Irish Traveller Women Negotiating Home and School Environments:
Identity, Space and Embodiment

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PhD Thesis

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Declaration

This material submitted for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work and, except where appropriately acknowledged and cited, does not include the work of any other party.

Signed: Date:

Tamsin Cavaliero

For Richard

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Abstract

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The purpose of this research is to investigate the manner in which Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. Previous writers (Helleiner 2000; Okely 1983) on Gypsy Traveller women recognised that withdrawal from the workforce into the home place has led to a reduction in Traveller women's participation in the wider society, and contributes to a decrease in female pollution taboos (Okely 1975). Yet increasing engagement by Traveller women within the educational sector has had a significant impact of the way in which Traveller women's identity is understood and negotiated both within and between communities. Through a detailed exploration, from a distinctly gendered, cross-generational perspective, this research foregrounds the voices of mothers and daughters from an ethnographic perspective, located in *Baile Lucht Siúil* in the Republic of Ireland.

The key finding from this research is that gender plays the most important role in shaping Traveller identity. By focussing on the disjuncture between the generations, and building on ideas of Okely (1975, 1983) and Gay y Blasco (1997, 1999) the study draws attention to the importance of ritual hygiene practices observed through embodied performances as a way of preserving and maintaining group boundaries that are understood through moral performances located at the site of the body. The changing perceptions of ethnic and national identities are ascribed moral values understood through the unique relationship between Ireland and England. I argue that evidence of familial expectations centre around a performed and enacted morality relating to deportment, behaviour and dress as evidence of female sexuality.

This research offers new insights and understandings of Gypsy / Traveller women in Ireland, both by conveying their voices and by providing a context in which they could explore their feelings about their roles in a changing environment.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study, conducted over a six year period in the North Western region of the Republic of Ireland amongst the group of people known as the Irish Travelling community, investigates the manner in which Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, how they negotiate the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. This research is qualitative in nature and explores the lives of a small group of women from an ethnographic perspective. My relationships with the people involved in this study began fifteen years ago in 2000 and developed out of my experiences of working with the Travelling Community in Ireland in a variety of posts which took place in the arena of education, including, tutor assistant, trainer and facilitator for a number of Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI) with Traveller Support Groups, and more recently as Home Youth Liaison Officer for the Travelling Community (HYLOTC).

The research is located in *Baile Lucht Siúil*, a fictional place that roughly translates as The Home-place of the Irish Travellers. Whilst the study focuses on the group known as Irish Travellers it is particularly cognisant of the fact that the majority of the participants in this study move between the U.K and Ireland. Within this thesis I refer to the group of people known as the Irish Traveller Community. Whilst they are a distinct community, they share similarities and characteristics with other Gypsy communities in the U.K and across Europe. In the U.K. context the term most frequently used is Gypsy Traveller or Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT). In accordance with current European policy perspectives (Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020), the overarching term 'Roma' is used in European policy discourse to describe a number of diaspora commercial and nomadic groups that include those who identify as Traveller, Sinti, Roma, Ashkali, Manush, Dom and Lom (FRA, 2012; COM, 2011, p. 173-4).

Travellers and Roma experience marginalisation across Europe, in particular spatial marginalisation that impacts on their ability to participate in society through education

and employment (European Parliament 2011). In the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion the European Commission has stated that Roma women are more likely to experience social exclusion than both Roma men and women in the majority community, and are often victims of double discrimination: discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnic origin.

This research provides insight into the differences between daughters and mothers as they negotiate the home-school interface. The reason for this was because previous researchers on Gypsy / Traveller women noted their departed from engagement in the wider society through their retreat from the workforce into the home place (Helleiner 2000; Okely 1983). Yet a groundswell of increasing participation amongst Traveller women within the educational sector has had a noteworthy influence on the manner in which Traveller women's identity is comprehended and negotiated within and between communities.

There are a growing number of sources (Kóczé 2009, 2011, 2015; Magyari-Vincze 2006, 2007; Muñoz nd; Oprea 2005a; 2005b) detailing Gypsy women's identities, however, these are outside of the UK and Ireland. The interest in Romany Gypsy and Traveller women is emerging. Whilst previous research in the UK (Okely 1983) and Ireland (Helleiner 2000) draws on the experiences of women, my contribution is that it focuses on the distinctions and disjuncture between the generations and places Traveller women's perspectives firmly in the centre. The findings clearly demonstrate that gender dictates familial obligations, expectations, understandings of ethnicity and sexuality. By focussing on the disjuncture between the generations, I argue that, in line with findings from Greenfields (2008) young women have little power or voice within their community and experience strong familial pressure to conform to expectations.

These questions led to significant insights into a number of key areas, namely: the changing perceptions of ethnic and national identities are ascribed moral values understood through the unique relationship between Ireland and England. The legacy of English colonialism impacts on understandings of an Irish Traveller status within the Gypsy racial hierarchy from an historical perspective. More recently, as is evident in this research, the attempts by Gypsy Travellers to acquire status by reclaiming moral superiority through the adoption of a set of practices at once projected onto Irish

Travellers, which they in turn, refract and project back onto English Irish Travellers. These findings on the different experiences of Irish Travellers living in Ireland and English Irish Travellers both within family groups and between them, particularly from an Irish perspective, are necessary in order to develop understandings of the challenges presented when engaging with both groups and to allow for adequate educational, employment and health responses.

Current television 'documentaries' exacerbate cultural stereotypes and misrepresentations that contribute to negative stereotyping in the wider population. The explosion of recent media interest in all things 'Gypsy' such as the popular television series, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* has further contributed to negative perspectives. Of particular focus in these programmes has been intense public scrutiny over the dress and deportment of young Traveller women. The focus on this is at the expense of wider structural inequalities that are glossed over for the preferred consumption of tabloid interest in young women's bodies. This stereotyping and misrepresentation operates in a landscape where current Irish government recommendations (*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* 2014 p. 54) acknowledge that:

> Young people, especially young girls, are particularly vulnerable to negative self-image and media pressure surrounding body image. It is therefore important to promote a safe and healthy body image and self worth.

Against a background of changing lifestyles, younger Travellers are required to reformulate their own understandings of Traveller identity, and this is influenced by increased involvement in schools and by the ways in which Traveller identity is represented within the curriculum. Building on ideas of Okely (1975, 1983) and Gay y Blasco (1997, 1999) I argue that evidence of familial expectations centre around a performed and enacted morality relating to deportment, behaviour and dress as evidence of female sexuality. Traveller women's deportment, dress and behaviour is scrutinised on a number of levels ranging from the macro to the micro, both within and outside the community and is linked to ideas surrounding female sexuality.

The findings highlight the significance of understandings of ritual pollution, which is understood and experienced differently amongst different groups of Travellers. Ritual pollution is conceptualised in terms of inside/outside body (i.e. English and Irish Gypsy

/ Travellers) or top/bottom (i.e. Rom) symbolism and is experienced as disgust, shame or fear. This inside/outside body or top/bottom symbolism classifies by comparison of the sacred from the profane, e.g. Gypsy/Non-Gypsy. Larkin (1998, p.vi) has suggested that understandings of ritual pollution lead to a form of social praxis, which is shown to affect the quality of Gypsy women's lives in personal, social and political domains. Discussions around ritual pollution have been found in much of the literature surrounding Gypsy purity customs (e.g. Gay y Blasco 1999; Larkin 1998; Okely 1983; Sutherland 1977; Stewart 1997) but interestingly in this research no mention whatsoever was made to them. This finding would seem to align with Okely's (1975) suggestion that a decrease in female pollution taboos is linked to women's declining economic role in outside society, however if we view education as increased participation in the wider society, then this changes, and is perhaps more relevant when we look at cleanliness in school; these discourses are still apparent, but have changed to become more insidious.

Identity is not a fixed phenomena, it is fluid and changing in response to environmental and economic contexts. Gypsy Roma Traveller communities have for centuries responded to fluctuations in circumstances with ambiguous identities. Newly emerging and negotiated identities pave the way for opportunities to build bridges across and between communities at local, national and transnational levels which create broader platforms for equality and social justice issues to be combined in order to alleviate inequalities. Failure to explore divergent identities is a key human rights issue as well as an issue facing Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, as voices remain unheard and marginalised. This highlights the need for a change in practice and understanding which values collaboration between organisations and institutions, developing cultures of respect through genuine consultation and involvement.

The way in which this research was conducted was by examining the following six key questions. Firstly, how does the school environment impact on Traveller women's experience of themselves? Secondly, how has Traveller women's educational experience changed over time? Thirdly, how has Traveller women's home experience changed over time? Fourthly, how do Traveller women experience these different spaces? Fifthly, how do different contexts impact the choice of behaviour and/or response? Finally, how is education shifting Traveller identities?

The overview of this PhD thesis is as follows: in Chapter Two I provide an introduction to the group known as the Irish Travelling Community, by detailing an overview of the characteristics of the group examining origins, culture, issues affecting Travellers and Irish legislation history. The chapter also looks briefly at Traveller employment and accommodation; with a particular emphasis on the issues affecting Traveller women and young people through educational provision.

Chapter Three provides an exploration of the literature surrounding Gypsy / Traveller identity. It is concerned with the nature of Traveller identity within the context of a changing society. Through the exploration of the different identities of Irish Travellers resident in the Republic of Ireland and Irish Travellers in the UK, and the differences between these communities, it problematises notions of nationality and Gypsy / Traveller identity. This chapter also considers the changing nature of Traveller spatial practices and the impact of this on social relationships both within and between communities. Furthermore, it considers the impact of educational provision on Travellers from the perspective of identity, in particular noting the challenges created by participation in sedentary institutions, the responses by communities of both parents and young people, and for those young people who choose to remain in the system. It details the literature concerning Traveller female identities and the way in which the boundaries between Traveller communities and sedentary communities are maintained. In addition, it draws attention to the importance of ritual hygiene practices observed through embodied performances as a way of preserving and maintaining group boundaries. It has explored the manner in which responses to insider and outsider groups are understood through moral performances located at the site of the body.

Chapter Four draws on selected theoretical literature to support the chosen methodological approach. It begins by outlining the methodological choices contemplated and then utilised in the research process. Consideration is then given to the impact of the position of the author, with a particular emphasis on gender and nationality, in relation to the research and the impact of this on the research findings. A documentation of the examination of ethical issues pertaining to sensitive research with a group that are defined as vulnerable is then provided. The chapter finishes with an

explanation of aspects of data processing that facilitated the development of the key themes of the research.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the research in relation to Traveller identity, which illustrates the ways in which Traveller identity is shaped by gendered experience, and, environmental contexts, which are gendered, raced and classed. The chapter begins by examining evolving ways of considering Traveller identity. Traveller identity has been explored from a range of perspectives (e.g. Gherorghe 1997; Mayall 2004; Stewart 1997). This perspective builds on Belton's (2005) framework of Traveller identity by foregrounding the importance of gender.   Following an explanation of the model, five main themes are presented. The themes are: gendered identities, the reconstructions of Traveller identities in the curriculum, impact of socialisation in school on Traveller women's gendered identities, Travellers' Irish identities within the curriculum and, finally, an examination of Irish Traveller identities and English Irish Traveller identities. Within the exploration of gendered identities, a story of one young woman's dilemma is highlighted in order to illuminate the ways in which young women negotiate between identities.

Chapter Six presents the findings from the research in relation to Traveller spatial practices. I argue that most discussion around spatial aspects of Traveller life tends to focus on nomadism. Whilst this research considers the changing practices of nomadism, my intention has been to consider spatial organisation from a gendered perspective. In particular, questioning **how do Traveller women use and think about space in a way that may be distinctive?**

Chapter Seven provides a bridge linking the previous two chapters through a focus on embodied practices. Embodiment operates as the link between identity and spatial practice whereby embodied identities shift between different spaces. Following Csordas' (1993, p. 135) suggestion that the paradigm of embodiment indicates that 'embodied experience is a starting point for analysing human participation in a cultural world'. The chapter builds on Okely's (1975, p. 60) argument that it is through embodiment that relations between Traveller and sedentary groups are understood, 'the problems arising from this relationship with the Gorgios are resolved and symbolized in the Gypsies' attitude to the body'. My consideration has been to examine the embodied

experience of Travellers from a gendered perspective. Through the examination of the practices that maintain the division between the wider sedentary community and the Travelling Community this chapter draws on the earlier works of Gay y Blasco (1999), Larkin (1998), Okely (1983), Sutherland (1977) and Stewart (1997). In particular, the findings build on the work of Okely's (1983) model of the division between inside and outside in relation to Gypsy Travellers and wider sedentary society. The findings show a distinctly gendered perspective of Traveller women's home life and educational experiences. The findings also highlight changes between generations of Traveller women. Recurring images of dirt and disease are referenced in both home environments and wider societal spaces, such as school.

Chapter Eight places the findings from this research within the wider context of knowledge gleaned from the literature. The chapter is structured into four sections: the first three sections are concerned with the key findings, namely: identity, spatial practices, and embodiment. The final section reintroduces the research questions that informed this process and highlights the significant findings.

Chapter Nine provides a conclusion to the research, by identifying possible areas for future research and examining the challenges and adaptations to the research project that were necessary in order to glean the relevant information. The chapter is divided into four sections which highlight the importance of these areas when considering conducting similar research, they are: the significance of time, the importance of context and place, the consideration of the anecdotal as evidence, and finally suggestions for further research. The argument is made that in order to conduct research with vulnerable and marginalised groups requires the researcher to develop quality relationships which extend beyond the scope of a single research project and require sensitive negotiation on both sides, which, in turn impacts on the role of the researcher requiring a particular consideration of ethical dilemmas and the management of the tension created by anecdotal evidence and what is considered 'real data'.

This research offers new insights and understandings of Gypsy / Traveller women in Ireland, both by conveying their voices and by providing a context in which they could explore their feelings about their roles in a changing environment. This suggests that

there are significant challenges facing researchers and educational practitioners and policy makers in establishing quality relationships with the Travelling Community.

Chapter Two

Travellers in Ireland

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the group known as the Irish Travelling Community. It begins by detailing an overview of the characteristics of the group examining origins, culture, issues affecting Travellers, and, European and Irish legislation history. The chapter also looks briefly at Traveller employment and accommodation, with a particular emphasis on the issues affecting Traveller women and young people through educational provision.

Who are the Travellers?

Irish Travellers (or Pavees or Minceirs as they refer to themselves) are an indigenous group of people traditionally resident on the island of Ireland. Whilst Travellers are often presented as a distinct group, it is important to recognise that they are not a homogeneous group and are perhaps better viewed as 'a community of communities' (Parekh 2000, p.34) with the extended family operating as the pivotal unit of organisation. Half of all Irish Travellers live in four counties: Cork (8%), Dublin (23%), Galway (11%) and Limerick (7%) (Ó Riain 1997, p.9). Whilst the majority of Irish Travellers live in Ireland, they also reside in the UK and in the USA.

The Equal Status Act (2000) defines Travellers as a:

> …community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

Travellers have their own distinct language which is known as Cant or Gammon, but which academics often refer to as Shelta. Traveller culture emerged as an oral tradition, which has contributed substantially to Irish culture, in particular, music and storytelling.

Origins

Due to the oral tradition of Traveller society, history was passed on by word of mouth as opposed to being documented in the written context, therefore, it is difficult to establish origins for the group, however according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) the name Tynker appears in records, as early as the 12th -13th centuries, as referring to those of a particular dialect and social group in Scotland and England. Numerous theories as to the origins of the Irish Travellers have been suggested, including, Irish Travellers being royal descendants of Chieftains of the wandering cattle herding clans. Other suggestions include Travellers as descendants of those dispossessed during Oliver Cromwell's military campaigns or people displaced during *An Gorta Mor* (the Great Hunger). In response to the Famine, and throughout the nineteenth century, many Irish Travellers emigrated to Britain, the USA and Australia (McDonagh and McVeigh 1996). In 2011, a joint study between the Royal College of Surgeons and Edinburgh University found that Travellers are a distinct ethnic minority who were separated from the sedentary Irish community at least 1000 years ago (Hough 2011).

Characteristics

Within the Travelling Community, the extended family operates as the pivotal unit of social organisation. The vast majority of Travellers practice endogamous marriage (marriage within their community) but marriage outside the community is not unheard of. It is a common perception that Travellers frequently practice consanguineous marriage (marriage between cousins) but accurate information is hard to obtain. A report produced by the Traveller Consanguinity Working Group in 2003 stated that 'studies have estimated that between 19% and 40% of Traveller marriages are between first cousins'. Travellers tend to marry younger than the sedentary community with young women marrying around 17 and young men around 19. In the past Travellers often had large families; research conducted in 1997 suggested that the average number

of children for each family was 8 (Ó Riain 1997), although the propensity for large families is diminishing. In addition, Travellers often have symbolic attachments to horses and working dogs that reflect traditional forms of employment such as horse dealing. Traveller family life is often organised along traditional gender divisions with the women being the primary carers. The most common Traveller names are Cash, Cawley, Collins, Connors, Corcoran, Delaney, Doran, Doherty, Doyle, Joyce, Lawrence, Maughan, McCann, McDonagh, McGinley, McInerney, Mongan, Murphy, O'Brien, O'Driscoll, O'Donoghue, Quilligan, Reilly, Stokes, Sweeney, Toohey, Ward (Griffin 2008, p. 283). It is important to note that as with the wider sedentary population, hierarchies of status exist within the community.

In Irish, Travellers are called *an Lucht Siúil*, which translates as 'the walking people' (Ní Shúinéar 2004). Traditionally, Travellers practised a nomadic way of life, however the majority of Travellers tend to be more sedentary nowadays due to a number of reasons, which include, the introduction of Trespass Legislation in 2002 that criminalises Travellers if they practice a nomadic way of life, the curtailing of traditional stopping places, the increase in educational attendance and the reduction in traditional forms of employment. It is important to note that whilst many Travellers may live in one place they tend to have a nomadic perspective, which differs from sedentary ways of viewing the world.

The Irish Traveller Movement estimates around 25% of all Travellers are mobile at any given moment (Donahue, McVeigh and Ward 2007, p. 5). Some of the reasons that Travellers practise nomadism include maintaining social networks (visiting family and friends), seasonal employment and pilgrimage.

The majority of Travellers are Roman Catholics, however their particular interpretation and practice of Catholicism may differ slightly from that of the sedentary community with an emphasis on traditional cures and Holy sites. Many Travellers practise pilgrimage and visit sites of healing often associated with water such as Holy Wells or visit Holy places such as Lough Derg, Knock and Lourdes.

Members of the Travelling Community in the United Kingdom are officially recognised as belonging to a distinct ethnic group, however this is not the case in the Republic of

Ireland with the result that a member of the Travelling Community in Northern Ireland has their distinct ethnic status acknowledged, but not in the Republic of Ireland. The United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) has called for the 'Irish Government to work more concretely towards recognising the Traveller Community as an ethnic group' (Irish Traveller Movement, 2010). At the most recent United Nations Periodic Review (UNPR) the Department of Justice Minister, Alan Shatter, said that the Irish state was seriously considering this issue (Pavee Point 2011b). McVeigh (2006, p. 105) has suggested that:

> The debate about Traveller ethnicity and racism in Ireland is not simply an academic or legal dispute about the correct use of neutral or objective concepts. Most importantly, it runs to the very core of how people understand and address the palpably different and unequal status of Irish Travellers.

Kenrick and Clark (1999) draw attention to the structural inequalities and inconsistencies inherent in policy making with regard to Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity in the British context when they note that, whilst the Race Relations Act (1976) acknowledges the ethnic minority status of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers, in a proviso relating only to this particular ethnic group and no other, they run the potential risk of losing this status unless they travel seasonally.

Population Statistics

According to the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS, 2010) the number of Travellers on the island of Ireland is 40,129 (Republic of Ireland 36,224, Northern Ireland 3,905). There are differences in the demographic makeup of the Traveller Community and the general population. Within the Travelling Community 63% of the population make up the under 25's group as compared with 35% of the general population and 42% make up the under 15% as compared with 15% of the general population. There are considerably fewer Travellers comprising the older age cohort, with 3% in the over 65's category as compared with 11% of the general population. It is difficult to ascertain numbers of Irish Travellers residing in Britain, as they are not yet specifically defined as a separate ethnic grouping on Census forms. Pavee Point estimates there are 15,000 Irish Travellers living in Britain and 10,000 Irish Travellers live in the USA (Ó Riain 1997, p. 9; McDonagh and McVeigh 1996). Gypsies and

Travellers were for the first time considered as a separate ethnic group in the 2011 decennial UK census. According to the results of the UK 2011 census there are 57,680 Gypsies and Travellers living in the UK. This number is considerably lower than the UK Government's estimated figure of 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). According to the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (2013), the disparity in numbers reflects the large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers who chose to preference to hide their ethnicity in order to avoid widespread discrimination and racism in tandem with lower educational attainment and poor literacy, skills that may impact on ability to complete the census forms.

Discrimination

Within Ireland, Mac Greil (1997; 2010; 2011) has documented how members of the Traveller Community experience either direct or indirect forms of discrimination on a daily basis. Furthermore, this has also been widely documented within a European context by United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNICERD), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). They experience social disadvantage in all areas including: poverty, social exclusion, health status, infant mortality, life expectancy, literacy and education, training levels, access to decision making, political representation, gender equality, access to credit and accommodation, and living conditions (Watson, Lunn, Quinn and Russell, 2012). Following pressure from national Traveller organizations, the Press Council's Code of Practice now highlights the Travelling Community as a group to be cognisant of when publishing material which might cause serious offence or provoke hatred (McGaughey 2011, p.16). Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (2007) declared that: 'Travellers have been subjected to discrimination and racism in the fields of education, employment, housing, health care, media reporting and participation in decision-making.' The stereotyping and discrimination directed towards Traveller and Roma communities is insidious (ENAR and ERIO, 2011). The current economic crisis has increased levels of discrimination and scapegoating for Travellers (Pavee Point, 2011) and Roma (ENAR, 2012).

Employment

The majority of Irish Travellers are self-employed. Traditional forms of employment included craftsmen, tinsmiths, horse traders, entertainers and seasonal labouring. As Ireland moved from a rural to an urban society many of the traditional skills were no longer considered to be of value. Despite these changes in society many Travellers, whilst no longer practicing the same occupation, have proved to be adept at adjusting to fluctuations in the market and continue to organize work activities in similar ways through the continuation of trading. It is estimated that 20% of market traders in Ireland are from a Traveller background (McCarthy and McCarthy 1998, p. 51).

Unemployment levels are high amongst the Travelling Community with 75% unemployment (CSO 2012). During Ireland's so-called economic boom years, only 14% of Travellers aged 15 years and over were described as 'at work' as opposed to 53% of their sedentary counterparts (CSO 2012). Travellers face high levels of discrimination when attempting to enter the workforce; a national survey commissioned by the ESRI (2007/8) found that 40% of respondents would be unwilling to employ a Traveller (O'Connel, Russell, Watson and Byrne, 2009).

In 2005, Ireland's national training authority, FAS began the Special Initiative for the employment of Travellers (FAS SIT). The purpose of the initiative was to provide assistance in two areas: enterprise development and funding employment. The initial programme, piloted in four regions, was later expanded to include 12 projects through the inter-agency programmes of City and County Development Boards. In 2011 the programme was mainstreamed. Eight projects were still running in 2012, but Traveller specific data beyond this point is unavailable. Nevertheless, community projects working within the remit of Traveller employment note that most support for employment focuses on newly unemployed as opposed to long term unemployed (Harvey, 2013). Romani activist Tóth (2005, p. 1) notes:

> Romani women continue to be invisible in most surveys and publications, and secondly most studies lack the gender perspective in that they continue to reproduce a narrow interpretation of 'economy' and 'work' – only focusing on the formal economy, and interpreting work as paid work only.

Despite the mainstreaming of Traveller employment initiatives, a research study titled *"A Good Job for a Traveller?"* (Greenfields, 2008) conducted in the UK with Young Gypsy Traveller participants (including Irish Travellers) noted that a number of the Irish Traveller participants in particular cited the desire for tailored training groups specifically for Travellers in order to build capacity and confidence. Other notable barriers to securing employment highlighted in this research among Gypsy Traveller groups included; the tendency for males and females to remain in single gender groups and work predominantly within their own ethnic communities and the experience of discrimination from wider society.

