁹³ Ina Ruckstuhl, “The making of the Irish Traveller Community, Mobility discourse, settlement policies and the Irish state 1950-2010”. IMI working papers. 6.

⁹⁴ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 65.

This aspect is on surface level unnecessary and even irrelevant to discuss because one can argue that it is a position paper, naturally the language in it would strive to be formal. It is stated in the paper that the addressees are policy makers. However, to include this tool, does not mean to review whether Pavee Point *should* or *should not* use formal language in their official publications, directed at authorities. It does, however, give context to the linguistic othering that can be traced in the text, and it can also serve as an example of how Fairclough means that text producers reproduce discourse.

Pavee Point is a Traveller organisation interacting with discourse of power and institutions of authority in Ireland, expressing in this position paper that their addressees are policy makers, and in another joint report stating that they have modelled the style of writing after other an official state report⁹⁵. In that sense, they have modelled the language of authorities, and in doing so, it seems that also the othering that has been done by authorities towards Travellers has possibly been internalised. Travellers and Traveller men are consistently presented with the pronoun “*they/them*” for example on pages 4, 8 and 10⁹⁶, otherwise never presented as a “we”. Travellers are also continually described from angle of authorities, visible in following quotes:

”It was identified through this project that Traveller women could be visited at home and health workers could discuss primary health care with them. It proved more difficult to engage with Traveller men. This is not uncommon amongst service providers and/or community groups...”⁹⁷,

”We are aware that working with men can be challenging and can only work with the involvement of Traveller men in all activities, using a community development approach.”⁹⁸

These sentences do not seem to be written by a spokesperson for Traveller men, writing *on behalf of* Traveller men, if one can assume it would be uncommon for a group that are fighting for their rights, to present themselves in third person, and as in general, “difficult” to deal with. Now, difficult for *whom*? The answer must be, difficult for people of authority and health care workers, doctors, nurses, health institutions.

Following passage is an example of *othering* from the tool of *relational values in grammatical features*:

⁹⁵ ”Joint Alternative Report by a Coalition of Traveller and Roma Organisations January 2024”, 2.

⁹⁶ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 4 ,8, 10

⁹⁷ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 5.

⁹⁸ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 7.

”2016 was the first year that a “passport to play” system was introduced whereby Traveller men were required to receive four key health checks delivered by health providers on site prior to participating. Building on the level of engagement, participation and interest by Traveller men in the region, the Traveller Men’s Health Project will explore the feasibility to expand this event nationally by working in partnership with other local Traveller organisations and Traveller Primary Healthcare Projects.”⁹⁹

Traveller men were *required* to go to health check-ups, in exchange for *permission* to play sports together with their community. The linguistics here reveals a hierarchical order of power where Pavee Point possesses a passport they *may give or not give* to Traveller men. A “Passport” is a word with experiential value since it is used as a metaphor in the project. It symbolises a document only official authorities of a country can give to citizens (or take from them), indispensable, crucial to possess to be allowed to travel *across borders* and *get access* to be *let in* to a country. Furthermore, another aspect of this quote is that engagement, involvement, participation and interest among Traveller men, are built from the outside-in, top-down, by the organisation and officials arranging and carrying out the project, and that order is a relational value. ”Building on the level of engagement...”, is an example of *agentless passive* grammar, due to Traveller men’s “engagement, interest and participation” presented as being “built” “upon”, thus not from within, by themselves, but from the outside by a hidden actor, ultimately carried out by the handing out or refusal of the ‘passport’ to *get access*.

Another quote that carries hints of common-sense assumptions of a need to control Traveller men and Travellers is

”Boys are afforded more freedom than young girls leading to high-risk behaviour.”¹⁰⁰

Now question 8 from Fairclough’s method chapter is useful; ”How are simple sentences linked together”¹⁰¹ The words “*leading to*” uses *logical connectors*¹⁰² that can function as keys to ideological assumptions about reality and common sense. The assumption in the quote is that if boys get freedom, it leads to high-risk behaviour. The quote is taken from a list with examples of poor mental health among Traveller men, so this assumption is specifically linked to Travellers as well. The following sentence after it is:

⁹⁹ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 6.

