**ESRC Seminar Series**

**Seminar One:**

**Conflict in space and place - accommodation and planning issues for Gypsies and Travellers**

**29th & 30th November 2012**

**Hugh Aston Building, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK**

11.00 Arrival, registration and refreshments

11.20 – **Welcome** from Jo Richardson

This is the first in a series of three seminars funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This first seminar will focus on conflict in space and place, looking at accommodation and planning issues for Gypsies and Travellers.

11.40 – **Articulating the problem: conflict in accommodation and planning for Roma, Gypsies and Travellers**.

There are a number of interlinked themes and challenges in the debate on planning/accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, including:

* National Planning Policy Framework: impact
* accommodation need,
* challenges in identifying suitable locations for sites,
* objection to planning applications from local communities,
* discourse in planning
* Suggested housing and planning solutions

The aim is that by the end of this session, some clear ‘problems’ and questions will be articulated so that we can start to take these forward and make suggestions in the remainder of the seminar for academics, policy makers, practitioners and community members to consider.

Lead facilitator Jo Richardson (De Montfort University)

Key Discussants: Margaret Greenfields (Bucks New University),

Patrice Van Cleemput (University of Sheffield),

Siobhan Spencer MBE

Maggie Smith-Bendell BEM

Simon Ruston (University of West of England)

13.00 – **LUNCH**

14.00 – **Contested Community** – how can we define and understand communities and what can we learn from this in relation to how the new planning framework will impact on all communities, but particularly those already marginalised. Communities are not homogenous, straightforward concepts, so when one is consulting ‘the community’ as part of planning – who is being consulted? If communities do not learn, do understand that they can be connected, let alone how (Somerville) what can be done to educate communities? Gypsies and Travellers are marginalised (Powell) and ‘othered’ (Richardson) and often physically excluded from communities. There is a need to ensure this exclusion isn’t further compounded in the research process and approaches which include Gypsies and Travellers in community research (Scullion) and a more general ethos of ‘co-production’ in research (Richardson) should be embraced as part of an attempt to better understand ‘community’.

Lead Facilitator Jo Richardson (DMU)

Key Discussants Professor Peter Somerville (Lincoln University)

Lisa Scullion (Salford University)

Ryan Powell (CRESR, Sheffield Hallam)

15.30 TEA/COFFEE

16.00 – **Understanding conflict in planning – a theoretical framing of the issue**

Planning can be seen as a process of communication and mediation (Forester and Laws). Conflict in planning can be seen to manifest particularly in consultation exercises and planning application responses for new Gypsy Traveller sites. But what can we learn from studies in planning both related to Gypsies and Travellers and in the wider planning context? Research on the use of ‘ghetto’ to understand the issues of marginalisation and segregation of sites (Powell) and on constructing ethnicity in the planning system (Beebeejaun) is useful to consider here. Also work examining the tensions between Indigenous people’s rights, in Australia and Canada, and the wider social and legal framework governing that space, referred to as ‘the contact zone’ (Barry and Porter) might provide useful parallels with the tensions in the English planning system for Gypsies and Travellers who remember rights to use common land, often bunded to deny access today.

Lead Facilitator: Professor David Laws (University of Amsterdam)

Key Discussants: Yasminah Beebeejaun (Manchester University)

Janice Barry (University of Sheffield)

Ryan Powell (CRESR)

Tim Brown (DMU)

5.30 **END of day one**

DAY TWO

9.30 COFFEE

10.00 – **The Discourse Framework for Gypsies, Travellers and Planning: the discourse framework: a need for mediation and conflict resolution**

This session will examine the broad discourse surrounding Gypsies, Travellers and planning for sites. Representation in media and political discourse will be examined in much more depth in seminar three of this series, but for the purposes of understanding conflict in planning there is a need to start to investigate the impact of the discourse framework here. Sites like Dale Farm and Meriden are extreme examples of the impact of opposition discourse but they are just two high profile planning cases among many. This session will start from a framework of discursive control (Richardson) which is also the subject of ongoing doctoral research (Ruston) but will think about this in terms of conflict and mediation (Laws) whilst examining practical case studies of Dale Farm and Meriden by those involved in the legal process at the time (Hargreaves).

Lead facilitator: Simon Ruston (UWE)

Key Discussants Jo Richardson

Professor David Laws

Michael Hargreaves (ITMB)

Julian Rendall (Berkeley Square Mediation)

Ryan Erfani-Ghettani (Institute for Race Relations)

11.15 SHORT BREAK

11.30 – **Housing and Planning Futures delivering homes and sites: alternative approaches?**

This session should help to place the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites and the challenges of the new planning regime within the broader context of housing need. There is an acknowledged need for homes in the community and for sites for Gypsies and Travellers. What is the impact of the NPPF on potential delivery of homes and more specifically sites? What lessons are there from those already managing and developing sites in local authorities and what impact does management of sites have on the ability to convince communities to develop new sites?

There is also a challenge in funding the development of homes and sites. Traditional funding for sites has been through grant funding but this has seen reduction in recent years and for how long will this be available? What are the alternative models out there?: REITS, charitable funds (e.g. CLTF), social investment bonds, community asset trusts. A range of professional practitioners from housing, planning and a community land trust will discuss these different approaches and all participants will want to consider whether such approaches can help to overcome some of the conflict in the existing models of trying to deliver sites:

* Andrew Matheson, Royal Town Planning Institute
* Sian Sankey, Chartered Institute of Housing
* Paul Sander-Jackson, Wessex Community Assets
* Tim Brown, De Montfort University
* David Bailey, Fenland District Council
* Mat Bagley, Leicestershire County Council

13.00 – **LUNCH**

14.00 – **Workshop**. The seminar group will split into three small groups to discuss three key questions that have come out of the sessions so far. These will broadly look at (1) implications for future research and development of ideas and theories (2) policy – messages for CIH, RTPI and others (3) practical future – what can practitioners do tomorrow to help facilitate planning for site accommodation?

16.00 **ENDS**