Accommodation

Travellers live in a variety of housing situations that include: official halting sites, unofficial halting sites, group housing schemes, local authority housing, private rented accommodation, and their own private property. The proportion of Travellers in private rented accommodation has risen from 7% in 1998 to 32% in 2011 (Crosbie, 2013). Berlin (2014) has noted that the move to private rented accommodation has knock on effects for Traveller wellbeing whereby lack of access to extended family for support leads to breakdown in community relations resulting in significant decrease in mental well-being for some members of the community. Whilst by far the largest number of Travellers nowadays live in houses (73.3%), a significant number (18.2%) live in trailers/mobile homes or caravans and 7.6% (2,753 Travellers) do not have access to basic services such as running water (AITHS September 2010).

In 1996, Ireland adopted a National Strategy for Traveller Accommodation and established a dedicated Traveller Accommodation Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Since 2000, each local authority has been required to adopt five-year plans for Traveller accommodation. With the introduction of the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1992 and 2002, nomadism was severely curtailed through the use of evictions and the criminalisation of trespass on public and private land. Despite the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act requiring that all local authorities produce accommodation plans, lack of adequate deterrents in the form of incentives or penalties within the legislation result in the failure of the local authorities to provide suitable accommodation. Suitable accommodation requires

planners to take into consideration aspects of Traveller culture such as nomadism, work practices (for example scrap collection, which requires areas for materials to be stored at the home place) and extended families residing together. One of the main reasons for not meeting the accommodation needs of Travellers is due to objections of residents to the building of culturally appropriate accommodation. A recent study found that 79.6% of the population would be 'reluctant to buy a house next door to a Traveller' (MacGréil 2010). MacLaughlin (1995, p.50) has suggested that the shift from a rural-based community towards an urban centred community saw the development of large Traveller encampments, which have been a significant factor in the friction that escalates between communities. Historically, Travellers responded to conflict by moving on, but with the curtailing of nomadic practices by the advent of the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act, this is no longer a viable option.

Coupled with the limitations imposed by the advent of the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act, the 2009 Habitual Residence Condition Act (HRC, 2009) has had a significantly disproportionate impact on members of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities who practice a nomadic lifestyle, particularly those moving between the UK and Ireland (Pavee Point, 2011). To qualify for certain social welfare payments applicants must meet the conditions of the Habitual Residence Condition Act (HRC, 2009) yet the HRC guidelines make no provision for nomadism, and furthermore, make no consideration that Travellers and Roma may not in fact live in permanent housing. Precarious accommodation therefore affects opportunities to secure employment, access education and sustain health (Greenfields, 2008, p. 9; Berlin, 2014) as well as rating highly according to Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of need.

Traveller Women

Traveller women face multiple discrimination as they experience inequality that women in our society meet with, combined with the discrimination of being a member of the Travelling Community. The EU *Framework for National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy 2020* established in May 2011 highlights the specific needs of Traveller and Roma women. The European Commission acknowledges that Roma women are more likely to experience social exclusion than both Roma men and women

in the majority community. The now defunct National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) highlighted the fact that many Traveller women are more easily recognizable than Traveller men and so they are more likely to experience the impact of discrimination from the wider sedentary community (Pavee Point 2011a, p. 36). Women, as the primary carers in the family, are more likely to come into contact with service providers and members of the wider settled community through schools, social welfare, doctors etc. and consequently experience significantly more discrimination as a result. Following the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee, established by the Department of Health and Children in 1998, Traveller Health Units were created in all regions across Ireland. These units developed primary health care (PHC) projects staffed by Traveller women trained as community health workers.

Whilst gender-based violence affects women from all ethnic and social groups, Traveller and Roma women face multiple discrimination through poverty and social exclusion, which significantly reduces their decisions to access supports due to historical experiences of poor outcomes when interacting with services (Cemlyn 1998). Furthermore, there are additional challenges facing both young Gypsy Roma Traveller women and men where issues of LGBT people within the Traveller Community remain unacknowledged at local and national levels – Ireland's National Roma Strategy fails to address issues of sexual orientation (Pavee Point 2011d). In addition, Roma women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, trafficking and exploitation than women in the wider community (Bitu 2003; ERRC 2006; European Parliament 2006; Oprea 2009). Romani activists and academics Magyari-Vincze (2006) and Kóczé (2009) argue that intersectional analyses of gender, race/ethnicity, and class are necessary in order to understand the social position of Gypsy Roma women.

Children and Young People

The idea of democratising education and applying a braided approach to education is a trend that Irish early years policy has drawn from the experiences in New Zealand. Irish Early Years policy, significantly influenced by the European Union has set the target of 'at least 95% of children between age 4 and the start of compulsory education to participate in ECEC by 2020' (2011, COM: 66, p. 2). Ireland has introduced three

early years frameworks - the quality frameworks, *Síolta* (2006, CECDE), and curricula frameworks, *Aistear* (NCCA, 2009) and the national Diversity and Equality Guidelines for Childcare Providers OMC: Office of the Minister for Children (2006). The most recent development is the introduction of the Universal Free Preschool Early Childhood care and Education Programme (OMCYA, 2010) for children of 3 to 4 years for 3 hours per day 5 days per week.

Identity and Belonging plays a central role in the *Aistear Early Years Curricula Framework* being one of four themes that underpin the curriculum (the others being Wellbeing, Exploring and Thinking, and Communicating). Yet adequate funding streams necessary to implement and mainstream these framework documents are severely limited. Promotion of preschool (and the introduction of the Free Preschool year in 2010), Lifestart family visitors programmes, along with a number of outreach initiatives including Toybox projects and Playbus initiatives are also recommended for Traveller children. These initiatives are designed to raise awareness amongst Traveller parents of the importance of play and engaging in play activities with their children as an important aspect of the early years education process. Whilst all these initiatives are welcomed it is important to recognise the value of early years experience within the home and to acknowledge the vital role that Traveller parents play as experts of their own children.

Okely (1983) has argued that the lack of toys among Gypsy / Traveller children is 'meaningless' as there is simply not the division between work and play that exists between the mainstream contexts. Levinson's (2005) study of play among Gypsy / Traveller children highlights the different ways in which children from Gypsy / Traveller Communities play suggesting that much play is around the (per)formation of identity and exploring the boundaries between Traveller and sedentary communities identities.

The *Preschools for Travellers National Evaluation Report* (DES 2003) has recommended that all preschools should actively work on policies and procedures to encourage equality. Recommendations from a recent evaluation report of Toybox initiatives in Northern Ireland (McVeigh 2007) advocates the importance of increasing the use of Traveller storytellers, Traveller education community resources and applying

a broader focus which recognizes the expertise of Travellers. Helleiner (2000 p. 208) highlights the discriminatory discourse within Ireland, which has influenced understandings of educational provision for Traveller children. She draws attention to the 'child saving rhetoric', which has been used to construct racist discursive practices. The discourse highlights the vulnerability of children; the vulnerability of the 'at risk' Traveller child who requires 'protection' (through sedentarisation and prolonged engagement with the education system). Combined with the 'at risk' discourse is the view that Traveller children's early engagement with the world of work and contribution to the family economy is 'wrong'. Bruce (1994, p. 195) argues:

> There is a strongly held view in Europe and North America that a high level of child labour is an infringement and abuse of children's rights, with an undertone that this is cruel and oppressive. There is an equally strongly held view that formal schooling is a sign of an advanced society.

Nieuwenhuys (1996, p. 244) has argued that assumptions of children not contributing towards family life has serious impacts on poor and minority children who then experience a 'double day' of school work with work, however she also acknowledges that school can be an important space whereby working children can 'identify with the parameters of modern childhood'. Many researchers have also referred to the different learning styles inherent within Gypsy / Traveller communities (characterised by family-based, kinaesthetic, conversational group learning as opposed to more traditional schooling methods involving individual learning with classification based on age) including Buckler (2007), Levinson (2003, 2005), O'Boyle (1990), Kenny (1997), Smith (1997) and Okely (1983). Jordan (2001, p. 5) suggests that family-based learning among Gypsy / Traveller groups is 'fundamental to the preservation and continuation of the groups' social and cultural identities'. Specific issues facing Traveller youth include early school leaving, high levels of suicide rates (particularly amongst young men) and a drop off in participation rates among Traveller women aged 15-17 years. Pavee Point (2012) has suggested a need to provide culturally sensitive Traveller space within services for young Traveller women with the result that services aimed at these ages need to be tailored accordingly.

The Children and Young People's Services Committees, (CYPSC) established by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) plan and coordinate services for children and young

people (age 0-24) in Ireland with the goal of improving interagency cooperation in order to facilitate the five National Outcomes as documented in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures; the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020.* The five outcomes include; active and healthy with physical and mental well being; achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development; safe and protected from harm; have economic security and opportunity; connected, respected and contributing to their world. Under outcome 5 'Connected, Respected and contributing to their world' the CYPSCs highlight the fact that the majority of the Traveller population is concentrated in the younger years.

Education

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006) noted that:

> The situation of Roma and Travellers in the public education systems of all EU member states is characterised by severe inequalities in the access to and benefits from education traced in overall poor enrolment, attendance and performance figures.

Poor literacy has been a salient characteristic of Travellers' education contributing to cycles of disadvantage. When parents' literacy is poor they are not able to support children with homework, read letters from school or follow medication instructions, for example. Many of the older generation received little education. The education that they did receive was usually in segregated classrooms or schools, where Traveller culture and history was practically invisible, and accounts from Travellers abound with discrimination and racist name calling which, not surprisingly, have had an impact on the ways in which some Travellers engage with the education system. Enrolment policies adopted by Irish schools, which gives preference to past pupils, significantly disadvantage many Gypsies and Travellers. The recent case of *Stokes v CBS High School Clonmel* highlighted this issue whereby, according to the AITHS (2010), it is highly unlikely that a Traveller child's parents would have attended a post primary school. In addition, the nomadic practices of some Travellers means they are unlikely to have had family attend the school in question. Pavee Point, in a Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection (2013) has recommended that an admissions to school bill is published and implemented which removes the past

pupil criteria thereby allowing standardisation and accessibility on school enrolment forms.

The Children Act (1908) and the School Attendance Act (1926) updated the previous provisions contained within the Irish Education Act of 1892. The School Attendance Bill (1942) legislated compulsory schooling for all children, however the mobility of Traveller children ensured that they tended not to be affected by the legislation as in the early 1960's only 10 per cent of Traveller children between the ages of six and fourteen were recorded as being on school rolls (Commission on Itinerancy 1963, p.64). In 1972 the Sub Committee of the Council of Europe was established to discuss mutual experiences and to prepare a draft resolution on the economic and social conditions of gypsies and other Travellers in Europe. The *Report on the Provision for the Needs of Travelling Children* (1975, p. 32) found that 2,719 Travelling children were attending school, while 'the realistic figure for travelling children of school age who are at present not in school is probably in the region of 4000'.

Later, the *Report of the Travelling People Review Body* (Government of Ireland 1983) advocated integration of Travellers into mainstream society whilst simultaneously refusing to acknowledge the identity of Travellers. Although Traveller identity and culture was still not directly acknowledged in the *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community* (Government of Ireland 1995) nevertheless there was a significant shift in the use of language. The publication of *The White Paper on Education: 'Charting our Education Future'* (1995) recommended full participation in school life by Traveller children by means of integration while at the same time respecting Traveller culture. The Employment Equality Act (Government of Ireland 1998) and the Equal Status Act (Government of Ireland 2000) set out in law to ensure equality of access to and provision of jobs and services for all with membership of the Travelling Community being one of the nine grounds mentioned under which discrimination is outlawed. In 1998 an Advisory Committee on Traveller Education (ACTE) was established in the Department of Education & Science, however this group was cut with the advent of the *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy (2006)*. The Traveller Education Advisory and Consultative Forum was established in 2009. The Department published *Intercultural Education Strategy* in 2010. The *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy* (2006, p. 10), in

its' core values and guiding principles (no. 13) states that: 'It is imperative that an anti-bias and intercultural dimension form an integral part of and underpin all pre-service, induction and continuing professional development of teachers'.

In 1992, Ireland signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 29 (1)c declares that the education of the child shall be concerned with:

> …the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own culture, identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own.

Binchy (2009) has also acknowledged that the right to education overrides the right to a person to become a valued and productive member of their society. Kenny and Binchy (2009) highlighted the issue of 'conceptual misplacements' within educational policy in relation to the Travelling Community, having made the observation that the *National Children's Strategy* locates Travellers under the section titled 'Special Needs'. The development of the *Aistear Early Years Curriculum Framework* in 2009 acknowledged the importance of 'Identity and Belonging' as one of four key themes identified within the curriculum, stating that: 'The theme of *Identity and Belonging* is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community'. According to Article 13 of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, recognises that 'understanding and tolerance among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups' must be included in education. In addition, Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically notes the significance of culture and family life.

In 2006, the Government launched the *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy,* which advocated an anti-bias and intercultural dimension promoting integration as opposed to segregation. Recent budget cuts which came into place in September 2011 led to a number of supports being withdrawn, including the removal of all Visiting Teacher for Traveller posts (42 posts), the withdrawal of Resource Teacher posts for Travellers at primary level, the withdrawal of teaching hours for Travellers in post-primary level and significant reductions in provision of Traveller school transport. In addition, all senior Traveller Centres will be phased out by June 2012 (Circular 0017, Department of Education and Science 2011). In a joint

statement issued by the Irish Traveller Movement, the National Traveller Women's Forum and Pavee Point highlighted that cuts in financing Traveller education were 'disproportionate compared to financial cutbacks of other mainstream cuts' as supported by Pavee Point (2011b). In 2013 Pavee Point undertook research (Harvey, 2013), which noted that funding for Traveller specific educational supports had been reduced by 86% in the last 4 years.

Whilst primary schools today enjoy almost full participation, Traveller participation rates at second level are far less than those of their sedentary counterparts (the *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy* stated that 85% of Traveller children transfer to post-primary school) and the drop-out rate amongst Travellers at second level is nearly forty per cent higher than that of the sedentary population (Department of Education and Science 2006, p.3). In addition, figures from a survey completed in 2006 indicate that only two per cent of Travellers have completed senior cycles of second level schooling (Department of Education and Science, 2006). The Office for the Minister of Children, in the *State of the Nations Children Report* found that, 'almost half of the total Traveller population of Ireland are under 18 years of age and that approximately 6 out of every 10 Traveller children (58.9%) lived in families where the mother had either no formal education or primary education only' (OMC 2006). Figures for educational attainment of Gypsy Traveller students in the UK published in 2007, noted that only 15.6% of Irish Travellers and 14% of Gypsy/Roma children left school with the expected minimum standard of 5 subjects passed at A*-C grade in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. In addition, a further 33% of Irish Travellers and 20% of Gypsy/Roma children failed to obtain any qualifications (DCSF, 2007; Skidmore, 2007). The majority of these students who failed to obtain qualifications were residing in unauthorised sites or insecure accommodation. O'Nions (2010, p. 466) makes the cogent point that:

> Additionally, the value of formal education may not be so obvious to communities living in poverty where the priority is about survival, with greater emphasis being placed on finding pockets of work.

A range of initiatives aimed at raising issues faced by Travellers within the education system have been developed at both regional and national level including the production of a DVD by Pavee Point (2011c) entitled *Pavee Parents: Primary Concerns*. In 2008,

the Irish Traveller Movement piloted an intercultural programme called *Yellow Flag*. The objectives of the programme were to assist and support schools in the area of intercultural education, involve the local community, promote diversity and improve the whole school environment for all students, staff and parents.

Government Policy

Travellers are highlighted as one of Ireland's most vulnerable groups under the *Europe 2020 Strategy*. The *National Reform Programme for Ireland* acknowledges that targeted social inclusion programmes will be aimed at them. In 2006, the Government published its national social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, which sets out a range of priority actions for Travellers in the areas of accommodation, education outcomes, opportunities for employment and communication between Travellers and the settled community. It also led to the establishment of the National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee in 2007 (National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee 2009).

Despite these advances, the refusal of the Irish Government to acknowledge Irish Travellers as a distinct ethnic group continues to cause a lack of coherence and clarity in state policy towards Irish Travellers. Ireland has an inconsistent integration approach for the Traveller Community whereby Travellers are included in some state integration policies but excluded from others, for example, whilst membership of the Traveller Community in Ireland is one of the nine grounds under which it is illegal to discriminate against in Ireland (Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004), Travellers are excluded from the Minister of State for Integration's remit thereby limiting their participation and involvement in certain areas of inclusion and integration.

A European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (European Commission, 2011, pp.173-4) was launched in 2011. The purpose of the Framework is to focus action at both EU and national levels to address marginalisation and socio-economic deprivation. Following the implementation of the Framework, Ireland established a *National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy*. The document has been widely criticised by Traveller NGOs (Pavee Point, ITM) for failing by simply documenting initiatives which were already in place, some of which had already been

scrapped due to lack of funding (see Pavee Point mediation service, 2010) to consult with Traveller and Roma or set any measures such as indicators, timeframes, monitoring or funding mechanisms. Furthermore, Ireland's strategy fails to adequately address discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping in any significant manner. Following the most recent assessment (2013) of the Irish Strategy by the European Commission only 4 out of 22 criteria had been met placing Ireland in the bottom third of European responses.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the group known as the Irish Travelling Community by describing the characteristics of the group examining origins, culture, issues affecting Travellers and Irish legislation history. The chapter also briefly examined employment and accommodation, with a particular emphasis on the issues affecting Traveller women and young people through educational provision. Historically Travellers' experience of institutions and sedentary organisations has been challenging and this may lead to the lack of engagement or sporadic involvement (Cemlyn 1995: Cemlyn et al. 2009). Acknowledging the expertise inherent within the Travelling Community whilst reflecting on practise combined with an understanding of the structural forces in Irish society that have facilitated the marginalisation, deprivation and discrimination experienced by the Travelling Community will be vital components in engaging and supporting authentic relationships with members of the Travelling Community. The next chapter considers literature around Gypsy / Traveller Communities.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

Introduction

The central research question of this thesis is to investigate the manner in which Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, how they negotiate the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. The focus is on the identities of Traveller women with a particular interest on intergenerational change. As the study took shape it became clear that certain elements were salient in that regard; such as uses of space and embodiment. My reason for choosing this topic as an area of research is that the subject consumed the majority of discussion topics throughout the course of my fieldwork and, in the words of Ní Shúinéar (2006 p. 72) 'This seemingly banal observation is in fact a revelation of profound truth: people talk about what is important to them (and do not talk about what is not)'. In both those areas, there is an expanding literature that could not be covered in fullness without pushing the data to the margins. I am aware that certain areas could be developed in the context of those bodies of literature. This work is situated first and foremost in literature around Gypsy / Traveller communities. While insights will be relevant to wider literature, my concern at this stage is in locating them within understandings of Gypsy / Traveller culture. I am seeking to highlight the continuities/discontinuities across generations and the diversity within Traveller culture.

Research concerning Irish Travellers is diverse including folktales (Gmelch and Kroup 1978), music (Carroll 1975; Munnelly 1975), biographies and autobiographies (Gmelch 1987; Joyce 1985; Maher 1972; Warde 2009), language (Binchy 1994; Ó Baoill 1994) and history (Kenrick 1979; Reidy 2001). Studies of Irish Travellers' culture have moved through a series of different phases from the '(Sub)Culture of Poverty' model (McCarthy 1972) now withdrawn, to Sharon and George Gmelch's (1976) study of Travellers' move towards urbanisation. Helleiner (2000), Mac Aongusa (1992) and, Ní Shúinéar (1994, 1997) have shifted the focus to considerations of ethnicity, relations between Travellers and the sedentary community and considerations of racism and structural inequalities. The subject of Travellers and education has been considered in

the Irish context by a variety of practitioner authors Bond (2006), Hegarty (2013), Kenny (1997), O'Boyle (1990) and Sullivan (2006).

Numerous authors (Gmelch and Gmelch 1976; Helleiner 2000; Mac Aongusa 1992; Okely 1983) have described characteristics of the Travelling Community as including the following: extended family networks, a value of the collective over the individual, a nomadic existence or nomadic mind-set, a tendency towards self-employment, the practice of sibling childcare, and the practice of marrying earlier than the sedentary community. In 1976, George and Sharon Gmelch published their seminal book *'The Emergence of an Ethnic Group: The Irish Tinkers'*. Since 1976, the majority of authors, with the notable exception of McLoughlin (1994), writing on Irish Travellers have testified to the fact that Irish Travellers are an ethnic group. Despite this, ambivalence still exists within state legislation and debates continue over origins and the authenticity of 'real' Irish Travellers. In addition, a separate literature is emerging around Irish Travellers as a distinct group (Hayes 2006; Helleiner 2000; Gmelch and Gmelch 1974; Gmelch, G. 1977; Gmelch and Gmelch 1974, 1976, 1985; McCann, O'Síocháin and Ruane 1994, Ní Shúinéar 1994). Yet as Malik (1996) and Mayall (2003) have argued, concepts such as 'race' and 'nation' are modern constructs that require consideration within a particular historical context.

Evolving ways of Considering Traveller Identity

Traveller identity has been explored from a range of perspectives (e.g. Belton 2005; Gherorghe 1997; Mayall 2004; Stewart 1997a). Mayall (2004, p. 12) notes that:

> How we categorise, label and represent minority groups has a crucial and considerable bearing on their positioning within majority society and inter-group relations, and directly impacts on such issues as racism, discrimination, legal status and civil rights. This operates at the level of individual and personal responses as well as in terms of attempts to establish the size and nature of the group targeted for specific policy objectives.

Understandings of Traveller identity are in constant flux and the signifiers through which it is communicated and understood vary between generations. Whilst distinctions are made between the values of Travellers and the sedentary community, different groups, families and individuals view these boundaries differently at different times and in different contexts. Established and shifting group allegiances, education

and the media all impact on the way in which Traveller identity is comprehended and expressed. Indeed Mayall (2004, p. 244) notes that:

> Issues relating to the nature of identity, identity formations and its development and evolution, counter-identities, change over generations, national differences, varied experiences and the elusiveness of self-identity are problems which cannot, indeed must not, be simply ignored or swept away in pursuit of defence of some mythical or mystical whole.

Traveller / Gypsy identity is, therefore, best understood as amorphous. In drawing attention to the fluid and shifting nature of Traveller identity, Belton (2005, p. 6) invites consideration of an understanding of Travellers based on the 'constant growth and dynamism of this group'. Buckler (2007), highlighting the multiplicities of Gypsy identities, draws on the work of Carrithers (2000) and proposes polytropy as a concept through which to understand a Gypsy / Traveller culture. Whilst Carrithers' research was concerned with Indian communities, such a concept challenges fixed and homogeneous notions, generating complexity, and encouraging caution about generalisation.

Whilst much early research was concerned with the origins of Gypsies and Travellers (Acton 1974; Clebert 1963; Fraser 1992) along with the similarities between groups, Willems (1997), writing in *'In Search of The True Gypsy'* recognised those studying Gypsies tended to concentrate on confluences between the groups whilst at the same time down-playing differences. Yet more recent studies have tended to highlight the diversity that exists within the communities (for example, Belton 2005; Clark and Greenfields 2006; Gay y Blasco 1999; Kenrick and Clark 1999; Smith and Greenfields 2013; Levinson and Sparkes 2004, 2006).

Travellers are not a homogeneous group and hierarchies of status exist within the community (Adams, Okely, Morgan and Smith 1975; Helleiner 2000; Reidy 2001; Ní Shúinéar 2004; Crowley and Kitchin 2007). Liégeois (1986), writing on European Gypsies has suggested that they are viewed as 'a rich mosaic of ethnic fragments' the diversity of which is an asset through which they 'borrow and absorb' from the host cultural environment without diluting their definitely separate identity. Mayall (2004, p. 12) foregrounds five key variables in the process of shaping group relations. These include; boundary fixing, labels and meanings, information and knowledge of the group

based on stereotyping and experience, group characteristics (size, location, visibility etc.) and external factors including socio-economic positioning and political environment. Turner (2000), focussing on Travellers in England, has identified four features that signify Traveller ethnicity. These include hygiene codes, language, a tendency towards self-employment and nomadism. Holloway (2005, p. 350) adds to this list by proposing the following characteristics: 'assumed criminality; a tendency to use fights to settle disputes; symbolic attachment to horses and expensive cars; characteristically patriarchal gender relations; miscreant youth and low literacy levels'. Mayall (2004, p. 229-30) develops this further noting, 'distinctive habitat, dress, rituals, and codes of behaviour in particular concerned with…Laws and customs relating to pregnancy, childbirth, baptism, puberty, virginity, clothes, food, cooking, hygiene, marriage, death and funerals'.