¹⁰⁰ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8.

¹⁰¹ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 129.

¹⁰² Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 131.

”They are disengaged from community and school”¹⁰³

and the following after that;

”Many Traveller men have a loss of structure and meaning to their lives. They reported hanging around, searching for a means to earn extra money, or trying to find things to do to relieve boredom.”¹⁰⁴

Here we can separate a *main clause* from a *subordinate clause*,

”It is generally the case that the main clause is more informationally prominent than subordinate clauses, with the content of the subordinated content backgrounded”¹⁰⁵.

”They reported hanging around, searching for a means to earn extra money, or trying to find things to do to relieve boredom” are the ‘facts’, deriving from a survey for the AITHS, All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010)¹⁰⁶, from where the clause ”Many Traveller men have a loss of structure and meaning to their lives” is assumed as common sense, ‘a given’.

That life of Traveller men lacks meaning and that this is due to structure is an assumption. Pavee Points argues for their “passport to play” to tackle that problem. It is common discourse that people in general need routines and structure, or else risk depression, but two things that matter in relation to a claim that Traveller men have a loss of structure and meaning to their lives, are, for one, Travellers aren’t and haven’t been able to fully live and support themselves like their culture traditionally did¹⁰⁷, and due to a lot of restraints on where to halt wagons and caravans. Pavee Point is nowhere in the position paper arguing to change laws to facilitate a retreat for Travellers to their traditional culture and lifestyle. They suggest *one* caravan being set up on a designated place, as a model and symbol of a culture, where older Traveller men can teach younger about customs and craft etc.

5. Discussion

After having analysed the position paper three patterns have become visible. Firstly, the continuous avoidance of agency when Traveller men’s mental health, discrimination and social exclusion are mentioned. Secondly, linguistic distance to Traveller men where Traveller men are *othered* and presented as “*they/them*” from the *perspective of officials from authority*. Thirdly, a duality in the text when trying to *unite two different goals*; to *preserve and protect* Traveller culture and heritage, what makes Traveller culture *unique and distinct*

¹⁰³ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8.

¹⁰⁴ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 132.

¹⁰⁶ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 5, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Ostberg, R.. “Irish Travellers.” Encyclopedia Britannica, May 16, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Travellers>

from the general population in modern Ireland. The other goal; to *incorporate* Traveller men in to society and convince them to subject, obey and *accept* the official Ireland's system of hierarchies and *norms*. One of the chosen quotes for this thesis,

"I think that in modern society, social control is increasingly practised, where there is feasible, through consent. This is often a matter of integrating people into apparatuses of control which they come to feel themselves to be part of (e.g. as consumers or as owners of shares in the 'share-owning democracy')."108

perfectly describes this unspoken agenda. "Agenda" may sound like unfounded speculation, possibly irrational, even emotion driven activism perhaps, it is a word often used as a negative, an accusation of someone's motif in a political discussion, here I use the word as in these two descriptions from Cambridge dictionary;

"a list of aims or possible future achievements" and "a secret aim or reason for doing something"109.

As was mentioned in this page and on the previous page (see quote for footnote) , Fairclough means that social control is most often exercised through achieving consent. Moving on now to discuss further the finds on agency, othering and views on culture and ethnic minority status for Travellers in Ireland.

5.1 Agency

The only place in the text where sentences are constructed as *active sentences*¹¹⁰ are when Pavee Point presents their own achievements with projects. An example of an *active sentence* in the material is "Pavee Point has a long history of working to improve Traveller health."¹¹¹

Here exists agency in the form of an active subject (Pavee Point) who is named responsible for an action, (the verb 'working to improve') and responsible for the goal (Traveller Health). This example contrasts with the choice of grammar when the topic in the text is discrimination (of Travellers) in contact with Health care workers/health care institutions;

"It proved more difficult to engage with Traveller men. This is not uncommon amongst service providers and/or community groups and Pavee Point summarises the difficulties surrounding men engaging with health services or groups as follows:

¹⁰⁸ Norman Fairclough, *Language and power*, (New York: Longman Group UK Limited, 1989), 36.