Guy (1975) has indicated that 'one encounters deep ambivalence towards their [Traveller's] identity' and finds that Gypsies and Travellers are 'righteously angry at the hostile stereotypes others hold of them' (p. 223). Damian Le Bas (2010) has proposed the notion of the 'anxiety of diversity' among Gypsy Romany groups, comparing the tensions within the Roma communities to those between Jewish communities; I would argue that the 'anxiety of diversity' can also be applied to the Irish Travelling Community in the maintenance of family allegiances and hierarchies of status.

In considering cultural categorisation of Gypsy / Travellers, Liégeois (1986) and Okely (1983) have both suggested that definitions of Gypsy / Traveller identity may be motivated by political desires to achieve access to resources and recognition from structural inequalities and oppression. Furthermore, Jenkins (1997) posits that:

> Identity and ethnicity do not in themselves make people do things. They must always be understood in their complex, local and other, political and economic contexts…In other words, in the service of which strategies are rhetorics of identification being mobilised?"

Equally, Okely (1983) has suggested that Travellers' self-ascription to their group, as opposed to ascription assigned from the sedentary viewpoint, is a more equitable advance in defining identities. Similarly, McCann, Ó' Siobhan and Ruane (1994, p. xiii), writing in Ireland, have argued that Traveller ethnicity cannot solely be answered

by historical research, that rather a key aspect of Traveller identity is how they comprehend their experience.

Numerous authors testify to the relationship between Traveller groups and sedentary society - that it is through their relationship with the wider sedentary group that Travellers define themselves by (see Liégeois 1998; Ní Shúinéar 1997; Levinson 2005; Gay y Blasco 1999; Okely 1983). This idea can be linked to Barth's (1969) notion of the definition of ethnic groups who, through 'self-ascription rather than objective traits' (Barth 1969, p. 60) create a boundary between themselves and outsider groups that are acknowledged by other groups. Barth's (1969, p. 15) model of understanding ethnic groups and boundaries, indicates that what is important in defining a group is not their particular cultural traditions but rather the maintenance of the boundary of that group and this has been further supported by subsequent contributions of Cohen (1985), Eriksen (1993), Geertz (1973, pp. 255-310) and Jenkins (1997). Jenkins (1997) has further argued that greater consideration, beyond that of the interactional construction of boundaries, must be given to the relationship between boundary maintenance and the local cultural context or meaning of ethnic identification such as embodiment, language, collective history and religion. He suggests four social processes that contribute to the salience of ethnicity, namely: earliest primary socialisation, categorisations of others, meaning and content of ethnic identification in relation to history, and the materiality and consequences of ethnicity (costs and benefits of particular identifications).

Both Liégeois (1987) and Belton (2005) have suggested that opposition to the majority culture is also a key factor in asserting and defining Gypsy / Traveller identity. Bauman (1989) has explained that definition is the way in which groups mark their boundaries. Hall (1996) proposes that the 'marking of difference' that occurs during the construction of identities needs to be considered within the context of power relations. Sutherland (1975, p. 9) writing on the American Rom identifies two key factors that delineate the boundary between Travellers and sedentary society. First, social relations with outsiders are defined by economic or political transactions. Second, the imposition of a moral boundary between the two groups which serves a symbolic purpose of defining and delineating the group. Theories of multiple and fluid identities (e.g. Hall 1996) and hybrid identities (e.g. Bhabha 1994) seem to have passed by Traveller communities. This may be because of the tendency of Traveller communities to set up

binaries of Traveller and Non-Traveller, as well as host communities setting them apart as the 'Other'.

Gmelch's (1977) study of Irish Travellers views their persistence in a changing society being as a direct result of the fact that they have remained separate from the wage labour system through adherence to family based self-employment. McVeigh (1997, p. 12), writing from an Irish perspective, also notes this occurrence amongst Irish Travellers. In a US context, Gropper's (1975) New York study suggested that these attitudes are essential in the maintenance of group cohesion in the face of the encroaching influence of the wider society. Despite the ability to remain apart, of equal importance is the ability to adapt situationally and draw on resources in the wider cultural milieu (Hancock 2010, p. 41; Silverman 1988, p. 267).

A shift in focus from the distinctiveness of Gypsy / Traveller communities towards the links that exist between Traveller and settled communities has more recently been suggested as a suitable mode of inquiry. Belton (2005), Smith and Greenfields (2013), and Clark and Taylor (2014, p. 6), have all identified the need for consideration of the intersection between commonalities of class and ethnicity as an appropriate mode of inquiry:

> Although Gypsiologists might have depicted Gypsies as separate from the humdrum of modern life; and while reformers, landowners and the aspirant classes focussed on their deviancy from the norm, the reality of Gypsy and Traveller lives were that they were intimately bound up with the settled community, and particularly the working classes.

Links across communities are also important when considering intersections of generational status (Smith and Greenfields 2013). The proposal of an examination of generational consciousness has been argued by Edmunds and Turner (2002, p. 60) noting the necessity of an approach that takes account of the shared experiences that emerge from a particular historical context, which then shapes generational consciousness. Edmunds and Turner's proposal of a consideration of a 'sociology of generations' recognises the conditions under which new identities are forged through a shared experience under a particular historical context.

Previous conceptions of Traveller identity have been shaped and dominated by associations with nomadism, but even this element, so often viewed as an identity marker, is complex and variable. Shubin & Swanson (2010, p. 923) suggest that Gypsy / Travellers 'do not see their movement in terms of linear progression…their travel comprises periods of stillness and movement, which do not have clear points of departure and arrival' which is fluid, subject to ebbs and flows. From a sedentary perspective, mobility, which by its very nature traverses boundaries, is a source of anxiety for the wider sedentary dominant group that labels the 'others' as deviant for their lifestyle. Cresswell (1996, p. 87) highlights the link between morality and place, which associates ownership of property as having a 'moral value':

> Mobility, though, appears to be a kind of superdeviance. It is not just 'out of place', but disturbs the whole notion that the world can be segmented into clearly defined places. Because the easiest way to establish order is through the division of space, mobility becomes a basic form of disorder and chaos – constantly defined as transgression and trespass.

Mobility therefore upsets established notions of the manner in which wider sedentary society operates through territorial understandings and expectations, which infuse social and economic structures so that understandings of concepts of 'work' and 'home' are clearly linked to understandings of places. McVeigh's (1997) suggestion, building on the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) of a consideration of a 'nomadology' (a particular mind set or way of viewing the world) is useful here. So, whilst Travellers may no longer travel in traditional ways, both metaphorical and symbolic realisations of movement are still adhered to across the generations. It is important to consider here that if change and movement is the norm, then the lack of movement is perceived as stifling and oppressive. In the words of Irish Traveller McDonagh (2000, p. 34) 'Nomadism entails a way of looking at the world, a different way of seeing things, a different attitude to accommodation, to work and to life in general'.

Affective dimensions of mobility are important 'sites of resistance' (hooks 1990), which provide creative opportunities of renewal. Whyte (2000) lists the transmission of objects, expressions of support, the creation of landscapes of memories, as well as physical and emotional returns to particular places as key reasons for maintaining mobility amongst Gypsy / Travellers. The advent of new media, including social

networking sites and mobile phones, helped to support opportunities to articulate the affective and symbolic aspects of mobility. McVeigh, Donahue and Ward (2004) draw attention to the importance of mobility in maintaining social networks. Crawley (2004) and Shubin and Swanson (2010, p. 921) focus on the emotional, imagined and creative dimensions of mobility:

> ...the complex range of feelings that emerge as a part or as a consequence of their movement. These mobilities can re-energise lives and provide opportunities for new emotions to emerge, which shape Travellers' relations with others.

Here, mobility would be viewed as a source of renewal and the performance of mobility provides openings to tap into a sense of belonging and continuity which is not simply attached to a particular place, but rather the act of moving provides opportunities to access emotional domains which recognise and reaffirm identities of mobility. Levinson and Sparkes (2004, p. 712) study attests to this:

> …the fact remains that Gypsies themselves show a tendency to speak about nomadism in oblique, not to say, arcane terms, associating it with what may be described as genetically predetermined biorhythms passed between generations. In effect, nomadism covers an emotional as well as a physical landscape. It represents freedom from the official world, sometimes perceived as lawlessness and deviancy.

This demonstrates, in line with Urry's (2007) suggestion of reimagining understandings of movement and mobility, that Traveller understandings of nomadism are nuanced. Cresswell (2003), building on Massey (1993), proposes a 'politics of mobility' with which to attempt understandings of movement and nomadism.

A number of authors have described the manner in which encroaching state intervention limits the practice of nomadism (Bhreatnach 2006; Crowley and Kitchin 2007; McLaughlin 1998) yet others (see Kenrick and Clark 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2004; Smith and Greenfields 2013) suggest that alternative practices are evolving. What is important to acknowledge therefore is that the impact of external forces on nomadism is not only one directional (i.e. towards settlement), rather it is multi-dimensional. In effect concepts of mobility and nomadism are fluid, evolving, and subject to ebbs and flows. Spatial practices have changed significantly over time due to external factors,

which significantly impact on the ways in which Travellers conduct their lifestyles. Belton (2005) and Levinson and Sparkes (2004) clearly indicate that external factors have limited the ability to practise traditional Traveller understandings of extended family life. Whilst Hawes and Perez (1995) argue that current policies impact on Gypsies by changing traditional Traveller life-style practices (which view mobility 'as a basis for ontological security') to the extent that cultural annihilation results. This current practice of increasing constraint to traditional spatial practices also exacerbates antagonistic relationships within the community by limiting opportunities for movement, which were traditional responses to conflict (Gmelch 1977). Shields' (1997, p. 255) work on social spatialisation is a useful concept to consider here, defined as 'a social construction of the spatial and its imposition and enactment in the real topography of the world.' He notes (1997, p. 47) that lives are structured 'around spatial routines and around spatial and territorial divisions. These surface as the carriers of central social myths, which underwrite divisions between classes, groups and regions'.

The lack of availability of appropriate housing has impacted on the manner in which Travellers interact within the extended family. External pressures force Travellers to adopt changing lifestyle factors in response to the State's failure to provide affordable and adequate housing. This, in turn, impacts on the way in which they are able to access education and employment (Levinson and Sparkes 2004; McVeigh 1997). Consistent with findings from Berlin's (2012) Finnish example, movement is still evidenced in the regular changes in housing accommodation. Therefore, nomadism, despite the influence of state policies, remains a central part of cultural identity, yet is practised in a variety of different ways ranging from moving house, to moving into a caravan, to engaging in pilgrimages to holy sites or visiting traditional fairs. The type of nomadism practised, depending upon whether it is chosen or enforced, determines the impact on Traveller understandings of community values and cultural identity.

Research conducted by Smith and Greenfields (2013) suggest that rapid change due to external forces has led to cultural trauma as described by Tatz (2004). In their examination of relationships between Gypsy / Travellers in housing and sedentary communities, Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 155) drew attention to the 'manipulation of stereotypes for personal advantage such as cultivation of an aggressive and violent

demeanour or the feigning of illiteracy, all of which may feature within an armoury of techniques utilised by informants'. Whilst nomadism as traditionally practised is no longer such a central feature of Traveller life, new types of nomadism are emerging, which require a rethink of the ways in which traditional understandings are considered (Berlin 2012; Kenrick and Clarke 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2004; McVeigh 1997; Smith and Greenfields 2013).

Against a background of changing lifestyles, younger Travellers are required to reformulate their own understandings of Traveller identity and this is influenced by increased involvement in schools and by the ways in which Traveller identity is represented within the curriculum. Binchy (2009, p. xxxiii) highlights the fact that education systems across the world deny 'the deep legitimacy of non-sedentary life choices' thereby delegitimizing nomadic culture. Drawing on the work of Said (1978), and Stallybrass and White (1986), Shields (1991, p. 277) offers an example of the cognitive schemas which divide understandings of spatial arenas into binary pairs of opposing domains which are dependent upon one another, these include: uncivilised v civilised, rational v ludic, centre v periphery, social order v carnivalesque, mundane v liminal:

> They expose the relativity of the entrenched, universalising values of the centre, and expose the relativism of cultural identities which imply their shadow figures of every characteristic they have denied, rendered 'anomalous' or excluded.

These binary oppositions then serve to justify power relations of the centre (Foucault 2003b). Specifically, the perceived transgressive / deviant behaviour of Gypsy/Traveller societies is necessary for the use and justification of centralised power relations.

A recent study conducted in Ireland by Hegarty (2013) noted the exclusion of both young and older generations of Travellers from the language, history and geography of their own nation. The impact on children's self-esteem, identity and ability to successfully engage with schooling being linked to recognition within the school curriculum is extensively documented (Drudy and Lynch 1993, p.271; Lynch 1999, p.17). This highlights the importance of a genuine and congruent engagement between the school and Traveller families so that they move beyond what Banks (1989, p.193) cited in O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004, p. 100), describes as a 'Level 1 contribution

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approach, where cultural artefacts are introduced into the curriculum as 'add-ons', using what he (Banks) described as the saris and samosas approach'. A whole school approach towards equality is frequently advocated in policy documents including the NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Primary School* (2005) and the *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy* (2006) however; Waldron (2004, p. 219) argues that:

> The inclusion of nomadism as a selected topic through which to explore continuity and change over time in 5th and 6th classes (Ireland, Government of, 1999 b, p.71) simply highlights the failure to name our largest ethnic minority, namely Irish Travellers, and to engage in a meaningful way with Travellers as a historic community.

Kenny's (1997) research recommends introducing celebrations of Traveller identity into the curriculum. This suggestion concurs with O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004) study, which draws attention to the lack of understanding by schools of Traveller culture, particularly language, which is evident in terms such as 'language deprivation'. This deficit approach to education fails to recognise the different worldview of Gypsy / Traveller communities. Whilst the focus on multiculturalism and interculturalism are advocated in Educational policy, this issue is contentious when viewed within the context of those who choose not to engage in an education system that Tierney (1993) defined as 'cultural genocide'. Levinson and Hooley (2013, p. 12), examining similarities between Gypsy / Traveller communities in the UK and indigenous Australian communities outline the division between the concept and purpose of education that operates between mainstream society and the indigenous / marginalised group. A key message from the study is the alternative ontological orientation of indigenous groups towards wider settled society; what they have termed a focus on 'being', as opposed to 'doing':

> Both groups have constructed their own pedagogical systems based around traditional lifestyles. In key ways, these systems have mirrored one another, in terms of learning content that is embedded in cultural survival and closely linked to future life contexts, and in modes of transmission that are based around learning through participation. In each setting, it is envisaged that children will acquire not only a set of skills to assist them in future life, but also an enhanced sense of autonomy and of group membership. Thus, learning in home contexts goes beyond the actual knowledge itself, and is integral to a sense of identity. Within this framework *being* takes precedence over *doing*.

This statement informs understanding of reasons for the often deep tension and anxieties that are present within Gypsy / Traveller Communities regarding the schooling of their children, what Delpit (1988) has described as 'silenced dialogue' experienced my marginalized groups who strive for social mobility and educational progress, because of the fact that they are missing from official discourse.

Consequently, (Dei et al. 2000) have argued that questions of identity, culture, spirituality, place and history are necessary ingredients required for the secure sense of belonging in school (as advocated in the most recent Irish Early Years educational curriculum framework, *Aistear*, and *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures*, the national policy framework for children and young people, 2014).

Irish Traveller Identities and English Irish Traveller Identities

Because of the inherently oral traditions of Traveller and Gypsy communities, representations of Travellers and Gypsies were traditionally constructed by the sedentary community and, therefore, subjected to gradations accorded them by the fashions and prejudices of the times. Mayall (2004, p. 13) notes that:

> In particular, it is the racial definition that provides the essential basis for the construction of rigid pyramids within the travelling population, which in turn legitimises differential treatment. The racial notion of blood purity allows a clear hierarchical classification in which the Romany elite is inevitably placed at the top. This ordering has been widely adopted and accepted, forming the basis and rationale for local authority persecution, informing public prejudice against the perceived non-Romany Gypsies encountered in urban and rural environments, and by Gypsies themselves seeking to avoid discriminatory treatment.

The famous Irish Gypsiologist, Walter Starkie, reflecting the obsession with exoticisation, chose to focus his studies on Eastern European Gypsies as opposed to those closer to home.

From an English perspective, Acton (1974) and Griffin (2002) have noted that English Gypsies looked down on Irish Travellers referring to them as 'the whipping boys of

English Romanies' (see Griffin 2002, p. 114 and Acton 1974). Gmelch and Gmelch (1985) describe the practice of continued movement of Irish Travellers back and forth between the UK and Ireland in response to increasing industrialisation and modernisation as a mode of cultural preservation and adaptation. The fear of a corrupting English influence, when considered within a wider historical context is something which crosses the Traveller-Sedentary divide permeating Irish nationalist discourse. As Fannon (1968) has demonstrated, forced ascription to a particular status creates a disjunction in understandings of self-worth as practised in the home / family environment which, in turn contributes to a disjunction in identities and family role (1997). Ní Shúinéar (1997, 2002) has demonstrated the dynamic whereby Irish sedentary people magnified those aspects of their prescribed identity from an English perspective onto Irish Travellers in an attempt to shed the stereotypes of English racism. Similarly, Gay y Blasco's (1999, p. 6) research with Gitano Gypsies in Madrid highlights how 'Spanishness and Gypsiness – irrationality, passion, mystery, honour – definitely overlap in popular non-Spanish representations of Spain'.

Irish perspectives on Irish Traveller identity highlight the response from sedentary society at a particular point in time, foregrounding the contrast between nationality (Irish) versus ethnicity (Traveller). Yet this Irish identity is viewed through the lens of colonisation. Much research conducted with Travellers in the education system in the UK, (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2003, 2006, 2013) highlights the discrimination faced by Irish Travellers within the English education system. Yet Winnie McDonagh, (2000) an Irish Traveller woman recalling her schooling in England, notes that:

> In England we were treated as being Irish, and although some would describe us as gypsies we were identified mainly as being from Ireland. I have no recollection of experiencing prejudice in England as a child.

The freedom from prescribed identities described by Winnie McDonagh, however, differs from Powers (2004) findings in the UK, who found that Irish Travellers are subjected to anti-Irish and anti-Traveller discrimination. Smith and Greenfields (2013) highlighted in their study of Gypsy / Traveller experiences in housing that the Irish Travellers they interviewed currently living in England were less likely to adapt to 'settled norms' and also less likely to have friendships outside of their group.

McKinley (2011) also draws attention to the differences exhibited between Irish Travellers resident in the UK and Irish Travellers resident in Ireland acknowledging the variations across cultural practices of particular life stages such as marriage and death.

Changing Uses of Space and Gendered Space

The emergence of the modern nation state signalled a reorganisation of space and time forging the way for industrialisation and the advent of capitalism. These changes required the harnessing of a disciplined workforce (Foucault 2003b) capable of delivering to the demands of modern industrialisation. Changes wrought by industrialisation included: the development of property rights, shift from rural to urban populations, creation of a distinction between public and private spaces and, the division of work place and home place. In order to facilitate this process, institutional practices that focussed on the assimilation of 'deviant' populations were developed based on ideas developed following the acquisition of 'scientific' data regarding specific portions of the nation's population (Foucault 1977; 2003b). Shields (1991, p. 39) notes how 'spatial control is an essential constituent of modern technologies of discipline and power'. The nomadic lifestyle practised by Gypsy Traveller communities did not fit into this modern vision of Industrial and post-Industrial capitalist society. Bancroft (2005, p. 150) traces the harm done to Gypsy Traveller communities (such as damage to traditional extended family structures, economy and residence) by the influence of State intervention through assimilationist policies thereby enabling them to be perceived and treated as the 'internal outsiders', or deviants, opposed to modern society and lifestyle.

In 2004, the eastward expansion of the European Union created opportunities for large numbers of Roma to become EU citizens, and potentially access the subsequent rights and benefits, including freedom of movement. Fearing the migration of Roma communities, Western governments shaped policy to improve socio-economic conditions for Roma communities in order to limit the desire for migration (Guglielmo and Waters, 2005). The outcome of these pre-accession instruments was the introduction of PHARE funding (European Parliament briefing No. 33) ostensibly designed to alleviate discriminatory practices and improve outcomes for Roma communities in key policy areas, including accommodation, employment and

education. The outcome of this movement towards a free market economy being 'the socio-economic gap between majority Non-Roma populations is widening; its immediate effects being social unrest, mass migration, ever increasing levels of anti-Gypsyism and deep structural exclusion' (ERPC, 2009, p. 4). This process therefore benefitted Roma whilst at the same time increasing focus on Roma migration (Balch, Balabanova, and Trandafoiu 2014). McGarry and Agarin (2014, p. 12) note that:

> This additionally points out that in cases where political capital was to be made out of Romani migration issues, 'the Roma problem' and such like, Roma were neither recognised as political agents on their own right, nor were they included into the body politics as viable actors and thus partners of political decision making.

Benefits accrued from joining the EU were therefore tempered by the rise in anti-Gypsyism evidenced throughout Europe including: ethnic profiling in Italy, segregation of Roma school children, and forced expulsion of Roma from France (ENAR, 2012). The economic crisis has led to increased levels of scapegoating against Roma (ENAR 2012) and Irish Travellers (Pavee Point, 2011d). The introduction of the EU Framework highlights the importance of working to alleviate Roma socio-economic disadvantage through: setting achievable goals for Roma integration addressing, at a minimum, accommodation, health, education and employment; identifying disadvantaged neighbourhoods or micro-regions; allocating sufficient funding from national budgets; proposing monitoring and review mechanisms; consulting Roma civil society and regional/local level authorities; appointing a national contact point. The Framework advocates for participation of Roma in decision making at all levels:

> [National Strategies should] Be designed, implemented and monitored in close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities.

Whilst in theory a sound proposal, this fails to address the structural power inequalities faced by Roma communities who have less voice and sway in decision-making. Recent evaluation of the EU framework (European Union 2015, p. 9) notes that:

> …the dearth of political will at all levels of national and sub-national government in Member States is hampering the implementation of the objectives laid out in the NRIS and accompanying policy documents

Lukes (1974) description of the dimensions of power (visible, hidden and invisible) highlights the processes whereby the majority community (visible power) sets the agenda and timing of decisions made, thereby limiting real participation from minority groups (hidden power), shapes public opinion, ideology and values, (invisible power) which becomes internalised by the minority group through hegemonic misrepresentations (as evidenced by Roma Gypsy Traveller misrepresentations in the media misrepresentations such as Channel 4's 'documentary' series *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*).

Spatial research concerning Gypsy / Travellers (Halfacree 1996; Hetherington 2000; Kabachnik 2010; Kearns 1977; MacLaughlin 1995, 1999; Nemeth 1991, 2002; Vanderbeck 2005) has highlighted the manner in which Travellers relationship to place is 'out of place' in a sedentary context. Other works in this area have also explored these themes of hierarchical classifications of people and place based on stereotypical representations, whereby depictions of 'authentic' Gypsy/ Travellers are represented as inhabiting rural landscapes reminiscent of pre-Industrial societies and thereby viewed with nostalgia or, alternatively, urban Gypsy Travellers are viewed as 'inauthentic' and therefore out of place and abject.[1] Cresswell's (1996, p. 87) notion concerning transgressive behaviour and contested understandings surrounding the use of space is useful here: 'Any landscape is a representation of order. The land is divided up and segmented into territories and places, each of which correlate to types of behaviour'. Cresswell (1996, p. 60) argues that the concerns surrounding place threatened by perceived transgression follow the logic that:

1. Something is out of place
2. Some act is out of place
3. Some act is incompatible with the proper meaning of place.

The implications of these changes are as follows:

1. If the transgression continues, the meaning of the place will change.
2. If the meaning of the place changes, the place itself will change.
3. The new meaning will be *their* meaning (the meaning of the other).
4. The place in question will become *their* place (the place of the other).

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[1] The work of Sibley, D. (1981, 1995, 1998) has contributed to a deeper understanding of this area, however, due to ethical considerations subsequently raised which may have impacted on his research, reference to his work has been withdrawn from this thesis.

This model is useful when considering Belton's (2005) central argument, which acknowledges the impact of social legislation and spatial control over housing as key to the formation of modern Traveller identity (see also Berlin 2015; Smith and Greenfields 2013; Picker, Greenfields and Smith 2015). Kendall's (1997) understanding of 'marginal space' as a site of resistance (hooks, 1990) considers both physical and imagined spaces as sites of resistance in supporting articulation of identity. Kendall (1997, p. 75) defines 'sites of resistance' where creation of a home place is seen as a method of cultural survival and resistance for the marginal group and a space of direct cultural subversion by the dominant group'.

Picker, Greenfields and Smith (2015) have demonstrated the manner whereby assimilationist housing policies towards Gypsy / Traveller populations developed out of 19th century social experimentation concerning ideas surrounding the appropriate governance of races and populations in colonial contexts. In Ireland, the twentieth century witnessed the move from a primarily rural-based population to a primarily urban-based population. In 1960 only 5 per cent of Irish Travellers in Ireland were housed, by 1980, 40 per cent of Irish Travellers in Ireland were housed, a further 15 per cent were living on serviced sites and almost half of all families were living on the roadside (MacLaughlin 1998). Bhreatnach (2006, p. 65) illustrates the impact of state intervention in the delineation of appropriate use of space through laws such as the Street Trading Act (1926) and the School Attendance Act (1926), which, combined with the development of public housing, changed forever ways in which Irish people used space leading to an emphasis of difference between the sedentary population and the Traveller Community:

> Travellers largely escaped the consequences of the Street Trading and
> School Attendance acts, but definitions of public space and family
> organisation had considerable implications for their position in Irish
> society. Conventional behaviour on the street was enshrined in by-laws
> and regulations, reducing tolerance for unacceptable usage of public space.
> When trading and whole family economies among the poor were eroded,
> Traveller society remained characterised by those features.

The impact of state legislation resulted in increased visibility of Irish Travellers caused by the 'politicisation of space' and 'tailoring of space for public consumption' (Bhreatnach 2006), which has severely constrained the manner in which Travellers are

able to practice their traditional lifestyle. Subsequently, the development of the National Settlement Programme and the emergence of Itinerant Settlement Committees led to what MacLaughlin (1998), has called a 'geography of closure' that curtails Traveller space through a series of legislations. These legislations include housing, trespass, road use, ownership and control of animals, destruction to property, anti-social behaviour and trading. The outcome of increasing legislation that limits Traveller space is that Traveller spaces are 'unenterable' (Garner 2004). Crowley and Kitchin (2007, p. 142) suggest that the manipulation of space through state intervention is the way in which the government is 'forcibly managing Travellers' lives'. McVeigh, Donahue and Ward (2004) draw attention to the importance of mobility in maintaining social networks. Being out of one's familiar place leads to feelings of alienation and anxiety (Levinson and Sparkes 2004; Peters 2011; Putnam 2000; Smith and Greenfields 2013; Tatz 2004). Loss of social support from one's community has severe implications for mental health (Balanda and Wilde 2003; Walker 2008). Furthermore, Pavee Point has suggested that the Housing Miscellaneous Act (1992) has had a significant impact on the health of the Travelling Community in that it has curtailed travelling which has affected the extent to which members of the Travelling Community relate to their extended family. They have suggested that Traveller Health has 'disimproved' over the last 12 years according to the results from *Our Geels* (AITHS, 2010). Writers on Gypsy / Travellers have highlighted the significant differences in spatial organisation and understanding amongst Gypsy / Traveller Communities (Adams et al. 1975; Kendall 1997; O'Boyle 1990). Consequently, Belton's (2005, Ch. 5) description of the site experienced as carceral / punishment for failure to conform to homogenous lifestyle, is suitable here. Levinson (2004, p. 717) has noted that 'settling in houses requires the most radical social adaptations'.

Levinson and Sparkes (2004) have demonstrated how Gypsy identity is actively constructed in relation to space. Levinson (2005, p. 510) acknowledges that Traveller sites have different temporal and spatial referents to the sedentary community. Inside the home, there are connections between the allocation of specific spaces within the home environment to the apportioning of particular roles within Gypsy / Traveller Communities (Daly 1990; Hyman 1989; Kendall 1997; Levinson and Sparkes 2005; and Okely 1975, 1983). Such allocation of space and role enactment might vary according to context. In particular, sites have been portrayed as constructing spatial

environments in which girls are liable to equate their femaleness with domesticity (Kendall 1997; Okely 1974). In accordance with Kendall's (1997) study, behaviour on site is carefully curtailed within appropriate spaces, with men's space being outdoors and women's space indoors, yet women's spaces are also limited by weather and time of day; at night and during bad weather men inhabit women's spaces, again gender becomes a most significant factor. Smith and Greenfields' (2013, p, 122) research into housing transitions noted a significant difference in relation to gender. Kendall (1997, p. 86) has argued that the fact that women are the key actors in accessing education has important implications for the way in which gender roles are constructed within the family:

> The accessing of education is a particularly important spatial arena for Travellers traditionally denied access to their rights because of non-literacy. Women are at the forefront in accessing this resource both for themselves and their children. Education by the institutions of the sedentary society can be viewed as a vehicle by which the cultural norms of the dominant group are imposed on the marginal group; it may also influence the nature of gender roles within the family.

Furthermore, with Travellers increasing participation in the education system the manner in which different generations of women negotiate gender roles within their communities is of increasing importance. In addition, McVeigh et al. (2004, p. 48) have emphasised the interconnectedness of housing and education through the impact of state legislation stating:

> It is also clear that many of the models of good practice in terms of service provision are interdependent – for example improving Traveller education and healthcare is premised upon the provision of safe and secure halting sites.

Movement away from traditional housing practices has led to concerns voiced by some members of the Gypsy / Traveller Community surrounding the lack of safety for children (Adams et al. 1975; Kendall 1997; Okely 1975) due to the change in housing arrangements whereby adult observers are no longer organised in traditional spatial formats which allow for easy observance of children. Yet recent studies have also attested to the fact of links developing across communities due to proximity (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 47):

> Ethnic identities have inevitably evolved due to spatial proximity and cross-group interaction and a process of acculturation in the sense of 'dual cultural outlook' has been identified in many younger community members.

New housing experiences seem to be more easily accommodated by younger members of the Gypsy / Traveller Community who are able to adapt accordingly and develop a bi-cultural outlook. A recent study conducted by Smith and Greenfields (2013) also noted the emergence of young 'wannabes' from the sedentary community who looked to Gypsy / Traveller groups in an attempt to emulate styles and particular identities, however they also noted the more 'conservative' approach to friendships outside the group as exhibited by young Irish Traveller women.

Intergenerational Discontinuities

Writers on Traveller and Gypsy culture have drawn attention to the fact that the extended period of youth is something particular to sedentary communities (Helleiner 2000; Okely 1983). Helleiner (2000) who conducted fieldwork in County Galway in Ireland, suggested that the period of Traveller 'youth' is a modern construct necessitated by the interference of Church (through the introduction of the three month engagement period) and state (in education) which may lead to generational conflict within the Travelling Community as young Travellers navigate the terrain and reconstruct their identities through increased interaction with sedentary population. A result of the creation of new identities across a generation can cause tension between communities as young people struggle to manage the relationships that cross communities (Smith 2005) resulting in conflict and competing loyalties when considering opportunities for education, lifestyle practices and employment (Furlong, Biggart and Cartmel 1996).

In 1904, G. Stanley Hall famously labelled adolescence as a period of 'Sturm und Drang' or 'Storm and Stress' suggesting that the period of adolescence was marked by emotional turbulence, marked by tensions within the family as the young person attempts to assert themselves; what Berger and Luckmann (1966) have called the 'struggle of affiliation to conflicting realities'. Aries (1962), Berger and Berger (1976) and Musgrove (1964) acknowledge the importance of the development of the modern age and the introduction of formal schooling on a mass level in creating the concept of

'youth'. Differences in perceptions of 'youth' and 'childhood' between cultures may also cause fractures in understanding. Devlin (2009) highlights the wide range of ages at which different institutions and communities, both within and between societies, acknowledge when childhood ends and youth begins. Valentine (2003, p. 38) suggests that the ages can vary further within different contextual understandings of age:

> This performative rather than biological understanding of 'age' means that by acting in a responsible way in a particular space or time children can 'grow' in terms of how others regard them; correspondingly their perceived age can also shrink if they behave in a 'childish way'.

Furthermore, Andereck (1992) and Levinson (2004) argue that education provides a space for Gypsy / Travellers to define identity, the identity, which is chosen, is one which is perceived as providing routes to social mobility whilst at the same time remaining outside of the wider society.

Gypsy / Traveller communities have experienced substantial change and upheaval in traditional lifestyle practices in their more recent history. This leads us to the question posed by Stewart (1997, p. 263) concerning the 'persistence of cultural difference' between Gypsies and non-Gypsies as opposed to enquiries into the 'mere existence of foreign origins' amongst Gypsy / Traveller groups. This question is particularly salient when considered within the context of second generation Travellers to England and sedentarism. Yet addressing issues of change within the Gypsy / Traveller Communities is not new. Writing over a quarter of a century ago, Acton (1974) highlighted a range of adaptive strategies developed in response to rapidly changing circumstances. The four strategies proposed by Acton range from cultural disintegration and passivity through to a variety of adaptive strategies. These include cultural disintegration and passivity, reduction of contact with outside society in order to control the rate of change, adaptation through allowing aspects of outside society in (cultural bricolage), and finally 'passing'. Similarly, in 1978 Tajfel's *The Social Psychology of Minority Groups* outlined the choices for minority groups as 'assimilation, acculturation and accommodation'.

Passing, whereby an individual decides not to disclose an aspect of their identity, as described by Goffman (1963), is used at different times by significant numbers of the

Travelling Community as a means of diverting negative attention and discriminatory behaviour and has been noted by a number of authors (Acton 1974, 2005). Adaptation to change amongst Gypsy / Traveller groups through a process of cultural borrowing has been noted by Okely (1983, p. 77), citing Levi-Strauss, who suggests that:

> Gypsies, and possibly other oppressed groups, can be seen as bricoleurs, picking up some things and rejecting others. The ideology of the dominant society is de-totalised, and the ultimate re-synthesised cosmology takes on a new coherence with perhaps an opposing meaning, and one, which accommodates the Gypsies as an independent group. The Gypsies are not passively copying the beliefs of the dominant society.

Adaptive strategies are not limited to younger generations however as adaptive strategies have been employed by Gypsy / Traveller communities since the earliest historical records of them arriving in England and posing as Egyptians (Mayall 2004). The ability to 'borrow' from groups outside the community in response to changing times also highlights the connections both across communities and between generations. Clarke et al. (1993, p. 51) note:

> Here we begin to see how forces, working right across a class, but differentially experienced as between the generations, may have formed the basis for generating an outlook – a kind of consciousness – specific to age position: a generational consciousness.

The supposition that actors actively choose or select particular groups further supports the argument of connections both within but also across communities and highlights the importance of the 'sociology of generations' (Edmunds and Turner, 2002, p. 60). The impact of modernisation on the wider community is also significant here. Maffesoli (1996) proposed a consideration of selective identity in the form of 'neo-tribes' and 'elective communities' as a response to modernisation and globalisation. Whilst Hetherington (1998) identified the emergence of 'elective communities', this approach may be seen as influenced by the choice of fieldwork, which was conducted with New Traveller groups in the UK (Hetherington 2000). Yet Hetherington's research is particularly salient when considering the lives of young people and second generation Travellers to England and to sedentarism. This argument is supported by Belton (2005) who draws on the work of Harvey, Jones, McInroy and Milligan (2002) to demonstrate

the ways in which groups draw inspiration from older cultures thereby reinventing themselves.

Researchers working with Gypsy / Traveller groups have acknowledged the impact that increasing exposure to television has had on challenging young Travellers' perceptions of gender roles (Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Smith 1996). Bhreatnach (2006), Kenrick and Puxon (1972), and Mayall (1988) noted the ways in which Gypsy / Traveller groups were often depicted as pre-industrial societies, and as such, viewed with nostalgia. The reality is that Gypsy / Traveller groups inhabit both urban and rural landscapes, and in each context, they are exposed to a media culture. Media culture delivers the 'materials out of which people forge their very identities' shaping perceptions and attitudes towards others (Kellner 1995, p. 1).

Yet this link to a contemporary 'technological' existence is resisted at times from both within and outside Traveller communities. Holloway (2005), in her examination of rural residents in Cumbria discussing their views of Travellers attending Appleby fair, notes that opposition from the settled community is to the new 'fake' inauthentic Travellers. This view is an old one constantly revived by politicians and members of the settled community. The romantic image of the Traveller selling pegs, telling fortunes, living in barrel top wagons at one with the natural world is similar to the 'rural idyll' nostalgia and contributes to a continuing discrimination of the Travelling Community. Both Okely (1983) and Gmelch (1977) have suggested that the charges over authenticity seem to be more vehement when Travellers are seen to be doing well for themselves. Similarly, Bhopal and Myers (2008) have noted that young Travellers point out the inconsistencies voiced by the sedentary population; usually an improved standard of living is seen as a positive progression, unless it is experienced by a member of the Travelling Community, when they progress in their standards of living from horse drawn wagons to cars, for example it is viewed by the sedentary population as a negative change. Likewise Hancock (1996), quoted in Levinson (2007) states:

> When *we* move from wagons to campers they [non-Gypsies] say, *what a pity*! When *they* move from wagons to cars, it's progress. Why isn't it progress with us?

This is interesting when we consider the arguments over the 'good' traditional, rural Traveller and the new Travellers who are flashy, urban and visible.

The persistence of certain stereotypes facilitates discrimination against Irish Travellers through the media (Fanning 2002; Hayes 2006; Helleiner 2000; McVeigh 2008). There has been a particular focus in recent years on the impact of the television programme, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (Clark & Taylor 2014; Jensen & Ringrose 2014; Tremlett 2014). This is of particular significance because of the fact that it is presented as a television documentary claiming to inform audiences of the 'secret hidden culture that is the Irish Travelling Community'. The representation of minority groups in the media is problematic, providing few opportunities for access to the modes and mediums of representation whilst at the same time influencing the creation of stereotypes (Dates and Barlow 1993; Centre for Integration and Improvement of Journalism 1994; MacDonald 1992; NAACP 2008). Of particular focus in these programmes has been intense public scrutiny over the dress and deportment of young Traveller women. Holloway (2005), borrowing a term from Dwyer (1999), notes how, along with physicality, dress becomes 'an over determined signifier of difference'. The focus on clothing and deportment is at the expense of examination of wider structural inequalities, which are glossed over for the preferred consumption of tabloid interest in young women's bodies. Recent studies conducted in the UK examining public attitudes towards Travellers following the advent of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* indicate that Traveller women are constructed as oppressed and culturally isolated (Clarke and Taylor 2014; Jensen and Ringrose 2014). Other writers have suggested that these views are sedentary constructs that fail to acknowledge the restrictions facing women in all sections of society (Crackle 1992; Jensen and Ringrose 2014). This stereotyping and misrepresentation operates in a landscape where current recommendations from the Irish Government (*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, 2014 p. 54) acknowledge that:

> Young people, especially young girls, are particularly vulnerable to negative self-image and media pressure surrounding body image. It is therefore important to promote a safe and healthy body image and self worth.

Irish Traveller group (ITM) highlighted the discrimination implicit in a range of media channels which focus on Traveller crime, anti-social behaviour, nomadism and ethnicity implying that there are cultural traits which result in these anti-social behaviours (ITM,

2012 – submission to Leveson enquiry). This reporting further exacerbates racialised stereotypes of the Travelling Community.

Impact of Socialisation in School on Traveller Gendered Identities

Many studies have testified to the importance of relationships within the school environment in contributing to the development of a positive sense of identity, belonging and security (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Kiddle 1999; Bhopal and Myers 2008). Furthermore, many studies testify to the gendered identities that are performed within the school environment (Gilligan 1982; Epstein and Johnston 1994; Holland et al. 1994; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1995; Hyams 2000; Holloway et al. 2000). O' Boyle (1990, p. 118) acknowledges the conflict facing Traveller pupils on entering an alien education system:

> By law, Traveller pupils are entitled to parity of treatment with settled children in all state-owned primary and secondary schools. In practice, the possibility of their success in schools is blocked by the immediate rejection of their 'habitus' by the school personnel. The assault on their cultural allegiance to family, to an oral tradition, to sharing, swopping and mutual support begins as soon as the child enters school. The dress, language and social habits of the Traveller are anathema to the school ethos and great pains are taken to make the child conform to settled standards.

Numerous researchers have also referred to the different learning styles inherent within Gypsy / Traveller communities characterised by family-based, kinaesthetic, conversational group learning as opposed to more traditional schooling methods involving individual learning with classification based on age (Buckler 2007; Levinson and Sparkes 2003; Levinson 2005; O'Boyle 1990; Kenny 1997; Smith 1997; Okely 1983).

Research concerning Travellers in education has been conducted in a wide range of national and international contexts. In Irish contexts research has included: mothers' experiences of their children's schooling (Hegarty 2013), primary schooling and equality (Sullivan 2006), alienation within the education system (O'Boyle 1990), and strategies of resistance employed within the education system (Kenny 1997). From an English perspective: Bhopal and Myers (2008) inquired into the factors influencing

Gypsy identity in education, Danaher, Coombes and Kiddle (2007) explored the teaching practices of those involved in teaching Traveller children, Derrington and Kendall's (2004) national longitudinal study of Gypsy / Traveller children in secondary school observed the relationship between impact of culture and identity on Gypsy / Traveller achievement levels, Levinson and Sparkes (2005) identified the relationship between the use of space in Gypsy communities and the use of space in the school environment, Levinson (2007) demonstrated the manner in which literacy acquisition within Gypsy / Traveller Communities may be perceived as acculturation, O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004) outlined educational practices and recent innovations for Gypsy / Traveller children in education, and Tyler (2005) described accounts of good practice in the teaching of Gypsy / Traveller children. In Scotland: Jordan (2001) noted the dissonance between home and school contexts for Gypsy and Traveller children, Jordan and Padfield (2003) studied the impact of ICT technologies within Gypsy / Traveller Communities. In Europe: Liégeois' seminal (1987) study critically examined school provision for Gypsy / Traveller children within member states. In the US: Andereck's (1992), the study of Irish Travellers in Mississippi investigated ethnic awareness within the school environment. In Australia: Danaher, Kenny and Leder, (2009) reviewed provisions for Traveller and distance learners.

In line with changing times has been Travellers increased participation within the education system. Liégeois (1988) argues that the norms and values of the dominant group, perpetuated in the formal education setting, contribute to Travellers' experiences of alienation and marginalisation. Lodge and Lynch (2003) reported that a deep-seated prejudice towards Travellers was encountered in most of the schools that took part in their study of educational equality. They found that the term 'knacker' was widespread. Brooker and Broadbent's (2007) study drew attention to the issue of children's discourse becoming significantly more racialised and sexualised between the ages of 5-7 often taking the form of name-calling, particularly during break times. Kiddle (1999) highlighted the link between discrimination and negative stereotyping of Traveller children to their essentially negative experiences of the education system. Within the UK education research studies (Save The Children, 2001; Bhopal, et al., 2000; Derrington & Kendall, 2004) and accommodation assessments (Richardson, et al., 2007; Greenfields, et al., 2007), document that current numbers of Gypsy and Traveller pupils (in excess of 85%) experience a spectrum of racist abuse, including 'name-

calling' and physical violence in schools. Research also indicates that teachers are also tacitly or openly racist towards Gypsy and Traveller children (Save the Children Fund, 2001; Lloyd & Stead, 2001; Derrington & Kendall, 2004).

Hartigan, in his study of White trash culture (1997, p. 53) argued that name calling can be understood in the context of a dynamic between the name caller and the named, 'contests over signification' and definition. This polarization of insider and outsider groups further disengages Traveller parents and children and is expressed through conflicts within the school environments which Kenny (1997) describes as 'naming rituals' and this is further supported by findings from Derrington and Kendall (2004). Helleiner (2000, p. 70) highlights the on-going accusation of Travellers being dirty and carrying diseases, 'The suggestion that non-Traveller children were particularly vulnerable to Traveller 'depredations' had a long history in the regional press, where Travellers were blamed for the spread of diseases to non-Traveller children as early as 1923 (Connacht Tribune 31 March, 1923)'.

Andereck's (1992) findings in a US school illustrated how children's awareness of difference was increased through education with school providing the first opportunity to spend time with people outside their own group. Mixing, particularly at primary school, seems to provide an education in how to manage and interact with the sedentary population. Andereck (1992, p. 102) argues that fighting between Travellers and non-Travellers was a way of defining one's ethnicity and represented 'the crystallization of ethnic awareness and identity'. In addition, she also suggests that conflicts arising within the school were perceived by Traveller parents as reassurance of the maintenance of ethnic boundaries:

> As long as Traveller and non-Traveller children disagree, the boundary rules are in place and ethnicity is maintained. If the children ignore the boundary rules, ethnicity begins to lose its salience and importance and Traveller mothers place more value on their ethnicity than on formal education (p. 115).

In the UK, Levinson's (2005) study identified school as an opportunity for defining cultural identity boundaries. Whilst acknowledging the opportunities provided by education, it is evident that social difficulties have also ensued, not least the

fragmentation of traditional patterns. The transition to second level is a challenging time for all pupils but seems to be particularly so for members of the Travelling Community, as noted by O'Brien (1991) and the *Traveller Education Strategy* (2006). Increased participation in schooling has led to added tension for young women attempting to participate in an alien environment, which celebrates particular aspects of identity that are traditionally not recognised as suitable traits for Traveller women, such as delayed marriages and the concern their prolonged participation in education created diminishing returns when valued against their marriageability (Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2006). In addition, numerous research studies acknowledge the fact that Gypsy Traveller parents voice concerns over adolescents attending mixed schools for fear that young people will be exposed to inappropriate sexual activity and/or drugs or alcohol use within a school setting (Derrington & Kendall, 2004; Warrington & Peck, 2005; Save the Children Fund, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; 2006). Furthermore, O'Nions (2010, p. 466) notes that 'Education is traditionally provided through close family networks where children work alongside parents, learning their skills, from an early age'. This discrepancy in recognition of the value of the formal curriculum is yet another obstacle to encouraging educational engagement (Bhopal et al., 2000; Jordan, 2001; Reynolds, et al., 2003; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; 2006; Derrington & Kendall, 2004).

Passing (Goffman, 1963) is used at different times by significant numbers of the Travelling Community as a means of diverting negative attention and discriminatory behaviour as noted by Acton (1974), Hanlon (2005), Levinson and Sparkes (2006) and Smith (2005). In passing one risks damage to self-esteem; the forced ascription to a particular identity (and, by implication, status) creates a disjunction in understandings of self-worth as practised in the home / family environment (Fannon 1968). Levinson and Sparkes (2006) study highlighted the disjunction operating between those who chose to stay in education and those who did not stating that, 'The very act of staying on at school has become an act of group disloyalty' (2006, p. 93).

Culturally gendered differences create tensions both within the family and between the family and the school system, which results in families removing themselves from the equation in order to preserve some form of equilibrium as evidenced by Andereck (1992), Liégeois (1987), Derrington and Kendall (2004), and Levinson and Sparkes

(2006). Furthermore, Jordan (2001, p.5) suggests that family-based learning among Gypsy / Traveller groups, is 'fundamental to the preservation and continuation of the groups' social and cultural identities'. Parental fears surrounding the corrupting influence of school through the encroaching sedentary value system impacting on sexual morality, gender roles and home life has been highlighted by some authors (Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2006). The dominant sedentary culture of schools can be perceived as a threat, a means of assimilation, and parents who often had negative educational experiences themselves can be fearful of their children's safety (Kiddle 1999; Okely 1998). Andereck (1992) and Kenny (1997) suggest that Travellers' resistance to the increasing involvement of the education system in their lives is partly an effort to control the rate of change. Kenny (1997, p. 211) also suggests that resistance to increasing involvement in education may be understood as a cultural response to managing conflict. Levinson and Sparkes (2003, p. 591) have suggested that fighting is an essential part of Gypsy / Traveller males' physical capital, which also provided opportunities for 'constructing and maintaining family alliances and hierarchies'. Both Okely (1983) and Helleiner (2000) have suggested Traveller females also consider fighting an appropriate response to aggression.