¹⁰⁹ "agenda", Cambridge Dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/agenda>

¹¹⁰ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 124.

¹¹¹ "Position Paper on Traveller Men's Health", 8.

- Discrimination;¹¹²

In this quote, “difficulties” for Traveller men when in contact with health care providers is expressed only through one noun, “discrimination”. There is no subject, *subjected to* discrimination, and not an actor *doing* the discrimination. This reconstruction of an action (health care providers discriminating Travellers) is an example of *nominalizations*, a “process converted into a noun”¹¹³, which has the outcome that a part of the process, as well as agency, is removed.

5.2 Othering of Travellers

Pavee Point is a well-known, award-winning Traveller organisation in Ireland, comprising of Travellers, Roma and settled Irish, working together with the expressed goal of improving living conditions for Travellers and Roma in Ireland, and to spread awareness and respect for Traveller culture and awareness of human rights and democracy.¹¹⁴ However, the linguistics of their position paper on Traveller men’s health consistently describes Travellers as “*they/them*”, and simultaneously appear to write from the perspective of authority, and the settled population. As shown previous in the analysis, Traveller men are also described as difficult to deal with. When it is stated that Traveller men are difficult to deal with it is written in the context of health care and social workers doing projects in sites for Travellers, to increase the use of health checkups and the prevalence of seeking health care. So, the claim that Traveller men have been shown difficult to deal with, is thus from the perspective of authority, and not from the perspective of other Travellers in other aspects. That sentence is though constructed as a fact about Traveller men. As was mentioned on page 5 and 6 in the terminology chapter, othering is an act of defining a group as different to a “we”, with potential of dehumanisation. The “we” in the text is clearly not Travellers, Travellers are literally labelled “them”. The “we” is the organisation, but also the written addressee; “...policy makers, service providers and other stakeholders”¹¹⁵. The way the position paper is written, I conclude that an “inclusive we”¹¹⁶ is being used. Fairclough makes (footnote 100) a distinction between the text producer choosing an inclusive or exclusive “we”, where the inclusive is the text

¹¹² “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 5-6.

¹¹³ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 124.

¹¹⁴ “about Pavee Point”, Pavee Point, <https://www.paveepoint.ie/about-pavee-point/>

¹¹⁵ “Position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health”, 7.

¹¹⁶ Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 127.

producer and the reader (like policymakers), or exclusive where the “we” would have been only Pavee Point, the organisation, *or*, it could have been “We Travellers”.

A quite newly started podcast in Ireland, “Outside the Colony” holds conversations between the two front figures of the organisation; a Traveller man and a man from the settled community, who is also an archaeologist, and their guests. The guests are researchers and academics who have either written and made research on Travellers in Ireland, or are researching topics like sociology and mainly other social sciences in Ireland. What is new and different with the narrative from Outside the Colony compared to the ‘traditional’ Traveller organisations, is that they do not focus on community development and integration of Travellers, but on opinion building among Travellers and settled Irish, with the message that the oppression of and marginalisation of Travellers has been a part of the English colonisation of Ireland. They have been fiercely critical of the established Traveller organisations, talking about a younger generation Travellers as “NGO Travellers” who, in their narrative, reproduce social relations and order, where Travellers in exchange for a salary and elevated status in Irish society work on behalf of Irish authorities¹¹⁷. This criticism claims that progress on mental health and status of Travellers in Ireland has not improved with the Traveller organisations’ work, but on the contrary, these issues have grown worse with time.