Gendered Identities

An emphasis on Traveller identity as ethnicity possibly accounts for the fact that specific work on Traveller female identities has, until recently, been rather limited. From an academic perspective, there is Okely, (1975, 1983, 1996), Gay y Blasco (1997, 1999), Helleiner (1997, 2000) and Ní Shúinéar (1994). Historically, the majority of writing about Gypsy / Traveller women has been provided by non-academic Gypsy / Travellers, (Duffy 2007; Freeman 2011; Smith-Bendell 2009; McDonagh 2000; Warde 2009). Recently, a number of academic sources (Dunajeva, Kóczé and Cemlyn, 2015; Kóczé 2009, 2011, 2015; Magyari-Vincze 2006, 2007; Muñoz nd; Oprea 2005a; 2005b) detailing Roma Gypsy women's identities have argued for consideration of critical feminist perspectives of intersectionality. Intersectionality, first defined by critical legal race scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) is premised upon understandings of social locations as central to people's lived experiences as influenced by the interaction of categories such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability/ability, migration status, etc. It further recognises that these interactions are situated within

interconnected power structures including government, media and economics. Intersectionality, therefore, theorises how forms of oppression and privilege such as patriarchy, racism, colonialism, homophobia and ableism arise, and it foregrounds the achievement of social justice through social processes, redistribution and equity. The benefits of intersectional perspectives are that examining disadvantage in isolation may result in additional aspects of oppression being missed; therefore contextually specific explorations are required in order to unearth a thorough understanding of inequality. Bradley (2013, p. 207) notes that 'Intersectionality is consequently a good way to address the postmodernist focus on complexity and difference'.

Interest in Romany Gypsy and Traveller women is emerging. The overall impression is of young unmarried women having little power or voice within their communities (Berthier 1979; Gay y Blasco 1999; Larkin 1998; Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Okely 1983; Smith 1997) yet expectations are shifting within the cohort of young Traveller women due to the impact of external forces such as wider and more prolonged participation in education and the changing makeup of Irish society.

Bradley (2013; 1996, p. 205) defines gender as 'the varied and complex arrangements between men and women, encompassing the organization of reproduction, the sexual division of labour and cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity'. Gender infuses all the institutions in society including marriage, families, schools, workplaces, and political organisations. (Bradley 2013, p. 6). Gender identities are multiple, intersecting with age, ethnic and class hierarchies. Sawicki (1998) has argued that by focussing on women's personal life experiences, power relations within the home space can be revealed. Woodward (1997, p. 269) notes how:

> Roles and responsibilities are negotiated within social contexts and within existing discourses. People respond to social change and particular circumstances in diverse ways. Changing patterns of employment operate along with cultural expectations of who does what at home and how caring responsibilities are undertaken…However, there are changes both in practice and in the recognition, which is now given to caring responsibilities. For example, there are shifts in domestic arrangements, which herald shifts in power relations within the family.

This requires constant adjustments in order to negotiate the pressures and tensions created from interactions on individual, group and national levels. Historically,

Traveller women enjoyed more freedom outside of the home; the changes in the wider society which have limited nomadic, and in turn, traditional economic practices, forced Traveller women into limited gender roles reducing interactions for Traveller women. Helleiner (2000) and Okely (1983) distinguish Gypsy Traveller women's previous lifestyle practices of work outside of the home as being a significant factor in contributing to family resources. Acton (1974) noted changing economic patterns that were excluding women from the workplace and of parallel cultural upheaval that was changing the 'texture of life'. Okely (1983, p. 203) and Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 178) have noted how the move from traditional residence practices into contemporary housing has increased patriarchal power in Gypsy Traveller families by increasing the domestic focus of Gypsy Traveller women's lives with endless domestic duties and women being offered little opportunity to interact with or work outside the home. However Kiddle (1999) and Levinson and Sparkes (2006) have outlined Traveller women's increasing participation in education and employment as having contributed to significant shifts in dynamics within the community.

From an Irish context, Helleiner (1997) documented how Irish sedentary women's move into the workforce was facilitated by Traveller women's increasingly constrained position within the home place. The Commission on Itinerancy (COI, 1963) and increasing sedentarism opened up opportunities for sedentary women in the arenas of healthcare and education whilst at the same time constraining Traveller women and devaluing and failing to recognise their contribution to the family economy. Crickley (1992, p. 105) argued that misunderstandings of Traveller culture via sedentary feminist constructs might be complicit in working against appreciation and acknowledgement of Traveller culture and expression of identity:

> Settled feminists working for the liberation of traveller women, may…be unwittingly contributing to their cultural annihilation, through linking gender oppression primarily to Traveller culture and the nomadic way of life.

Okely (1975, 1983) documented the vital and complex role played by Traveller women in negotiating and mediating between Traveller and sedentary communities in order to draw on and access resources for the family. Whilst an initial reading of gender roles within the Travelling Community would suggest that Traveller men are the sole defenders of a culture that forces women to remain in traditional gender roles, Okely

(1975) and Helleiner (2000) have both argued that this is a superficial reading of the situation, demonstrating how Traveller women, when interacting with the sedentary community in order to access more resources for the family, draw on vulnerable images of themselves and their children in order to elicit sympathy for them from sedentary society as passive victims of patriarchal dominance. Okely (1983, p. 69-70) notes that:

> Even if carefully socialized, women may not automatically be prepared to accept the major domestic role, minimum external economic and political participation, implied inferiority, and greater restrictions on their libido. They will find ways of avoiding them. I am not suggesting crudely that men alone have necessarily imposed these restrictions; women have assisted by some complicity, consciously and unconsciously.

Okely (1983) has also argued that both Traveller men and women use those occupying outsider groups as a way of projecting fantasies of the other. This argument aligns with Clark's (2002) research that examined the way in which Travellers' identities shift in business transactions. Okely (1983, p. 205) highlights the challenges Gypsy / Traveller women face when negotiating relationships with outsiders in order to elicit resources that are limited in their own society. They are 'expected to be subservient to her husband and cautious with other men', whilst equally being faced with the demands of crossing over into 'enemy territory' with different gender roles and expectations which require 'outgoing', 'persistent' and 'aggressive' qualities in order to succeed. Recently, Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 178) have acknowledged the acquisition of 'strongly gendered expectations' of young women that can be understood as 'methods of social control' employed for the purpose of limiting contact with 'potentially corrupting influences of 'gorger' society'.

Embodiment and Gender

Cregan (2006, p. 3) defines embodiment as:

> …the physical and mental experience of existence [which] is the condition of possibility for our relating to other people and to the world…Embodied social relations exist both as the context (the prior circumstances) and as an outcome (a consequence) of given social formations, given systems through which we create and gain social meaning.

In the postmodern era the body has become a significant aspect of a person's sense of self-identity (Giddens, 1991; Shilling, 1993). Historically, 'Western' intellectual traditions, shaped by Cartesian philosophy, informed the approach to the body (Shilling, 1993; Turner, 1996). Within this tradition the *res cogitans* or mind and the *res extensa* or body were split (Grosz, 1994). Indeed, Shilling (1993, p. 9) writing on the body in sociological tradition defines it as 'an absent presence.' The mind/body dualism extends into dualistic classificatory systems between male and female, with masculinity associated with the mind, reason, rationality, science, and, consequently the public sphere while femininity is associated the natural world, the body and emotions and therefore better situated in private, interior realms. Bradley (1996, p. 80) notes that 'historically women have been seen as other people's property'. Within patriarchal systems, the culturally defined aspects of women are female sexuality and women's powers of reproduction. Shilling (1993, p. 9) contends that these definitions serve to represent vulnerability as a central feature of being a woman:

> Women's corporeal specificity is used to explain and justify the different (read: unequal) social positions and cognitive abilities of the two sexes. By implication, women's bodies are presumed to be incapable of men's achievements, being weaker, more prone to (hormonal) irregularities, intrusions, and unpredictabilities.

Mothering plays a central role in discourses surrounding feminine identity and moral worth whereby 'Mothers are constructed as the nation's and family's moral guardians' (Woodward, 1997, p. 257). Motherhood operates as a primary identity that serves to reinforce women's gender identity (McMahon, 1995). Forcey (1994, p. 357) notes the significance of mothering as 'the main vehicle through which people first form their identities and learn their place in society'. Woodward (1997, p. 241) notes that 'Motherhood is seen as a social institution represented and produced through different symbolic systems, but it is also claimed to be biological and to have an essential nature.' It is an institution operating within 'specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class and gender' (Collins, 994, p. 56, 1991; Baca Zinn, 1990, 1994).

Yuval Davis (1997) has foregrounded the central role played by gender in the marking and maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Until recently, the majority of research concerning Traveller identity, in particular male research (e.g. Gherorghe 1997; Mayall

2004; Stewart 1997a) foregrounds the importance of ethnicity as the defining feature as opposed to gender. Yet Okely (1983) has noted the central role assigned to Traveller women's sexuality within Gypsy / Traveller Communities. Traveller women's sexuality is constructed as dangerous because they have the ability to produce offspring from a different group, which in turn challenges group notions of identity and ethnicity, therefore female sexuality must be guarded. Life-stage is particularly significant in this conception as the reproductive years are the time during the life course when a woman is considered most dangerous. This concept is supported by Irish writer Crickley's (1992, p. 106) assertion that ethnic groups under attack from the wider dominant society utilise strict control of female sexuality as a way of maintaining group boundaries. Furthermore, Magyari-Vincze (2008, p. 21) states that:

> Romani women are viewed by the patriarchal Roma movement as life-givers and caretakers who are obliged to carry the burden of the biological and cultural reproduction of Roma.

A number of studies of Gypsy / Travellers (Stewart 1997; Sutherland 1975; Okely 1983; Salo 1977 and 1979) have emphasised morality as the defining characteristic that marks them as separate from wider sedentary communities. This different morality is understood through body symbolism (Douglas, 1970), which is then performed and read at the level of gender relations Okely (1983) and Sutherland (1975, 1977). Douglas (1966, 1973) suggested that the body is good for thinking about society. Turner (1984) proposed the idea of the 'somatic society' in which 'our present political problems and social anxieties are frequently transferred to the body' (Turner 1992, p. 1). According to Douglas (1966), the body as a symbol for society, becomes a site for locating culture, however the boundaries of the body are potentially dangerous, leaking substances, which may pollute through contamination and mixing, thus creating the need for social laws and taboos governing cultures.   In addition, Cregan (2006, p. 5) notes that:

> People in societies predominantly dependent on oral communication relate in the moment, in the presence of the person with whom they are communicating. The social framing of that moment links people to others across time and space, but it remains held together by modalities of presence.

A number of ethnographers have highlighted the manner in which group boundaries between Traveller and sedentary groups are preserved through the observance of a set of

practices that are situated in the bodily domain (Gay y Blasco 1999; Okely 1975, 1983; Larkin 1998; Stewart 1997a, 1997b; Sutherland 1977). Specifically, these practices are located within the Traveller female body and operate as a metaphor on a symbolic level for the Traveller 'body' (group). Okely (1975, p. 59) explains that it is through embodiment that relations between Traveller and sedentary groups are understood:

> Clearly, external control over the women's sexual activities can only be affected by supernatural beliefs, and ones fully internalized by the women. It is here that fears of ritual pollution have power. In addition to the pollution beliefs, which the Gypsies use to erect and maintain boundaries between themselves and Gorgios, there are certain polluting powers attached to women, which can be fully understood only in the context of Gypsy-Gorgio pollution.

Ritual pollution beliefs, concerning Roma Gypsy communities (variously referred to as *mahrime moxadi, mokadi, marime,* and *marimo* in the literature), foreground the centrality of cultural practices to which is attached moral worth. Larkin (1998, p. vi) has suggested that understandings of Mahrime lead to a form of social praxis, which is shown to affect the quality of Gypsy women's lives in personal, social and political domains. Discussions around Mahrime have been found in much of the literature surrounding Gypsy ritual purity and pollution (e.g. Gay y Blasco 1999; Larkin 1998; Okely 1983; Stewart 1997a, 1997b). From an Irish Traveller perspective, there are similar differentiations between 'clean' and 'dirty' although the concepts may vary slightly from those expressed by Gypsies and Roma (Griffin, 2002; Ní Shúinéar, 1997). Griffin (2002b, p. 110) states:

> Just as some Gypsy or Roma groups articulate aspects of their social organisation and identity in beliefs and symbolic practices concerning the body…so too…do Irish Travellers.

These purity beliefs and customs are experienced as disgust, shame or fear and conceptualised in terms top/bottom (i.e. Rom) and of inside/outside body (i.e. English and Irish Gypsy Travellers). This inside/outside body or top/bottom symbolism classifies by comparison of the sacred from the profane, e.g. Gypsy/Non-Gypsy. These practices function to strengthen community cohesion (Powell, 2008; Smith and Greenfields, 2013).

From a generational perspective, Gay y Blasco (1999) and Larkin (1998, p. 15) demonstrate how older women operate as the guardians / protectors of morally appropriate behaviour:

> …while ma[h]rime theoretically applies to all members of an ethnic group, it applies unequally so, with women during the 'fertile years', pertaining both economically and reproductively, being the most controlled.

Okely (1975, p. 62) has argued that reduction in the importance of female pollution taboos amongst Gypsy / Travellers is directly related to the decreasing participation in the wider sedentary society through declining economic roles:

> If indeed, female pollution taboos have become less important, this coincides with the relative decline in the women's external economic role, and thus my case that the two are interconnected.

Coupled with the decline in participation in a wider economic sphere, however, is the need for consideration of the impact of Gypsy / Travellers increased participation within the education system. Sociologists (Bourdieu 1984; Csordas 1993; Elias 2000) and historians (Connerton 1989, p. 71) propose the notion of an embodied memory situated in the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984) operating below the level of consciousness. Bourdieu's understanding of bodily practices includes carriage, deportment, and the ways in which these translate into expressing a sense of entitlement, confidence etc. The term 'techniques of the body' was a term shared by Foucault (1986a, 1988) and also Mauss (1979). Foucault (1977) recognised the way in which bodies are aspects of power relations through which their exertions force them / coerce them into malleable and conforming objects. Social power distinguishes and delineates individuals as members of one specific group, or social class through the way they implement their bodily practices such as walking, talking and general demeanour. These bodily practices are actively embodied and serve to provide a structure around which social relations of power operate. As individuals begin to intuit how the game is played they are able to improvise their actions within the playing field. Power relations shape all facets of embodied practice including class, gender and ethnicity so that women and men come to experience and inhabit space in different ways. Young, writing in *Throwing Like a Girl* (1990) describes how the symbolic and physical confinement women experience within the sphere of gender relations and, consequently, political

power, manifests physically and is experienced as diminished articulation within the body so that unlike men, who experience their bodies as unobstructed and expansive, women's understanding of their physical limitations and physical articulations of their bodies becomes curtailed consequently affecting the ways in which they use their bodies. Thus, the essence of identity is to be found in embodied practice and performance that is also gendered.

Goffman (1959) draws attention to the concept of identity as performance through interaction. Goffman portrays people as actors creating identities by playing different roles on different stages and to different audiences. Goffman's identity performance is fluid, dynamic and interactive. A number of studies on Gypsy communities have highlighted the importance of the performance of an identity (Buckler, 2007; Gay y Blasco 1999; Lemon 2000; Stewart 1997a, b). Citing Butler (1990) Gay y Blasco (1999) suggests that personhood among Gitano Gypsy communities is a gendered performance of moralities that highlights the distinctions between the Gypsy community and the wider sedentary community. She suggests that identity is constructed through performance as opposed to being preserved through attachment to a specific place or collective historical archive. Buckler (2007) suggests that Gypsies have a tradition of 'practising and performing Gypsiness'.

Shilling (1993, p. 5) notes that awareness of the body involves individuals being conscious of, and actively concerned about, the 'management, maintenance and appearance of their bodies' together with a 'practical recognition of the significance of bodies; both as personal resources and as social symbols which give off messages about a person's self- identity'. Aspects of identity performance include clothing, deportment and speech (Okely 1975; 1983). Choice of clothing plays a significant role in the negotiation of a gendered identity. Bartky (1998, p. 64) has outlined three distinct practice areas in which techniques of the body are performed in order to fashion an appropriately gendered body which include:

> …those that aim to produce a body of a certain size and general configuration; those that bring forth from this body a specific repertoire of gestures, postures and movements; and those that are directed towards the display of the body as an ornamental surface.

Gay y Blasco (1999, p. 80) has suggested that Gypsy women's choice of clothing is 'one of the fields where power is negotiated' which operates both within families and within the Church. Griffin (2002) conducting fieldwork amongst Irish Travellers in the UK noted that Irish Travellers, unlike the English Gypsies, did not consider dress as important, yet Griffin's work did not consider clothing within a gendered context, but rather across the whole group. In addition, the advent of modern media may have changed this. Recent media interest in Gypsies and Travellers through television documentaries such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* has raised the visibility of certain female Traveller styles. Body image is used to achieve what Featherstone (1991, p. 171) has described as the 'marketable self'. Yet struggles over clothing, what Dwyer (1999, p. 21) calls 'over determined signifier of difference' not only mark ethnic boundaries, but also class boundaries (McClintock 1995; Skeggs 1997, 2004). Literature surrounding the influence of clothing on identity performance notes the intimate connection between clothing and body (Tseëlon 2001). Clothing discourse is intimately intertwined with discussions of morality and immorality; what is 'good', 'proper' or 'appropriate' clothing. As well as the practical function of protection from cold, clothing also functions to decorate, demarcate and demonstrate identities. It functions to provide an awareness of a division between groups and, in so doing, facilitates reinforcement of identity. As with housework and other 'feminine arts' clothing is intimately intertwined with discourses of hygiene and morality. Particular ritual events for which specific clothes are worn provide space for the performance, creation, sustainment and re-enactment of particular identities. Clothes provide the membrane between the body and society.

Blasco (1999) noted the apparent contradiction between the performed morality of Gitano Gypsies and their preference for voluptuous female form, emphasising fertility and fecundity. Similarly, Levinson and Sparkes (2006, p. 85) noted:

> Another aspect that separates many female participants in their own minds from non-Gypsies is a sense of greater femininity, evidence of which has been suggested in better looks, more womanly figures, prettier jewellery and perhaps above all, in the propensity to have bigger families.

Modesty, which may be described as a way of dressing and carrying oneself in a manner, which does not encourage sexual attention, varies widely across cultures and

history (Flügel 1930, Ch. 4; Konig 1973; Ribeiro 1986). Display of skin represents deeply held values about fecundity and virginity within society (Eicher 2001, p. 247). Goffman (1963) suggests that skin exposure is related to the degree of trust and security that a person feels, arguing that a woman displaying considerably more flesh during a ceremonial occasion is articulating that she can, in this situation, expose herself without being exploited.

Clothing can, therefore, highlight those members of society occupying liminal spaces, for example, wedding dresses, christening gowns, communion dresses, Victorian mourning wear, certain types of outsider clothing such as punks and emos. The investigation of clothing styles as a way of advertising group identity has been noted by Hebdige (1979), Willis (1975, 1978), and from a gendered perspective McRobbie, (1981, 1991, 1994), whilst defining themselves in opposition to a dominant group. Initial investigations of subcultural styles tended to limit themselves to male working-class groups (such as mods, rockers, bikers and punks), however McRobbie argues that male members of subcultures are more 'visible' due to the spaces they inhabit, whereas female styles tend to be less visible because of the spaces they inhabit (i.e. indoors). However, the advent of recent media interest in Gypsies and Travellers through television documentaries such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* has raised the visibility of certain female Traveller styles. Indeed, Okely (2013, P. 209) notes how:

> Gypsy and Traveller identity can be said to be constructed through opposition to outside society by favouring an alternative taste to that followed by the majority.

Enactment of life stage rituals can, therefore, provide spaces for the modification of identity performance through textural and stylistic improvisation. Within these spaces, different groups tailor their identities in a variety of ways. From an Irish context, Brownlee's (2011) research of Irish Travellers at Knock examines the perceptions of the sedentary community towards Irish Travellers in a religious setting suggesting that the way young Traveller women dress represents an alternate perception of the use of space whereby, due to limited opportunities for socialising (due to gender) pilgrimage is not only a religious and spiritual event, but also a major social event. Concerns over deportment are therefore linked to contested notions of space.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an exploration of the literature surrounding Gypsy / Traveller identity. It is concerned with the nature of Traveller identity within the context of a changing society. It has explored the different identities of Irish Travellers resident in the Republic of Ireland and Irish Travellers in the UK and the differences between these communities. It has considered the changing nature of Traveller spatial practices and the impact of this on social relationships both within and between communities. Furthermore, it has foregrounded the importance of particular spaces in forming a gendered identity, that is, the notion of gendered spaces. It has given consideration to the impact of educational provision on Travellers from the perspective of identity, in particular noting the challenges created by participation in sedentary institutions, the responses by communities of both parents and young people, and for those young people who choose to remain in the system. Moreover, it has also highlighted the disjunctions between the generations within the Travelling Community and the responses to this. It has detailed the literature concerning Traveller female identities and the way in which the boundaries between Traveller communities and sedentary communities are maintained. In addition, it has noted the importance of ritual hygiene practices observed through embodied performances as a way of preserving and maintaining group boundaries. It has explored the manner in which responses to insider and outsider groups are understood through moral performances located at the site of the body. The following chapter outlines the methodological approaches employed in this research.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework and methods employed in this research. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the researcher and the researched, framed in this instance by gender and nationality. Specific consideration is also given to issues around ethics. There is a tendency to write up research as if it had been impeccably planned and everything had adhered to some carefully constructed design. This was simply not the case, and I do not attempt to conceal the disrupted nature of this research; it grew organically and shifted shape as it developed and, consequently, the research changed focus. I began with a vague and general plan for qualitative work. This seemed to develop into an ethnographic project. I believe it is important to be open about such inconsistencies rather than go through some pretence about this. Mauthner et al. (2002, p. 2) note that the salient characteristics of qualitative research are 'fluidity and inductive uncertainty'. Tesch (1987, p. 231-2) describes the approach as an organic activity:

> Obviously, the researcher must begin somewhere and intends to end somewhere. Thus there is a movement, a progression, and eventually, an arrival. It would be wrong, however, to picture this movement as a straight sequential process. It is even a bit misleading to think of it as a process. To conjure up an image of what this movement is like, it helps to see it more in terms of a flow, or a cycling and spiralling motion that have no clearly distinguishable steps or phases. Typically, the researcher would be hard pressed to say where this flow begins. She knows only that her first data collection session already contained the seeds of what is usually termed the 'analysis'. The first ideas of how to make sense of the data are born then, and other ideas may come to her at any time during any research activity, even up to the eventual writing of her results.

Qualitative, empirical research in the social sciences seeks to make sense of the world through offering explanation, clarification and demystification of the 'social forms that man has created around himself' (Beck 1979). Qualitative research can involve the use of multiple methods in an attempt to understand particular phenomena (Flick 1998). Fetterman (1989, p. 28) suggests that through ethnographic research 'cultural

interpretation' is formed that requires 'the ability to describe what the researcher has heard and seen within the framework of the social group's view of reality'.

This research evolved through a number of stages. My initial research idea was to examine Travellers' experiences of education. As I became engaged in the research process, however, I began to reconsider my understanding of the role that education in home and school contexts plays in shaping Travellers' gendered identities, which, in turn, affects the ways in which they experience the education system. The research, therefore, developed throughout the process, through a number of phases, into an investigation of the manner in which Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, how they negotiate the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. Through a detailed exploration, from a distinctly gendered perspective, this research project aimed to approach the question from a cross-generational perspective which foregrounded the voices of mothers and daughters within the Travelling Community in the Republic of Ireland. The way in which this was conducted was by examining the following six key questions. Firstly, how does the school environment impact on Traveller women's experience of themselves? Secondly, how has Traveller women's educational experience changed over time? Thirdly, how has Traveller women's home experience changed over time? Fourthly, how do Traveller women experience these different spaces? Fifthly, how do different contexts impact the choice of behaviour and/or response? Finally, how is education shifting Traveller identities?

Methodology Choices

At the outset, all I knew with any certainty was that this was going to be a qualitative study. Qualitative research methods allow researchers to hear the voices of those who are 'silenced, othered, and marginalized by the dominant social order' (Liamputtong 2010). In qualitative inquiry the researcher is not only interested in what something is, rather the salient feature becomes 'explain it to me – how, why, what's the process, what's the significance? (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2005, p. 28). Furthermore, the in-depth nature of qualitative methods provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore rich, meaning-laden data, which allows research participants the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences in their own words (Gregory and McKie, 1996).

Therefore, qualitative research is particularly important when researching the views of young Traveller women and Traveller women in general who have little power or voice in the wider community and in their own community.