This contrasting narrative from a new and small Traveller organisation is added to give a perspective on the traceable othering of Travellers in the position paper. Current discourse among Irish policy makers, media, politicians and amongst many members of the Irish population in total, has been to consider the positioning of Travellers as an *other*. In the position paper this seems to be *natural*. With this comparison to the podcast Outside the Colony’s narrative, it becomes more visible that how to think of, address and work with ‘issues’ regarding Travellers is a *choice out of several*, depending on discourse, which also has alternatives. This in turn is valuable for the analysis due to how the position paper’s positioning is based on naturalised common sense, rather than pure facts without ideology.

5.3 Culture and ethnicity, ethnic minority status, to rescue Traveller culture

Culture and ethnicity are in the text related to Traveller men as a group, mixed with, as shown in the analysis chapter, ideological assumptions about control and social relations between Travellers and authorities, with the goal of getting Traveller men to comply and *consent* to

¹¹⁷ “Beyond the Colonial Labels”, Outside the colony, 13:50, posted October 13, 2024 on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JVCGRP8z40>

projects of Pavee Point. When states or organisations in cooperation with states work with national, ethnic minorities, social projects for members of Indigenous populations; what happens to the culture if it has already been subjected to ethnocide? If a culture is not allowed to exist organically the way it did before nation-building, how to preserve or keep said culture alive? Pavee Point suggests a project modelled after an Australian ‘men’s shed’ for Aboriginal men, where they can come and talk to each-other (with the purpose of improving their mental health), but also with the purpose of teaching the culture to younger men. At the same time, this model relies on keeping ethnicity in the project in a small, controlled reserve, where their culture can be practised in miniature in a way that does not threaten the nation state’s monopoly on norms and access to land etc. There is no expressed vision of returning to a past where Travellers could freely exercise their lifestyle and way of life. Patricia Wood argues in an article for *Irish Geography* that the Irish state intensified politics to eradicate Traveller culture, through ‘policing’ Travellers’ horse keeping with stricter laws that severely impacted Travellers’ mobility and culture, where horses and horse keeping is essential.¹¹⁸

Ina Ruckstuhl, author of, “The making of the Irish Traveller community, Mobility discourse, settlement policies and the Irish state 1950-2010”¹¹⁹, talks on an episode of “Outside the colony” about the problems with teaching ethnic minority knowledge in primary schools. Ina teaches in Norway and tells in the episode that the Norwegian schools are celebrating “Sámi day” and teach about the Sámi people, but that the curriculum is not thought through and does not give the students an understanding of their shared history, and how the Sámi people and the general population in Norway got to current day situation; the tuition often gets reduced to teaching about traditional craft, clothing, mythology, and reproduce othering in a way Ina express like “They are still other but now we are happy about that”¹²⁰. She makes the comparison to Irish Travellers and current work and discourse from Irish authorities expressing that they as authorities are making effort to improve relations between Travellers and settled, improve conditions and integration.

A contrast between Sámis and Irish Travellers relevant to this thesis and its chosen material are the organisations working for Sámi and Traveller rights. Sámi organisations in Sweden are not consisting of “Sámi members and members of ‘settled Swedish’ working together with the

¹¹⁸ Wood, P. “Travellers, land management, and the political ecology of marginalisation in Celtic-Tiger Ireland”. *Irish Geography* 50, no. 1, (2017) 59–80

¹¹⁹ Ruckstuhl, “The making of the Irish Traveller community, Mobility discourse, settlement policies and the Irish state 1950-2010”

¹²⁰ “The making of the Irish Traveller Community: 1950-2010”, Ina Ruckstuhl interviewed by Bernard Sweeney, YouTube, 9th March, 2024

purpose of better integrating Sámi in society”, they do not focus on community development, but are political grassroots organisations where the expressed ‘we’ are ‘we, the Sámi’, fighting to regain rights of hunting and fishing, they also openly names colonisation as part of history and as a cause of their need for organisation¹²¹. I argue that these factors can possibly be connected to the difference in approach to culture, and difference in the lengths these different organisations for the two ethnic minority groups vocalise, as how far the vision goes regarding their separate struggles to protect their cultures and their ongoing existence in each state. The way that Pavee Points communicates questions and projects regarding culture and ethnicity is when discussing their balance of who they represent of Travellers and authorities, it can be argued as weighing heavier on representing authorities. Furthermore, the perspective is an easy and beneficial one for the Irish state, since it requires no adjustments in order to facilitate Traveller’s culture in society, on roads, access to travelling, camping etc.