I was looking, primarily, at educational issues, and such a position seemed to suffice. Even when the work extended to explore wider issues around identity and home-place, I was a little reticent to view the research as fully ethnographic: I was not living with any particular group of women, I did not know for sure that they would allow me sufficient access for the kind of sustained framework that characterises ethnographic work. Yet as Foster (1979) and Adler and Adler (1987) demonstrate, fieldwork is not solely limited to the full-time or long-term sort. Spradley (1979, p. iv) defines ethnography as a research methodology that enables us to comprehend 'how other people see their experience'; this entails **learning from people** as opposed to **studying people**, (p. 3). According to Agar (1986) Becker (1970), Emerson (1981, 1983), Spradley (1980) and Strauss (1987) ethnography equips researchers with a set of skills for gathering and analysing data, the aim of which is, according to Geertz (1973, p. 14), 'the enlargement of the universe of human discourse'.

This was a research project, which was shaped and informed by my experiences as a practitioner. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to the methodological **bricoleur** who draws from a wide range of knowledge and diverse perspectives using a montage style approach. This multiple method approach allows for a rich description of the lived experiences of participants, which, whilst acknowledging the inherent power laden dynamics that are present within the research encounter does not restrict the researcher to one particular worldview or paradigm. The montage approach is open and evolving, allowing for improvisation throughout the research process in order to facilitate emerging opportunities (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p. 7):

> The qualitative researcher who uses montage is like a quilt maker or jazz improviser. The quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience.

Through the employment of a range of methods the researcher is able to access particular characteristics which may have been shrouded or concealed thereby

developing new understandings and the creation of new knowledge. The organic nature of the research facilitates opportunities to realise developing themes and, in turn, articulate theories. Because the nature of qualitative research methodologies are adaptable and variable, they are particularly relevant when approaching research with vulnerable groups as they accommodate the exploration of subjective experiences and interpretations (Dunne 2000; Dunne et al. 2002; Hutchinson et al. 2002; Lee 1993; Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005; Liamputtong 2007; Melrose 2002; Miller 1997; Wiebel 1990).

In adapting a research design, I was increasingly confronted by issues concerning its purpose. Who was this research for? Was it aimed at the academic community, policy-makers, teachers and other practitioners? Or was it, primarily, for the Travellers themselves? Increasingly I became preoccupied by the need to shape research that would have real meaning in Travellers' lives. Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007 p. 46) acknowledge that 'Research is used if it is politically acceptable'. Okely (1983, p. 232) notes that:

> Policy questions are invariably set by those in power, and restrict what needs to be learned. Even research with the most democratic and benevolent intentions will fail, if the questions of relevance are devised by the uninformed.

For the purpose of this research project, I chose to explore examples of the lives and attitudes of the marginalised **within** the group known as the Travelling Community, specifically the lives of women and within this group to attempt to elucidate the voices of those most marginalised within the group, namely, young women. My reason for choosing this particular perspective rather than constructing the lives of the disenfranchised group and its implications for policy and education was informed by my interest in choosing to explore a marginalised voice within marginalised voices. By choosing this perspective, I was aware that whilst there is a need to access representation for one group from a political perspective and those activist groups representing them, there is was also the challenge of attempting to include multiple voices across the generations which may not necessarily agree. Therefore, the interests of key participants might shape the research in a manner that is not truly emancipatory

for the wider group. This is important to consider when, as in Gypsy / Traveller research, there is a tendency to focus on a small numbers of voices within a community.

Ethnography

The style of approach that I selected in order to conduct my research project was ethnographic in nature. Van Maanen (2011, p. xvii-xviii) describes ethnographies as 'portraits of diversity in an increasingly homogeneous world'. Ethnographic approaches employ grounded and field-based styles that rely on participant observation and unstructured interviewing to explore the meanings behind social interaction. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 3) note that the:

> task is to investigate some aspect of the lives of the people who are being studied, and this includes finding out how these people view the situations they face, how they regard one another, and also how they see themselves. It is expected that the initial interests and questions that motivated the research will be refined, and perhaps even transformed, over the course of the research and this may take a considerable amount of time.

Iphofen (2013, p. 2) suggests that ethnography 'is best understood as a 'style' of research requiring the observation and description of people in their normal social context'. Central to the understanding of the ethnographic style is the concept of multiple perspectives wherein different aspects or perspectives seen and voiced, thus avoiding a particular or dominant hierarchical perspective.

The primary goal of the ethnographer is to attempt to access authentically produced data; to allow the data to emerge naturally and in an unforced way. Genzuk (2003, p. 5) states that:

> It is argued that if one approaches a phenomenon with a set of hypotheses one may fail to discover the true nature of that phenomenon, being blinded by the assumptions built into the hypotheses...The focus of the research is narrowed and sharpened, and perhaps even changed substantially, as it proceeds. Similarly, and in parallel, theoretical ideas that frame descriptions and explanations of what is observed are developed over the course of the research.

Within the context of the ethnography, attention can then be focussed on emergent patterns that may be specific and unique to a particular group or situation. The focus of

ethnographic research may take any number of modes such as individuals, groups, families or case studies (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The organic, evolving nature of this approach allows for a fluidity of styles which can shift to encompass varying needs of a research project at any given time, thereby enabling the researcher to develop an unobtrusive and facilitative research encounter which is most appropriate when working within the private, intimate spheres of life. Allan (2011, p. 68) states that ethnography is 'well known for being an approach that is usually practised in 'natural' everyday life social settings'. Furthermore, Matza (1969, p. 5) has argued that in order to capture the myriad of forms that exist within the social world we must observe it in its natural setting; it is for this reason that I chose to select an ethnographic approach to data gathering. Moreover, Agar (1986) has proposed that the emphasis placed on **listening** to participants in ethnography sets it apart from other approaches to research. In addition, given the intimate and delicate nature of the research, I selected an ethnographic approach which Coffey (1999, p. 1) has argued is invariably 'personal, emotional and identity' work. Therefore, it can be argued that the ethnographic approach is an appropriate methodology for researchers working within both the Traveller and sedentary populations.

Positionality

Crapanzano (1977, p. 72) acknowledges that 'however objective they may seem, there is an autobiographical dimension to all ethnographies'. Positionality, which can be defined as 'where one stands in relation to 'the other'' (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Lee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411) shapes research, influences interpretation, understanding and views about the 'truthfulness' of other studies in the field. Hall (1990, p. 18) argues that, 'There's no enunciation without positionality. You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all'. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 17) note 'there is no way we can escape the social world to study it'. Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 369-70) propose:

> …all researchers can benefit from exploring the ways in which they are connected to their research – in terms of topic and methodological approach - and how these connections influence their theorizing and practice.

They advocate for quality in research methods that include a way of being:

Quality is thus about becoming rather than being. It incorporates noticing how identity, ethnicity, class, our positioning in the world impact our research, and being aware of the creative potential that this awareness makes available in speaking a perspective and acting inquiringly.

Throughout this research process, much of the data seemed to be influenced by my position in the field, also by synchronicity and embodied responses that I was initially hesitant to note. Yet Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) have argued that this type of research is necessary and that in order to engage in quality research we must 'develop capacities for working with multiple ways of knowing' so that:

Our knowing is then consummated in practice, the skill or knack of doing things in the world, which, of course, gives rise to new encounters.

Bourdieu's (1984) theories of practice and social/cultural reproduction are important here; theories of habitus, field and capitals. Bourdieu (1984, p. 170) defines habitus as 'a structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices'. Habitus encompasses our understanding of the world and includes, beliefs, interests, tastes and practices that are influenced by our early socialisation, family and education. Capital, as defined by Bourdieu, is comprised of four types – social, cultural, economic and symbolic. Social capital is defined as social networks. Cultural capital encompasses the experiences, knowledge and connections of an individual and is particularly important when considering education. Economic capital incorporates economic assets including property ownership and earning ability. Symbolic capital considers recognition and prestige that an individual accrues. The field is defined as:

…a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure. (Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 32)

Therefore, for the purposes of this research it was important that I attempted to acknowledge and situate my own views and biases within a context. I am a forty-four year old married woman, mother of three children, English by birth, living in Ireland for the last 20 years, white, middle class, educated and raised as a Quaker. I obtained a degree in social anthropology and later trained as a body psychotherapist. My first experiences of the Gypsy / Traveller Community were as a child. I remember passing trailers lined up along the side of Doncaster racecourse. Later in my teenage years I

worked for the family business picking up produce from market gardens and delivering to market traders.

I moved to Ireland in the 1990's after visiting friends who were 'New Travellers'[2] and on first moving to Ireland I regularly mixed with and for a short period of time (six months) lived on a New Traveller site. Later, when starting work with the Travelling Community, I was recognised by some of the local Gypsy / Traveller community who were in contact with some of the New Travellers through a range of activities including buying and selling horses and dogs.

This research developed out of my experiences of working with the Travelling Community in the North West of Ireland in a variety of posts which took place in the arena of education, beginning in 2000, including, tutor assistant, trainer and facilitator for a number of Traveller Support Groups, and more recently as Home Youth Liaison Officer for the Travelling Community (HYLOTC). The role of practitioner researcher (whether teacher, psychologist, Principal, Warden or development officer) is not new in Traveller research in both the UK and Ireland (see Buckler 2007; Griffin 2008; Kenny 1997; O'Boyle 1990; Sullivan 2006; Bond 2006). Given the typically closed nature of the community, access is a difficult obstacle to negotiate and developing research relationships through a former professional role is, arguably, a suitable way for someone who is not from the Travelling Community to gain access. However, the role of the researcher, in terms of former professional roles, also requires some further consideration. For example, the voluntary participation of the participants in this research may be impacted by the fact that the researcher has advocated for them in the past and has known them for a considerable period of time. It was therefore necessary to emphasise to the participants, particularly in a study using an ethnographic (and thus very involved) approach, that their participation is entirely voluntary, and that they ought not to be swayed by the researcher's former professional role. Equally, it can be argued that a former role can also be seen as a benefit for participants, as well as myself, in that they knew me and felt more comfortable with me than they would with a stranger. Additionally, whilst much initial contact had been through professional roles I also had personal relationships with people in the community known as New Travellers

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[2] New Travellers is a term used to describe members of the settled community who have adopted a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle

who interacted with the local Gypsy Travelling Community and these personal relationships also served to support participants' involvement.

Another topic that was important in developing a rapport with the older women was the question of my religious beliefs. When I began working with the women they asked me what religion I practised; I explained that I was raised as a Quaker. After explaining what a 'Quaker' was, I was then asked, 'Are you a Catholic?' I usually explained that although I wasn't a Catholic I was deeply interested in religion. I was then asked, 'Well do you believe in Our Lady?' to which I replied I did. As I spent time with the older women the talk would frequently turn to 'cures' and visits to Holy Places. As part of my research, I began to develop an interest in visiting graveyards and Holy Wells and the fact that I was seen visiting these places certainly helped to establish connections and facilitate discussions.

The Impact of Gender on Positionality

Golde (1970) and Warren and Rasmussen (1977) note the manner in which the ethnographer's gender allows for the development of relationship with particular research participants, whilst Berreman (1962) highlights the manners in which gender operates to inhibit the development of other relationships. Gender plays a role in access, willingness to discuss intimate topics, and meaning making. As stated previously, I am a married woman and, mother to three male children. The fact that I was married and a mother played a key part in allowing me access to certain areas that would otherwise have been closed to me. In the first instance, being female allowed me access to predominantly female spaces. In the Travelling Community women tend to spend much of their time indoors whilst men tend to spend most of their day outdoors (Kendall 1997; Levinson and Sparkes 2004). Being a married woman with children allowed me to be party to intimate conversations about childbirth, contraception and sexuality. Workers in the local Traveller support groups where I worked, from both the Traveller and sedentary community, informed me that conversations regarding sexuality did not take place. Despite being told that sex talk did not take, place I found that at times conversations were ribald and highly sexualised.

Being pregnant during a part of my time 'in the field' was also useful as it facilitated conversations around childbirth and allowed access to folk knowledge[3] that otherwise would have been more difficult to explore[4]. During my involvement in Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI) in 2000 and 2005-6 a considerable amount of time was spent with the older women and I believe that this experience was a key factor in building trust and rapport, with the older generation, establishing a 'way in'. During 2005-6, I worked three days a week for the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) as a tutor and facilitator for a Traveller Women's Group. At this time, I was also pregnant with my third child and this certainly provided plenty of opportunity for establishing rapport; morning sessions began with making tea and speculations as to the sex and arrival date of my baby which naturally led onto recollections of their own experiences (including giving birth on the side of the road). The older women (one of whom had had 19 children) were accurate predictors of the change in position of my transverse baby and the due dates.

The BTEI I worked in catered to women from the Travelling Community between the ages of 16 and 60. The BTEI also provided opportunity to work with younger members of the Travelling Community and the rapport that I established with the older women certainly helped to build their trust in me when I later became a Youth worker. Moreover, the fact that this work entailed interactions across the generations certainly helped in bridging generations and mediating between them when conducting the research. My interactions with the younger female generation then developed further through a mutual interest in clothing and bodily adornment, in particular, tattooing. In addition, I had a New Traveller friend working as a tattoo artist in the local area whom many of the younger and older Gypsy / Traveller women used and this also provided a useful point in conversation[5].

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[3] Pollution and the practice of Churching whereby women who have recently given birth undertake a ceremony in the church. Whilst some accounts explain the ritual as giving thanks for a safe passage, the women I worked with explained the reasons to me in terms of purification whereby they were unable to prepare food for the family until they had been 'Churched'.

[4] During the time I worked with the Traveller Women's Group I was pregnant with my third child. After the birth of my third child I took a three-month maternity leave and then returned to work part-time.

[5] After providing contact details of the tattoo artist to one particular family, they called by my house one afternoon in order to get directions. I then offered to drive up with them up to visit the tattooist I had recommended. The tattoo artist, a New Traveller, resided in a rural area in the North West of Ireland that was at one time exclusively inhabited by New Travellers. Many New Travellers came to Ireland in the

The opportunity provided by working with Traveller children, young people and parents was an important facilitator in enabling me to conduct research across the generations. Whilst much of my early contact with the Travelling Community was with women, through my work in the HYLS I also came into contact with male relatives and through this established some rapport with the men. Furthermore, the fact that I had also been in contact with Traveller men through these roles was also, to a lesser degree, significant, as I was considered a familiar figure when conducting research. Through what may be termed 'sporting capital' (Wacquant, 2004) or more specifically equine capital, relationships across genders were facilitated to a certain extent, however I was always careful to observe what may be termed a more 'gendered-oriented' approach. In the Travelling Community horses tend to be 'men's business' and yet in the sedentary community this is often the reverse. Over a period of two years I spent a considerable amount of time horse riding with young Traveller males as part of youth projects and my proficiency in this area was key. Along with the physical act of horse riding, knowing about the care of horses, training and their ailments; basic stable management was extremely useful in helping to develop conversations.

My position as a female granted me access to the more intimate discussion of women's lives. The very opposite was the case when talking to males. While speaking to Traveller men was not central to the research, as it developed, it was important to have some relationship with the men. In that regard, it was useful to have a shared interest in hunting. I grew up in a rural area in the north of England among farming communities who all practised some form of hunting (including fox hunting and lamping). Whilst hunting is often seen as the preserve of aristocracy, in reality it is a country pursuit enjoyed by many different groups in rural society. Many young Traveller men spend a considerable amount of time hunting and training hunting dogs and my knowledge of hunting terminology and enthusiasm for the sport certainly helped here. In addition, some of the New Travellers with whom I was friendly bought and sold hunting dogs

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early 1990's following the introduction of the Criminal Justice Bill in the UK and lived in trailers or 'benders'. Passing by the benders and trailers the Gypsy Traveller family, who were second generation settled, could not believe the living conditions of the New Travellers, claiming their surprise and hilarity at the place; saying that this was like the 'Wild West'.

with the Gypsy / Travellers and again my contacts with them proved useful and I often used books about hunting dogs as resources in literacy classes.

Ethics

No discussion of research is complete without an examination of ethical issues. This research was approved via an ethics committee prior to beginning fieldwork. Ethics documents for anthropologists and ethnographers begin by highlighting basic ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-malfeasance and justice. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) identify two separate types of ethics. The first type of ethics are procedural ethics, that is, ethics concerned with informed consent, confidentiality, rights to privacy, deception, and protecting human subjects from harm. In addition, they draw attention to 'situational' or 'practice ethics' which are concerned with the aspects of research which one is unable to predict prior to entering the field (ethics such as participants disclosing something harmful or asking for help?). Ellis (2007), suggests that researchers need to construct a third dimension of ethics based around an 'ethics of care' and 'relational ethics' which requires one to be 'true to one's character and responsible for one's actions and their consequences on others' (Slattery and Rapp 2003, p. 55). Relational ethics focuses on those aspects of relating that develop out of interactions between researchers and individual research participants and researched communities of recognition, value, mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness (Lincoln 1995, p. 287; see also Brooks 2006; Reason 1993; Tierney 1993). Bergum (1998) argues that relational ethics must be viewed as a process of continuous reflection and questioning which attempts to address the reality and practice aspects of relationships that are fluid and subject to change over time. Recently, there has been a focus towards researchers as ethical thinkers with a move away from rule-based and participant focused ethical protocols and procedures towards a focus on researchers as ethical thinkers who act with 'responsible advocacy' (Clark and Waller 2011; Smith 2008; Ulrich et al. 2002). Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) predict that ethical researchers must 'Be willing to act in circumstances of radical uncertainty'. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of ethical dilemmas that arise during fieldwork there are a number of strategies that the researcher can employ in order to reduce the risk of ethical dilemmas. The next section is concerned with a consideration of these strategies.

Working with closed communities often poses difficulties concerning access, and whilst it could be argued that an ideal situation would be to engage in ethnographic research with a family I had no former links with, this was not in practice possible. The nature of my research was limited by a number of constraints. In the first place, financial and temporal constraints limited the scope of my research to the North West of Ireland, and over the last 15 years I had worked with Travelling families in this area in a variety of advocacy and support roles. Whilst further financial resources would have enabled me to conduct my ethnography further afield, and presumably, afford me the opportunity to engage in research with a group not previously known to me, this is not always a determinant of transparency in the research relationship. Judith Okely (1983, p. 41) in her seminal work *The Traveller-Gypsies,* describes how she began by securing funding for her research as a policy-oriented project originally, then pretended to be a warden or student / helper and later allowing perceptions of herself as someone who was on the run from the police as a 'way in' to a community:

> There were other suspicions: that I was a journalist, a police collaborator, a foot-loose heiress, a girl friend of the warden, a drug addict and a hippy, or someone on the run from the police. I discouraged all these images except the last.

Whilst it could be argued that the fact that I had previously engaged in a working relationship with the participants would sway their decision and ability to participate in research freely, it could also, equally be argued that I selected them specifically because through my previous relationship with them we have had the opportunity to build good lines of communication which were vital in establishing a process of on-going consent. More recently, Helleiner (2000, p. 17) who conducted ethnographic research with Irish Travellers in Galway, suggests that families engaged with her in order that she may advocate for them:

> While I was assured of my welcome, Travellers' lack of ownership of camping land, together with the absence of a local protocol to ensure research accountability, limited their ability to accept or reject my presence and to exert any formal control over my subsequent activities. As with earlier invitations to other camps, it is also likely that the initial welcome extended to me was premised upon a hope that the presence of an outsider associated with key service providers might have the result of reversing years of official neglect.

This has led me to reflect on the power in the research encounter; well documented by feminist theorists such as Sangster (1998). I had previous experience as a practitioner whereby, due to the nature of my work, I was regularly asked to act as a 'gatekeeper' (Gatekeeper as defined by social science researchers to provide a 'way in') to the Travelling Community. This often left me in a conflicted position; for example, certain researchers requested that I provide access for them. Introductions to appropriate research 'subjects' can be a treacherous process if the research interview does not go well and the interviewee is left feeling disgruntled and 'used', this then can have 'knock on' effects in my subsequent relationship with the person. Therefore I chose not to use gatekeepers, but instead to use my own contacts within the Travelling Community.

Throughout this research project I provided participants with information regarding training programmes and resources, support with college assignments and preparation for interviews. There are two advantages to developing meaningful and on-going relationships with research participants, namely the ability to address sensitive topics and the ability to review data and return to it over time. Research is deemed as sensitive, according to Wellings et al. (2000, p. 256):

> If it requires disclosure of behaviours or attitudes, which would normally be kept private and personal, which may result in offence or lead to social censure or disapproval, and/or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express.

There are also, however, challenges to developing meaningful and on-going relationships with research participants, specifically the researcher becomes drawn by the direction of the research participants to the extent that it can be difficult to identify 'data' as opposed to friendship. In her reflection on her undertaking of sensitive health research, Dickson-Swift (2005, p. 11) contends that 'sensitive research has the potential to impact on all of the people who are involved in it'; this includes both research participants, but also researcher. Dickson-Swift further suggests that within this frame of reference, it is necessary:

> To examine the potential for harm to the researchers as well as to the research participants…researchers are caught in emotionally laden research, and they too are vulnerable to harm as much as the participants in their sensitive researches.

In order to engage in the research process with participants, I was required to cede a significant portion of power to the research participants. Whilst relinquishing complete control from the researcher is ethically good practice, in reality it is scary for novice researchers and challenging for supervisors who are not familiar with the particular anxieties that are aroused through this process. Guba and Lincoln (1994) have foregrounded that notion of 'trustworthiness and authenticity' necessary for qualitative studies which have parallels in Freirean and emancipatory thinking. Furthermore, Yardley (2000) suggests the elements of sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and, impact and importance. Cemlyn et al. (2009, p. iv) highlight this issue in their research with Gypsy / Traveller groups; attesting to the fact that they experience 'multiple and complex forms of exclusion'. Carefully considered approaches, therefore, need to be explored in order to navigate and negotiate with vulnerable groups.

In striving to ensure that the research participants understand that their participation is[6] entirely voluntary, and therefore, in an attempt to address the issue of pressure to consent, I built in on-going oral consent (in line with agreements developed following ethics committee approval), in addition to developing appropriate written consent forms and participant information forms for both child and adult participants. Whilst consent forms were duly developed and signed in all instances described, it can be seen that 'informed consent' is a minefield for practitioner researchers. All participants involved in the project were aware that I was involved in on-going research around Travellers and education and were informed of the research verbally and consent forms were organised and signed by young people and their parents. Travellers and professionals that I came into contact with through my role as HYLOTC also knew that I was conducting research on Travellers' experiences of education. I also brought a letter along to interviews, which I read out to alleviate literacy issues (I later felt that this had actually served to polarise encounters as opposed to addressing ethical issues because of the inherent distrust in some Gypsy / Traveller Communities around the written word). Choosing to involve participants in the research is contentious when attempting to circumvent literacy challenges. Even those participants who did not struggle with literacy were not keen to trust the written word. Offering written transcripts is also

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[6] In order to reflect the on-going nature of the research relationship, when referring to process consent and informed consent I have used the term 'is' as opposed to 'was'.

advocated in research methodologies yet, whilst I offered these they were refused along with the explanation that: 'It's fine as long as you can't tell it's me'. In order to address this request all research participants involved in this project have been assigned pseudonyms. In instances of recording specific interviews I offered to provide a copy of the audio recording; this was rarely desired despite the offer.

According to guidelines concerning informed consent (Antle and Regehr 2003; Edwards 2010; WMA 2008) the fundamental aspects of informed consent should involve the following: consideration of an individual's capacity to give their consent, disclosure of adequate information about the risks and benefits of participation so that an individual can make a meaningful decision, enough time and space for an individual to fully consider involvement, ensuring consent is freely given and without coercion, disclosure of all steps of the research process including what will happen to the information collected, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity in transcripts, reports and publications, ensuring that the participant is aware of their right to refuse to participate or later withdraw from the project without any negative consequences. Throughout the research process I employed the practice of 'process consent' (Etherington 2005; Grafanaki 1996) checking at each stage to make sure participants still fully understood, and wanted to be part of my research project. This in itself provided challenges when I widened the scope of my research as I struggled to articulate exactly what I was researching as the process entailed me broadening the scope of my initial research question. As previously noted, certain groups within the Travelling Community may struggle with literacy, therefore, whilst signed consent is often suggested when conducting structured interviews, during participant observation in naturalistic settings, Iphofen (2013, p. 74) recommends that 'Consent should be gained in the most convenient, least disturbing manner for both researcher and researched' and this included the giving of oral consent in a face-to-face situation as it 'does appear more natural and consequently more consistent with the ethos of qualitative enquiry'.

In addition, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 274) note that, 'Ethical issues are not matters on which simple and consensual decisions can always be made'. Research with minority and indigenous groups is particularly prone to abuses of power; indeed the historical development of the discipline of Anthropology is littered with instances of

these abuses (Smith 1999).