6. Conclusion

Turning now, finally, to the research questions for this thesis, and their answers. The first question was:

“What can the chosen theory and method find that gives cues on power relations between the organisation Pavee point and Irish Travellers, as well as between Pavee Point and the Irish state?”

By using Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis theory and method, I found that his claim that a common way of exercising power is to seek consent, can be traced all through the position paper, the “passport to play” just being one example. The tools of the method revealed a pattern of *avoidance of agency* whenever discrimination and exclusion of Travellers were mentioned, also when comparing Travellers to Māori and Aboriginals. When comparing mental health and other health related problems among Māori and Aboriginals, there is no motivation for this comparison as in mentioning that the common factor for Māori and Aboriginal modern problems with health and social exclusion, is colonisation and ethnocide. The answer to this first question for the thesis is that the power relations between Travellers and the state have a leap between the ultimate and executing power with the State, while Travellers are described as lacking in power and that the organisation Pavee Point is the answer to solve problems related to this lack of power, this through getting consent for their

¹²¹ “Vårt arbete”, Svenska Samernas Riksförbund, <https://www.sapmi.se/vart-arbete/>

suggested programs. However, in the position paper, Travellers as a group is not acknowledged to have any agency of their own, while the organisation and the state has agency.

Question number two was “*How are those differences in status and power within the context of Ireland balanced?*”

I cannot find an equal ‘balance’, but will answer that the choice by the text producers has almost solely been to take the actor in power; the state and policy makers, in regard, in an inclusive we with the text producers. The suggestions of projects and comparisons with other indigenous peoples have the same strong tendency to not mention the politics by the Irish state that has affected the outcomes of ‘issues’ listed in the position paper, as argued by several researchers presented in the sources. The avoidance of agency thus is visible both linguistically and in reasoning around problem solving. I conclude that in terms of balance, the position paper shows strong identification and loyalty to the Irish state and authorities, which would not be considered an equal balance, but instead biased.

7. Suggestions for further research.

Finally, I want to make suggestions for further research, that is done with an awareness of MR regarding Travellers, nomadic peoples, civilisation, integration, community development etc. A bachelor’s thesis cannot give solid proof that immediately solves problems such as those brought up in the position Paper on Traveller Men’s Health, but my suggestions are further research made with an awareness of Critical discourse analysis, in order to make visible hidden or subconscious biases or ideas that could affect what questions are being made in the research.

Especially relevant research would be investigating the ‘journey’ people on the geographical space of the island Ireland made from before, during and after English colonisation, through the fields of history, literature, archaeology, political science, sociology, anthropology and ethnography. In doing so also intentionally look for the ancestors of Travellers *as well* as the ancestors of settled people, to search for a better understanding of history and development of culture and social relations we see the result of in modern day.

Likewise a similar chronological investigation that passes important milestones in European nation building and development can be made, with the same utilisation of Critical discourse

analysis in the process, and it does not have to be groups based on ethnicity, it could also be based on social class for example.

To end with the lens on Ireland, the podcast episode of ‘Outside the colony’ send from Ulster University in Ulster, “Beyond the colonial labels”¹²², I think is an interesting conversation on colonialism and history in Ireland, where Bill Rolston, professor of sociology of Belfast university, who have researched colonialism in Ireland, says he has not really written about Travellers in the context of Irish history and colonialism, but that the academic roundtable talk that the researchers have with the hosts in this episode shows that there is an interest and academically, quite unexplored territory.

To research the colonisation of Ireland with intention to gain knowledge of Travellers’ place in that history, and to research Irish Traveller history from a post-colonial lens I believe could be beneficial for Irish history, as well as for the problems that Pavee Point has highlighted in their position paper and could possibly assist thaw modern congealed social relations.

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