Despite my previous relationships with participants, gaining access was not easy. I felt confident that I would be able to engage research participants easily enough due to the fact that I had been known to a number of Travelling families in the North West region of Ireland for the past 15 years. What was challenging however was how anxious I was approaching families to ask them to speak about their experiences of education; I often wondered if this was because I had previously occupied a dual relationship (as a professional working in the area) that I felt a refusal was an indication that they did not trust me, (which would have been a challenge to my professional identity) and, as a result more challenging than if I had had no previous contact. As I was nervous my initial attempts felt clumsy and laborious; I did not articulate the research well and I kept stating how the research could be 'good for Travellers'. This was a vital learning point for me as I came to see that whenever I pointed out this fact the conversation would close down, however when I explained why I wanted to do the research (to document Travellers' own experiences in a format that other professionals would accept) and how it would benefit me (I needed to talk to so many people because I needed help to complete this research) the participants were welcoming. Smith's (1992, p. 2) assertion that, 'belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training' rings uncomfortably in my ears as I reflect on my learning in this encounter.

The question of ownership of material is a major theme, whether it is ownership of language, stories, land, property etc. The question of whether a person from another culture is able to tell a story from another's point of view is a valid and oft-times cited charge laid at the door of researchers, as Smith (1992, p. 2) states:

> …indigenous people's across the world have other stories to tell which not only question the assumed nature of those ideals and the practices they generate, but also serve to tell an alternative story: the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonised.

It is important therefore to understand that alternative concepts of ownership exist both within and between communities, and are situated within a context of power relations, combined with a recognition of the importance of reflecting on differences between oral-based and written-based cultures when attempting to examine appropriate ways of

working.   Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) draw attention to the necessity of researchers 'working actively with issues of power' whereby the researcher must explore different facets of power within a research context in response to the necessity of the creation of 'mutuality'.   The challenge is in acknowledging what Clark (2014, p. 45) defines as:

> …power relations, and how these play out in terms of ethnicity, gender and class differentials, are central in trying to understand the complex power dynamics at work and how agency interacts with structure in the sociology of everyday life.

In addressing issues of power in the research encounter, Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) advocate an approach which enables participation to generate high quality knowing, and working actively with issues of power, which includes: 'active engagement with stakeholders; constructing capacities for inquiry; questioning boundaries of the system; reviewing who counts as stakeholders; the exploration of different kinds of power involved in the research context; attempts to create mutuality, *power with*, so that others participate on equal terms in the research engagement, and attending to and moderating your own *power over* which derives from unearned, or earned, privilege'.   By viewing the research relationships as encounters rather than research 'on' a particular individual or group of people, I have taken my understanding of the term 'encounter' in the psychological sense as an authentic, congruent meeting between individuals.   Furthermore, I strived to be reflexive and aware of the power of rank as described by Mindell (1995) whereby those who have more rank are less aware of the power they hold than those who have less rank. Mindell (1995, p. 42) argues that once a person has become aware of their rank they are able to use it in a way that may benefit themselves or others, he defines 'rank' as:

> …a conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power. Whether [we] earned or inherited [our] rank, it organizes much of [our] communication behaviour.

Writing from a feminist perspective, Oakley (1981) has suggested that it is not possible to conduct effective research with women using traditional interview approaches, which, she argues, implies an exploitative relationship. Therefore, it is important to understand the manner in which to approach discussions within the domestic sphere. My initial intention to explore the research question with both men and women altered

throughout the course of the research as it became apparent that Travellers' tended to view education as being firmly situated in the realm of women's business, and furthermore, I had better relationships with the Traveller women, as we had known each other longer. I, therefore, decided to modify the study in order to reflect this and to gain as much information as possible. In the first instance, the earliest education begins at home and as Oakley (1974) has noted, domestic labour and female identity are intrinsically linked. Whilst an appreciation of the domestic homespace is central to female constructions of identity, it is important to be aware of prejudice stemming from Western, colonising, sedentarist perspectives that automatically assume that the homespace is a site of oppression and domination of women. Thapar-Bjorket and Henry (2004) have highlighted the polymorphous nature of power relations that exist within the research encounter whereby the interviews they conducted with women in their homes in India were sites of power and control. Kendall (1997, p. 83) has argued that the 'sites of resistance' that Traveller women construct through their management of the homespace both within Gypsy / Traveller communities and between Traveller and sedentary communities are also important sources of sanctuary providing opportunities for negotiating power relations. She suggests that different temporal spaces facilitate resistance so that women assert power during the day when men leave the site to go to work.

> The homeplace is somewhere that Traveller women can restore their
> dignity, providing a 'safe' spatial area in which to learn to love and respect
> their culture outside the hostility of the sedentary society.

Crickley (1992, p. 105) argues that misunderstandings of Traveller culture via sedentary feminist constructs may be complicit in working against appreciation and acknowledgement of Traveller culture and expression of identity. Most recently, Smith and Greenfields (2013) have noted how the move from traditional residence practices into contemporary housing has increased patriarchal power in Gypsy Traveller families by increasing the domestic focus of Gypsy Traveller women's lives with endless domestic duties and women being offered little opportunity to interact with or work outside the home. Therefore, issues concerning power need to be understood within a gendered, ethnic, generational and national context.

Building intimate and trusting relationships through research not only leads to in-depth data, but is also ethical, because it allows the researcher to continue to work with the community; however, this relationship over an extended period of time requires an emotional investment on both sides (researcher and participant) and, as a result ethical dilemmas arise. The extended time period of this research certainly provided opportunities to acquire rich information, but with this comes the added responsibility of protecting participants' identities. Ethical considerations impacted on all stages of the research so not just fieldwork, as previously stated, but these considerations certainly slowed down the writing up process as I agonised over how to protect the identity of participants, the result being that I tended to leave much out of the initial writing up. In truth I have still left much out and this is because of a responsibility towards individuals, also families, but also the Traveller Community as a whole and how these findings may be taken up in some areas. As Blackman (2007, p. 701) states:

> Through the writing process the ethnographer decides how much to reveal. My argument is that to reveal what is usually hidden is to cross emotional borders in fieldwork accounts.

During this research process, there were times when I felt paralysed by my relationship with the participants, specifically that I was unable to include data for fear of exposing them. Writing field notes presented particular challenges for me and generally I chose not to do this in the field as this often caused anxiety and tension even amongst those members of the group who did not struggle with literacy. Writing for a non-literate group is threatening and amplifies historical folk memories of persecution through state involvement in Travellers' lives. The biggest anxieties were caused when I attempted to draw family trees. My reason for doing this was an attempt at clarifying relationships between extended family members. I eventually discovered that the best way for me to understand the information was to sit back and listen. One time I attempted to research a particular Traveller family history through a genealogy site in an attempt to help research participants locate distant family members, but the participants did not appreciate this and felt threatened by it. I then attempted a different approach whereby I sat down with a few older members of the sedentary community who had been involved with Travellers since the 1970's in the areas of social work, community development and education who helped me work out some of the family relationships, however, I then chose not to include the data because I felt uncomfortable about having acquired it

in this way. Whilst audio recording was fine, often it did not occur because the particular situation was spontaneous, or not appropriate given the context (e.g. in the gym or out shopping) so whilst I did conduct some traditional recorded interviews, most involved me going straight home and writing from memory.

Choosing to involve participants in the research is also contentious when attempting to circumvent literacy challenges. Even those participants who did not struggle with literacy were not keen to trust the written word. Whilst I offered written transcripts these were refused, but the explanation that: 'It's fine as long as you can't tell it's me,' was offered instead. Again, previous contact and work I had developed prior to this research helped here, so the fact that I had been involved in the production of a short film based around a Traveller man known to the participants allowed them the chance to criticise the way they saw that I had done something and I am certain that the fact that I engaged in on-going discussions around this provided them with opportunities to decide whether or not to be involved and also to negotiate terms. This approach can be seen to follow Marshall and Reason's (2007, p. 275) outline for distinguishing quality research processes whereby the researcher attempts to: 'Process and present evidence through a range of different presentational forms…Engage in, and explicate, research as an emergent process…[and] Pay close attention to the process of engagement with the issues and with others, as well as the content'.

As previously stated, nurturing profound and personal relationships certainly provides the researcher with rich and varied data; however, this then becomes problematic when attempting to separate the researcher from the data as the relationships between researcher and participants' lives become intertwined so that at times the researcher is left with a bewildering array of information. The challenge in this research was the sifting through data and working out what is gossip and what is meaningful data. Frequently gossipy asides provided key insights that eventually developed into central themes of the research, particularly around the discussions surrounding sexuality and hygiene practices. I am grateful to the earlier work of Judith Okely (2011) for providing insight into the management of field data through her article *'Retrospective Reading of Field Notes. Living on Gypsy Camps'*. Challenges also became apparent when research participants come into conflict with one another leaving me as researcher feeling pulled between conflicting loyalties, however again this allowed for insights into

the challenges young Traveller women face when attempting to negotiate education and the added tensions created by familial ties and loyalties to parents and siblings. Furthermore, this was compounded by conflict between extended family members that was at times confusing and distressing as I observed women who had married into extended families drawn into conflict with their natal family. Participants in this research became my friends and I experienced the moral and ethical challenges that accompany this position. This emotional investment certainly caused me much emotional energy and I was concerned about the impact of my on-going relationships with some of the participants. During one stage of fieldwork (when Kathleen [pseudonym] was struggling to remain in education and wanted to pursue a relationship with a man from the sedentary community) she spoke frequently about wanting to run away. I felt caught between responsibilities towards Kathleen and responsibilities to the other members of her family. This caused me more than a few sleepless nights, and yet I am still not resolved about this. Kathleen is no longer in education, and when I visited her recently in her new home and she proudly showed me her bedroom (which for the first time was on her own) she pointed out the wallpaper she had chosen which was that of images of books in an old library; I am left wondering where her education will take her in the future? What is the role of the researcher in changing the attitudes and expectations of research participants? Kathleen's horizons were certainly broadened yet she experienced considerable tension, guilt and anxiety as a result of this.

As previously stated, prior to and during the research I attended a number of local events, including a number of funerals (10 in total). During the time that I came to know the participants, a number of deaths occurred in the community and, as I always have done, I attended their funerals. Whilst attending funerals is always a sobering and sombre occasion, untimely deaths, particularly when they are associated with young people and violence are deeply distressing. During my research three members of the local Travelling Community were murdered, one young woman died of anorexia and two young children died of congenital abnormalities. The funerals of the young people who died were deeply upsetting events. At the funeral of one of the young men who was murdered I was distressed at the overwhelming grief and righteous anger, which I witnessed, in the failure of the Gardaí and local services to provide an adequate response. In contrast, the response from the Gardaí towards mourners at the funeral when attempting to enter the graveyard was both hostile and intimidating; we were

searched by the Gardaí for weapons and then herded through gates into the graveyard. The gates were then quickly closed once everyone had entered. The feeling of rising panic was overwhelming. I witnessed anger erupting between two families at the graveside burial and the ethical dilemma of an anxious mother handing me her two toddlers, asking me to 'take them out of here and meet me at the car' whilst she begged her husband not to get involved. Afterwards, I attempted to enter a local hotel to use the bathroom in order to compose myself a little and was refused entry. Such ethical dilemmas are not foreseen in ethical research proposals and require instant snap decisions whereby the researcher must 'be willing to act in circumstances of radical uncertainty' (Marshall and Reason 2007, p. 375). In such a context, how relevant is academic research? And is it just another intrusion from an antagonistic external world? How does the researcher respond to this? On reflection, this experience provided me with first-hand knowledge and an embodied understanding of the impact of discrimination from a range of different perspectives (accommodation, healthcare, crime, gender) that allowed me to gain insight into understanding the justified levels of distrust many members of the Travelling Community feel towards the sedentary community.

In my previous role as Liaison Officer I was involved in establishing a Traveller Homework Club to support Traveller children and families. Throughout this process I was approached by a number of Traveller parents who asked me to speak up in a meeting with the school stating that I did not want workers who were from the Travelling Community involved in the homework club. I was perturbed by this request as it went against my own convictions. However, the Traveller (women) parents were adamant that they did not want members of their own community knowing their family business. Understandably, these same parents did not feel comfortable stating their position openly at a meeting with school personnel, so I was coerced into the role. This position was morally and ethically challenging for me, and also rather ego bruising; in order to build trust and to respect the wishes of the participants I followed their advice, and took the heat despite disagreeing with them. This experience provided me with an insight into the complexities of developing relationships both across and within communities and allowed me to understand the often times perplexing and contradictory nature of particular decisions made by Traveller women thus prompting me to

investigate from an ethnographic perspective those voices which are often unheard. As Okely (2005, pp. 707-8) states:

> The anthropologist, once stranger but always outsider, works within and between as witness, collaborator, ally or even dupe. She is a ready object for settling old scores and internal disputes.

However, this perspective can provide valuable information that enables policy makers and activists to approach situations with added dimensions of understanding necessary to engage all members of the community which is significant when examining the tendency within Gypsy / Traveller research to focus on a small numbers of voices within a community.

Data Collection

Twenty eight Travellers were interviewed in total, comprising 25 women (18 - 45 years of age) and 3 men (20 - 54 years of age) who lived in a variety of housing situations including trailers, halting sites, council housing, and private rented accommodation. The majority of the participants had at some point in their lives moved between the UK and Ireland. Whilst 45 years of age may seem relatively young in terms of the sedentary community, the lifespan of Travellers tends to be an average of 11.5 years less for women than that of the sedentary community 15 years less for men (AITHS 2010). I had planned to interview equal numbers of men and women, however, during the interviewing process it became apparent that Travellers' perceived education as situated in the realm of women's business, and furthermore, I had better relationships with the Traveller women as we had known each other longer. I, therefore, decided to modify the study in order to reflect this and to gain as much information as possible. Of the men that were interviewed all had spent time in England; this experience seemed to give them a different perspective as they returned to Ireland with more proactive views on education and felt that they were a vital part of their children's' education. Moreover, those men interviewed tended to be the ones who had spent longer in the education system, which gave them more confidence when engaging with it.

At the start of the research process I conducted semi-structured interviews with the older participants specifically focussed on education and their memories of it. Generally

speaking, the older participants tended to be more reflexive, articulate and confident (possibly due to the fact that they were no longer in school and so could view the experience from a distance). In preparation for the interviews I read accounts of education in Ireland in the 1970's, conference proceedings and articles that appeared in the local press. I found that this was helpful in aiding recollections for a number of participants, for example, showing photographs and referring to local newsworthy events to aid memory recall. Interestingly, national stories that dominated the headlines, during this time, had little place in Travellers memories whereas local events were remembered vividly, reflecting the local, situated, face-to-face way of being that characterises Traveller relationships. The newspaper articles also provided insights into the flavour of Traveller–sedentary relations during this time, for example, nearly all reports between 1970 and 1975 in the local newspaper about Travellers were negative and articles referring to Travellers tended to be placed on the same page as articles which had headlines announcing burglaries (none of which were actually anything to do with Travellers). Familiarising myself with the educational and societal context of the North West of Ireland in 1970 was important for me coming from a different context, for example, many Travellers spoke of the harsh treatments they were subjected to by nuns and teaching personnel at this time, but it is also important to be aware that many sedentary people were subject to similarly harsh treatments at this time. What struck me whilst reading the proceedings and news reports of this time (1970-5) was that although there have been general improvements in standards of living, the same issues were affecting Travellers lives in 2010 as in 1970. Later when I reviewed data and returned to participants, I then asked if I could talk some more about the particular themes that had arisen. These discussions were also recorded.

For later phases of the research, I moved away from the semi-structured interview design. My decision to do this was influenced by two key factors. Firstly, whilst I wanted to research Travellers experiences of education, I realised that I had not taken into account the disjunction between home and school environments. This was a significant insight during the research process as I came to understand that not only was the information I received in the home and school environments significant to the findings, but more importantly, the method adopted did not work. The formality of the semi-structured interview seemed completely at odds with the style of research. The ethnographic approach that allowed for 'being with' jarred with the stilted strangeness

of the semi-structured interview and changed the nature of the interaction. Secondly, on reviewing the recordings I became aware of how much important information happened 'off stage'. In addition, the process of arranging interviews taught me a lot about this as I attempted to plan my interviews and schedule suitable times that fitted in with my work schedule, however this was a disaster as I regularly turned up to find that the people I had planned to interview had had to go off for the day. Travellers tend to prefer to engage in face-to-face encounters and seemed to know that they would bump into me when they needed to and indeed many serendipitous meetings occurred. The timescale of planning ahead was not something that most Travellers were comfortable with, yet they were confident that they would see me when they needed to, which was usually the case. As Van Maanen (2011, p. 2) notes, 'Accident and happenstance shapes fieldworkers' studies as much as planning or foresight'.

I realised early on in my work with Travellers that they tended to learn well in flexible, informal learning environments that facilitate kinaesthetic styles of learning. In addition, I also found the flexible learning environment produced a more enjoyable, creative and reflexive experience for us both. Therefore, I revised my approach and decided that in order to conduct my research I would need to experiment with a variety of methods and media. An example of this type of research and the different types of knowledge and understandings produced, was, as I attempted to understand various family connections between certain research participants. When I was sitting in my office with one of the older research participants talking about their family connections and suggested that we draw out a family tree they were unwilling, however a chance meeting at a local graveyard that contained a number of family plots led to a fascinating tour of all the Traveller graves with accompanying explanations of the family connections involved. This example illustrates what Pink (2011) has referred to as the 'serendipitous sensory learning of being there'. During this experimental phase I developed an interest in creative approaches to working with Travellers (Cavaliero 2008, 2011a, b, 2012). I also became aware that different contexts influenced the answers that I got to questions to such an extent that I needed to learn how to **know** in order to understand the different answers.

In addition, I experimented by visiting places with participants that had been important to them at a particular time in their lives. For example, I visited a house (now

abandoned) with one research participant where they had grown up. The visit was a useful way of accessing a series of recollections, which shed interesting light on my understanding of Traveller spatial experiences. During the visit the participant began telling me a story about moving on; typically, during what was one of the most fascinating pieces of fieldwork, I was driven to extreme frustration as I did not have my audio recording device with me (another participant had walked off with it to try and record something else!) so I took a series of photographs. When I came to analyse the data I was immediately struck by the fact that although I had failed to capture the audio recording and exact words of the story, my use of a different medium allowed me to begin to understand the importance of the way in which Travellers inhabit their space, which has contributed to a key aspect in the development of my research concerning identity. As the participant had been telling the story, a colleague from the sedentary community had been present and was in a series of the photographs. When I viewed the series of photographs I was immediately struck by the differences in styles of conversing through movement and stance as well as the significance of gendered spaces within the home space.

As the research progressed and my relationships with the research participants deepened I moved away from the semi-structured format and began asking participants if we could talk more about a particular topic. These conversations between myself and research participants were far more focussed on specific themes, however, they also involved much more sharing on my behalf as I spoke with them about intimate aspects of my own life. The reason for trying out a range of techniques with older and younger members of the community was that different methods worked better with different people. I also found that different interview techniques worked better with younger participants. It is also important to note that the previous relationships I had forged through my work as a BTEI tutor and Youth worker contributed significantly towards being able to act as a mediator across the generations. As with the older research participants, I returned to the younger research participants and asked if we could speak more about particular topics. Again, these conversations entailed me becoming more involved in the research participants lives and revealing aspects of my own life.

Coding and Analysis

This section outlines some of the challenges I faced during the fieldwork that subsequently developed into the key themes of this research. This may broadly be defined as include the importance of relationships across time and space. Lee (1993, p. 3) argues that sensitive research stretches beyond the consequences of carrying out the research, but methodological issues are also inherently essential in doing such research. Senge et al. (2005, p. 29) foreground the emergence of the capacity for suspension as a basis for enhancing awareness, so that 'we begin to notice our thoughts and mental models as the workings of our mind'. I chose not to read about Traveller identity and this open-ended approach originally led to 47 themes, which distilled over time so that the stronger themes emerged and I chose not to pursue some others. Themes selected included issues of gender, nationality and embodiment: in particular differences between mothers and daughters, the changing perceptions of ethnic and national identities which are prescribed moral values, sexuality and ritual hygiene practices. Coding had to change at different stages. Additional interviews emerged from a sense that different elements needed to be explored. Much of the data seemed to be influenced by my position in the field, through gender and the spaces I inhabited with the participants. As Ní Shúinéar (2006, p. 72) has noted, 'This seemingly banal observation is in fact a revelation of profound truth: people talk about what is important to them (and do not talk about what is not)'. Equally, the research participants helped me to identify these more salient themes as I reviewed the data and returned to them stating that a particular topic seemed to me, to be important and asked them if they would talk more with me about it. This was particularly the case in relation to the hygiene and morality aspect of the research. So the themes emerged organically out of the research process. Some themes, however, were discounted as they were potentially harmful to the participants by revealing certain aspects of their lives / views. In addition, the research that drew my interest were those aspects about which I felt the participants were more interested in discussing, however this took a long time to identify. The research process and the acquisition of knowledge followed the notion of the rhizome as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) whereby knowledge is recognised as being multi-dimensional and non-hierarchical. This understanding of research acknowledges the importance of relationship wherein the struggle between alternative views is enacted.

I transcribed all audio recordings personally which, as well as protecting the identity of the participants, allowed me to be immersed in the data, however this was not without drawbacks; I was completely immersed in the data and found it difficult to take a step back. Data processing took place within the context of on-going family and individual family member discussions. This was perhaps further exacerbated by my on-going relationships with research participants, as there is no distinct decision to 'leave the field', a challenge noted by Buckler (2007, p. 27) in her research with Gypsies in the UK:

> In this process, everywhere becomes as alien and as familiar as anywhere else and the question becomes where is home and how do we get there – or how do I get there – in order to create some distance and so to write?

While attempting to situate different, and often competing, voices (Bakhtin 1984), the research involved on-going discussion with participants, however the findings are presented as only my opinion. The reason for the final phase was that whilst early research had provided much information, the 'voices' of the participants were curiously absent. CORDIS (2010) guidelines suggest that the largest risk factor within social sciences and humanities are the disclosure of a person's identity and insufficient protection of private information, which may then lead to discrimination or stigmatisation. Ethical issues concerning disclosure must be constantly negotiated and worked out collaboratively with the participants involved in the research. In *Writing Culture,* Clifford and Marcus (1986) argue that ethnographers must reflect on the sources and uses of their knowledge, methods and multiple positions within the field and how these aspects are refracted through the lens of the informant's subject positions. Further refection on my dilemma allowed me to recognise that the strong bonds forged with the research participants was from an academic perspective silencing their voices, as I struggled to find an appropriate way in which to represent them without identifying them. This was made particularly challenging because of the close relationships that I had developed. For considerable periods of time I felt blocked as I struggled to develop this skill. In addition, this 'impasse' was affected by particular circumstances that were taking place within the lives of some of my participants. In particular some of the younger members who were in conflict with their parents with whom I also had relationships. This was resolved as I began to develop confidence as a

writer and in how to articulate the particular challenges faced. Therefore, a final phase of interviewing took place from April to June 2014. This phase of interviewing depended on the particular participants involved. For some, the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. For others, notes were taken immediately after leaving the field and written from memory. Nevertheless, it is also important to acknowledge that employing a polyphonic model only goes so far in ensuring multiple voices are heard (as the author still orchestrates the text by deciding where and when to insert participants voices). Marvasti (2004) has advocated the value of a braided approach to data collection and analysis that contributes to 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1988).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to foreground the challenging and problematic nature of this project. I have described the methodological choices considered and then utilised in the research process and provided an overview of the methods employed in conducting the research. I have examined the impact of the position of the author, with a particular emphasis on gender and nationality, in relation to the research and the impact of this on the research findings. I discussed the ethical considerations necessary when conducting sensitive research with a group that are defined as vulnerable. I then reviewed the aspects of data collection and processing which led to the development of the key themes of the research and the aspects of this that influenced the course of the research.

Chapter Five

Identity

Introduction

Identity is shaped by a number of factors, which include gender, ethnicity, family, class and environmental contexts. Environmental contexts include concepts of Nationhood, ethnicity and economics. Each of these factors plays a part in shaping Traveller identity. The following chapter will illustrate the ways in which Traveller identity is shaped by gendered experience and environmental contexts. The chapter begins by describing evolving ways of considering Traveller identity, which have been explored from a range of perspectives (e.g. Gherorghe 1997; Mayall 2004; Stewart 1997a, Belton 2005). This study foregrounds the importance of gender, and Magyari-Vincze's (2006, p. 8) call for a consideration of intersectionality as being key in understanding the complex intersections of different social locations for Roma including, gender, ethnicity and class:

> The ethnicized/racialised and gendered construction of the order within which people's lives are embedded comes in a cultural and social process. Through this, women and men are defined and classified on the basis of some characteristics supposedly determined by their ethnicity and sex, as if these were their natural and inborn essences; also via this mechanism, women and men are placed in certain social and economic positions (and, consequently, have access to, or are excluded from, specific material and symbolic resources) according to the hegemonic representations of their ethnic and sexual properties.

Magyari-Vincze (2006, p. 6) also suggests 'these processes might be observed inside different institutions and in the context of their complex relationships, including different sites of everyday life'. These sites and processes include, family, education, nationhood, peer group, ethnicity, class, gender, generation / life stage, nomadic practice, and minority / state relations. Each dimension adds another layer of complexity to the way in which identity is experienced and understood. Different contexts affect the way in which each aspect resonates. Understandings of Traveller identity are in constant flux and the signifiers through which it is communicated and understood vary between generations. Whilst distinctions are made between the values of Travellers and the sedentary community, different groups, families and individuals

view these boundaries differently at different times and in different contexts. In addition, established and shifting group allegiances, education and the media all impact on the way in which Traveller identity is understood and expressed. Following an explanation of the diagram, the following themes are examined: gendered identities, the reconstructions of Traveller identities in the curriculum, the impact of socialisation in school on Traveller women's gendered identities, Travellers' Irish identities within the curriculum, and finally, the examination of Irish Traveller identities and English Irish Traveller identities. Within the exploration of gendered identities, a story of one young woman's dilemma is highlighted in order to illuminate the ways in which young women negotiate between identities.

Evolving Ways of Considering Traveller Identity

The following diagram (Fig.1) represents a map of how Traveller identity is experienced. The concentric rings each add another layer of complexity to the way in which identity is experienced and understood. Different contexts affect the way in which each layer resonates. Understandings of Traveller identity are in constant flux and the signifiers through which it is communicated and understood vary between generations. Whilst distinctions are made between the values of Travellers and the sedentary community, different groups, families and individuals view these boundaries differently at different times and in different contexts. Established and shifting group allegiances, education and the media all impact on the way in which Traveller identity is understood and expressed.

Fig. 1 Diagram Illustrating Representation of Traveller Identity
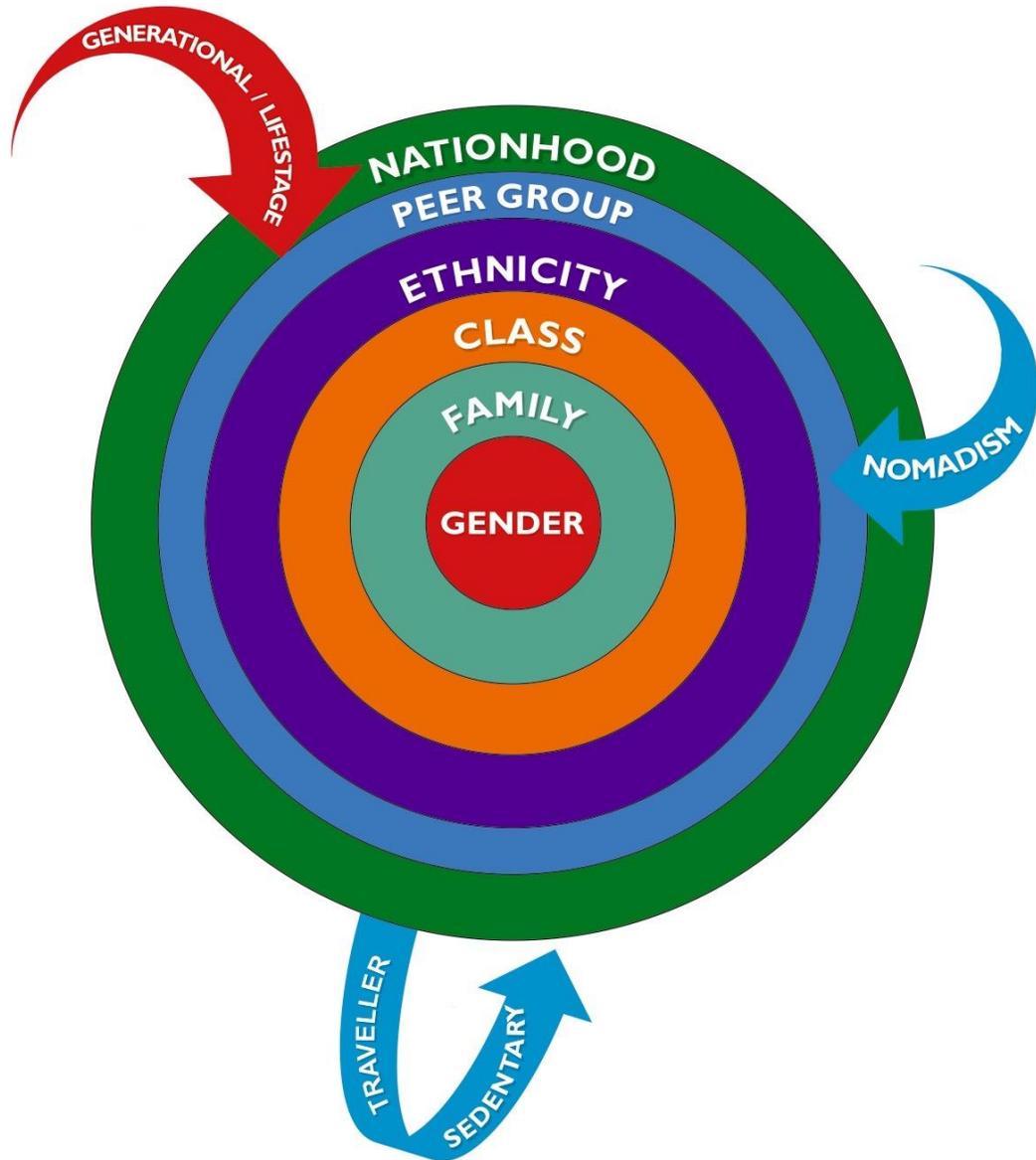
Considering Belton's (2005) framework what is clear is that it starts with gender, yet Much of the research the area of Traveller identity, in particular male research (e.g. Gherorghe 1997; Mayall 2004; Stewart 1997a), foregrounds the importance of ethnicity as the defining feature as opposed to gender. My intention is to highlight the arena of gender, but equally to recognise the differences that are present within the broad categorizations of ethnicity, gender and class (Yuval-Davis, 2006, pp.193–209), following Kóczé's (2009, p. 54-622) argument that failure to integrate intersectional approaches leads to a 'womanising of ethnicity':

> The broad and homogenous categories of ethnicity, gender and class are not easily applicable to the study of the situation of Romani women, who are located in a particular juxtaposition, which needs to be explored and challenged with new variables and through new analytical frames.

Each layer of the model represents a factor influencing Traveller identity. The innermost layer represents the most significant feature that shapes Traveller identity. My contribution, which places Traveller women at the centre of the research, providing Traveller women's perspectives, therefore highlights the disjuncture between the generations of mothers and daughters. Whilst Okely (1975, 1983) draws her research from women, she focuses on Traveller society as a whole rather than women's perspectives. In addition, my research, by placing Traveller women at the centre of the research, highlights the disjuncture between the generations, mothers and daughters. The innermost layer represents the most significant feature that shapes Traveller identity. Whilst gender is the most important factor as it affects how identity is formed, experienced and constructed, conceptions of the way in which gendered identities are expressed vary between families and between contexts. Life-stage impacts on the way in which gendered identity is experienced, therefore adolescence, marriage, motherhood and old age represent a significant change in understandings of Traveller identity. These conceptions, which shift throughout the life course, influence the manner in which Travellers engage with each layer. Environment plays a key role in shaping the way in which identity is experienced, for example through the impact of socialisation in school, nomadism, and housing. The interplay of the various layers all impact on the way in which Traveller women respond and negotiate identities. This will be elaborated on in the following sections.

Gendered Identities

The key finding from this research is that gender plays the most important role in shaping Traveller identity. Gender dictates familial obligations, expectations, understandings of ethnicity and sexuality. As Okely (1983) has noted Traveller women's sexuality is constructed as dangerous because they have the ability to produce offspring from a different group, which in turn challenges group notions of identity and ethnicity, therefore female sexuality must be guarded. Life-stage is particularly significant in this conception as the reproductive years are the time during the life course when a woman is considered most dangerous. Traveller women are defined through their relationships with others (as mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, grandmothers etc.) and gain status through these relationships, therefore married women, mothers and grandmothers enjoy far greater status than young unmarried Traveller women who have little voice or power within their community. Yet expectations are shifting within the cohort of young Traveller women due to the impact of external forces such as wider and more prolonged participation in education and the changing makeup of Irish society due to the influx of other outsider groups.

The salient characteristic for Traveller women, through which they draw a large part of their self worth, is through having children. A large part of Traveller women's identity comes from their role as mothers:

> I don't believe in only having one child, that's not a family, well it is a family, but to me it's not a family. It's always about your children; you always go back to your children. Marguerite (45)

Whilst women's work outside of the home has been recognised as being a significant factor in contributing to family resources (Helleiner 2000), the findings from this research indicate that certainly, the mothers interviewed saw their main role as being a mother first and foremost. This finding, then aligns with McMahon's (1995) assertion that motherhood operates as a primary identity that serves to reinforce women's gender identity. Women who chose to pursue careers outside of the home and outside of the traditional roles expected of Traveller women were viewed as being less family

oriented, however amongst some members of the younger generation this is certainly changing:

> My younger sister, she got a higher education and where did that get her? She was in the social worker office. What did she get out of it? She got nothing. That wasn't worth it. She thinks she's better than everyone else. If you have children at home, who are you putting first? You just focus on yourself not your children. You are not focused on what time you get home from your education. The children they should come first. Marguerite (45)

> I don't know, my sister seems to really like it. I wouldn't have the guts to do it. Ailbe (28)

Some younger Traveller women certainly have aspirations to work outside of the home:

> As Travellers, we now have an opportunity to do what we want, like we can get an education, and most Travellers don't get the opportunity. Like Muslims, they have arranged marriages, they have to get married at a certain age, and things like that. If you're not married by 16 or 18, you're too old. And then you'll never get married. I don't believe in rushing to get married, I'm 20 now and next year I'll be 21, but I don't think I'll get married until I'm 24 or 25. I don't know if I want to get married yet, because you're thinking, I know people have got married at 20, 18 and 19, and if I think of it now that's pretty young. I think Jesus, there were young. Imagine having to cope like, back then, there wasn't much money either. Briana (20)

There was a strongly defined difference in perceptions around identity between mothers and daughters involved in this research. Unlike some of the Irish Traveller women interviewed in Greenfield's (2008, p. 97) study, the younger women I spoke to had aspirations to achieve something beyond that of the role of mother:

> Staying in the home, cleaning up all day, watch TV for a wee while, put the babies to bed. That is the day gone. The day is wasted. Maire (30)

> Even when you get married and have children, you want to do something, hairdressing or something and education that you fall back on. Something there for you, for the future. I think everybody would have to get a job. Chevonne (23)

Helleiner's (2000) recognition of Traveller women's work outside the home is perhaps better understood with the present generation of mothers by taking education into consideration. Many of the mothers I interviewed spoke of engaging in paid 'work' outside of the home at some point in their lives, but for the majority of these women,

the work they were referring to was attending Back to Education initiatives for which they received payment.

> …but even when you were growing up and if you *did* get a job, I remember, working down in FAS years ago and I think it was twenty pound a week we used to get and I used to give ten pound to my mother to get whatever.
> Marguerite (45)

The way in which some of the Travellers interviewed associated payment for attending adult education classes illustrates the changing ways in which Travellers engage in economic transactions with the sedentary population in order to secure resources for the family.

Kathleen's Dilemma

Kathleen's dilemma illustrates the pressures of attempting to conform to group allegiances whilst tempering this with the need for personal fulfilment. The dilemma also illustrates the manner in which relationships with outsiders are seen as threatening and morally questionable, as they lead to a dilution of Traveller cultural values:

One afternoon during the course of my fieldwork Kathleen tells me that her parents say she is ready to get married, but she doesn't want to. Her parents want her to marry Geraldine's son Michael, but she has said no. Geraldine is her mother's cousin. Kathleen says she doesn't want to get married 'just to be stuck in a trailer with a husband off with settled women'. Instead, she wants to enrol in a course at the local adult education centre, but her father refuses to allow her to attend a course where there are male students as well. Kathleen says she was recently at a funeral where she got talking to Jack's wife Maureen who said to her, 'I'll have you as a daughter-in-law!' Kathleen says Maureen's son is very good looking, but 'he's high on drugs all the time'. She says 'I always say we should have been born boys! The boys can go with settled girls, but the Traveller girls can't go with settled boys!' She says that her sister said to her recently that 'maybe no one wanted to marry us because they're scared of Dad'. She says Jack's daughters aren't really Travellers because they all have their children before getting married, despite the fact that one of them is married to her cousin on her fathers side (one of Jack's and Maureen's daughters is married to her father's cousin).

She says, 'Dad wants us to marry Traveller boys so he can call on them in a fight'. She says this is important and describes how everyone is afraid of a local Traveller man, 'not because of who he is, but because of who he's **related** to'. I ask her would it be okay for her to get married before Margaret? (the eldest in the family), she says, 'Yes, but Margaret wouldn't like it'. She says that she is still in conflict with her bother Charlie because he can have a settled girlfriend, but he doesn't want his sisters to date settled men.

This dilemma illustrates the way in which different factors relating to identity are shaped by gender, which is understood in particular ways during different life-stages. Gender is also constrained within prescribed family expectations. Most significantly, Kathleen is a young woman of 21 whose parents consider her old enough to be taking on the traditional gendered role of a married woman at this age. If Kathleen were a young man she would be able to participate in the course. She would also be entitled to pursue a relationship with a partner from either the settled or (to a certain extent, depending on family allegiance) Traveller Community. Young women have little power or voice within the Travelling Community. In mainstream society at this stage of the life course, the peer group is dominant, whereas in Traveller culture the family remains dominant and, as a result, there is added poignancy and tension to family disagreements. Evidence of female sexuality is equated with a sense of dilution of Traveller values and identity; taking on sedentary morality (or lack of), which leads to a greater sense of guilt. Should Kathleen pursue a relationship prior to marriage, such consequences would have a severe and lasting impact on her and her family's standing within the wider Traveller Community. As with Gay y Blasco's (1999) findings, these findings would suggest that female sexuality is linked to notions of morality, good standing and purity, which is performed and enacted in contrast to the perceived lack of moral standards of the wider society's sedentary standards for females.

In addition, familial and filial expectations are that Margaret will marry before Kathleen. Class distinction within the Travelling Community is also evident, whilst Maureen is related to her (through Maureen's daughter being married to her father's cousin), Kathleen's immediate family do not consider his daughters as Travellers because they have not followed the traditionally expected role of marrying prior to having children. This indicates how conceptions and constructions of Traveller identity

are performed and enacted as a 'lived morality' (Gay y Blasco 1999). However, all families do not perceive this notion in the same way or to the same extent. Kathleen's father's shifting allegiances within the Travelling Community restrict her options for marriage. Extended family networks and obligations reflect shifting allegiances, which limit her opportunities for marrying within the Traveller Community as she must marry the 'right' kind of Traveller, whereas her brother can avoid this by having a relationship with women from the sedentary community.

Peer group has also played a role in Kathleen's dilemma, socialisation in school has influenced Kathleen's aspirations and frustrations, which are shaped by her interactions with a wider circle made possible through her participation in education which has allowed her access to alternative / imagined possibilities not only with the sedentary population, but also within the Travelling Community. Participation in education has provided Kathleen with opportunities to interact with young women from the Travelling Community whom she may not have had the opportunity to do so otherwise therefore environment has played a key role in shaping Kathleen's experience. In addition, it has opened up opportunities for her to consider accessing further training and employment on the one hand yet on the other it has placed her in a tension with sedentary society and at odds with her family. This adaptation to changing economic circumstances aligns with the assertion made by Davis et al. (1991), of multidimensional aspects to power dynamics that recognise agency with gender relations. Whilst men may control more resources than women and so be dominant, women may counteract this force with control of certain types of resources (such as accessing education) leading to social changes created by greater access over particular resources to women, as is arguably happening now with shifting patterns of female and male education and employment in Gypsy Traveller communities. This would seem to be what Clark (2004, p. 79) is implying when he states that:

> Interestingly and perhaps surprisingly, most students are female, which challenges the assumption of feminist commentators who view Gypsy society as overtly patriarchal (see Okely, 1983).

Whilst an initial reading of these findings highlights the way in which some Traveller women are accessing economic resources through engagement in education, what seems to be important here are the intersections of class and poverty which enable some

members of the community to make wider lifestyle choices with less moral consequences. Remaining in education, deferring marriage and starting a family may contribute to better education, employment and consequently health and wellbeing, yet there is often a pay off for those members of the community who are willing and able to do this, such as a reduction in social capital leading to isolation and cultural dislocation. This deficit is regarded as too significant a loss when facing the challenge of operating in a hostile and discriminatory society. As a result, many young women are constrained within particular roles as a result of discrimination through poverty and marginalisation and consequently forced into an increasingly private, domestic role (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 178).

(Re)-Constructions of Traveller Identity in Schools

Whilst identity is sometimes concealed in the school environment, the issue of representations and visibility of Travellers within the curriculum varied across the generations and was met with a range of emotions. Most mothers did not remember any attempts to address Traveller culture or identity in the curriculum and when asked about memories of this, the experience of segregation and stigma came quickly to the fore. The challenge facing teachers attempting to address Traveller identity within the curriculum is complex as, similar to other findings in this research, not all Travellers are in agreement about whether or not to include references to Travellers. Of the parents I spoke with the majority did not feel that teaching Traveller history was important in school. One exception was a male Traveller from the North of Ireland:

> Well history, how do you think a Traveller became a Traveller? At the time of the famine, some people went to America, some people left their homes, they should learn more about Travellers, what they are, part of this culture, part of the history of this country. I've been in secondary schools, and when the kids are learning about different cultures you will look around at the posters, and they could be every culture like Polish, Muslim, but you never see Traveller. They should be learning more Irish history. **With Travellers**. They should know where Travellers come from. Once a Traveller learns to read and write, that is all they want. Then the Travellers will learn the rest a different way. In ten years it will be gone, the Traveller generation will be completely gone. You look back ten years there were Travellers on the roads, but there are none now. Traveller history will get lost when my kids' kids go to school. John (20)

This response highlights the importance of intersectional analyses as it is indicative of a different perspective, formed from alternative social locations of gender and ethnicity where Irish Travellers in the North of Ireland enjoy legal recognition of their ethnic status. Of the women I spoke with, the majority had ambivalent feelings regarding the introduction of Traveller history in the education system:

> I suppose it wouldn't do no harm, but what relevance does it have in education? Unless maybe they just brought it up, and lets other kids know a bit about the background, that kind of thing, but I don't know how that would further their education. I suppose they could and then the other kids would learn more about them, and their ways, and maybe accept them more. But then you also don't want to make people feel really different, and make it into a big deal. Yes because some kids may get embarrassed sitting there, if others know about their background. Yes it is a difficult one. Nessa (26)

One mother succinctly described the irony of introducing Traveller culture in the curriculum, highlighting the inherent tensions of power dynamics and ownership:

> They actually try and teach my aunts kids stuff about being a **Traveller** and their lifestyle, they're trying to teach them what I can teach them at home, and with them not a Traveller. Maire (30)

This finding therefore aligns with literature that recognises the role of women as the bearers of culture and tradition (Gay y Blasco 1999; Larkin's 1998, p. 15; Okely 1983; Rosaldo and Lampshere 1974; Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 119).

One instance that occurred during fieldwork took place in a local secondary school. The school was having a cultural diversity week, which involved a display of all the different ethnic groups within the school. No Traveller display was present despite the fact that there were a number of known Traveller pupils in the school and Travellers had attended the school for many years. That week there were a series of conflicts, which erupted between some of the Traveller pupils and other students of ethnic minority status. It was notable that the conflicts did not take place between students from the mainstream sedentary population:

> I got sent home for three days. Two of us got in a fight and both of us got sent home for three days. Yes. He called me a 'Gypsy' and I called him a 'Paki'. Oonagh (18)

As previously noted, Irish Travellers do not currently have a recognised distinct ethnic group within Irish statute. The conflicts that erupted in school during the cultural diversity week can be seen as a call for recognition and expression of frustration that outsider ethnic groups (Asian) are afforded higher status and recognition within the school environment. During this time the teacher in this particular school informed me that they were implementing a series of anti-bullying workshops to address the issue of violence against pupils. When I suggested that it would be a good idea for all members of the school to attend (i.e. teachers and other members of staff) the teacher stated that this was unnecessary as it was only an issue amongst certain pupils. This situation highlights issues documented by Bhopal et al. (2000) which note the importance of strong leadership from senior management, the promotion of respect and care within the educational environment, and the importance of displays featuring the cultural background of Gypsy Traveller families. This response fails to acknowledge the response as a struggle for recognition and self-identification and instead, pathologises and infantilises the behaviour. What is also important to mention is that the conflict occurred between two pupils of outsider status not between pupils from the mainstream group, and I will argue highlights a struggle for secondary status, which is at the same time, outsider status.

The change in Irish society over the last two decades has provided young Travellers with opportunities to explore alternate identities. During the last two decades Irish society has undergone a significant shift from a society predominantly white Irish and Catholic to a multicultural society with an influx of a number of groups from Eastern Europe arriving on the surge of a wave of the Celtic Tiger looking to avail of employment opportunities. One of the largest groups to avail of this newfound employment during the Celtic Tiger in Ireland was the Polish community and incidents of racism were fairly common towards the Polish community at this time. During the course of my fieldwork, a number of the daughters I was involved in research with befriended a number of young Polish women whom they came into contact with through the local youth training centre. During the course of one such conversation they discovered that she assumed a number of their group were Polish; this discovery occurred as she greeted them in Polish and began talking to them in Polish. The initial misunderstanding was the source of great amusement amongst the Traveller women

after the incident. This incident became the subject of many jokes and conversations between the young women and during the course of the fieldwork I observed the young Traveller women engaging in a game developed with their younger siblings called 'being Polish':

> One of the girls in the centre starts talking to Kathleen because she thought she was Polish. And she does look Polish and it would be easy to mistake her for Polish. So we play a game with my little cousins 'Are you **Po**lish?*'* Keela (25)

'Being Polish' or 'Polishing' provides an insight into understandings of the way in which these young Traveller women perceive themselves within the context of the wider society and within the context of their own community. As previously noted, young women have little power or voice within their community. 'Polishing' creates an opportunity for social mobility. Whilst the Polish community are perceived as outsiders in Irish culture with second class status, young Traveller women attempting to adopt alternate identities seems to suggest that being classed as Traveller is of lower status than Polish. Young Traveller women choosing to adopt a Polish identity indicates that they view themselves as third class citizens in the eyes of the majority and want to be equated with second-class citizens. Whilst adopting alternate identities is not new, passing as an adaptive response to a hostile environment and discriminatory practices is well documented (see Acton, 1974; Berlin 2015, ch. 8; Clark and Greenfields 2006; Cullen et al. 2008, p. 12; Hanlon 2005; Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Okely 1996, p. 53; Smith 2005), what is interesting here is that 'Polishing' is different to 'passing' whereby an identity is hidden. In 'Polishing' an outsider identity is adopted which has higher status than Traveller identity, but is still an outsider; still distinct and separate from mainstream society. This finding would seem to differ from Andereck (1992) and Levinson and Sparkes (2006) whereby whilst education provides a space to define identity, the identity, which is chosen, is one which is perceived as providing routes to social mobility whilst at the same time remaining outside of the wider society. Here we see the impact of external forces such as increased participation in education, coupled with the influx of foreign nationals into Ireland creating opportunities to define an alternate identity at a particular juncture in the female Travellers' life stage. Here if we link to the model of Traveller identity the impact of the outsider / insider division between Traveller and sedentary communities is at the fore in identity construction. Furthermore, specific familial practices such as sibling childcare influence younger

siblings through the creation of new games, which play with new identities. 'Polishing' indicates an attempt to escape categorisation as Traveller, but at the same time to maintain a distinct identity suggesting again that Traveller identity is heterogeneous, complex and nuanced, and indicating the opportunities for young women within the community to develop agency through the active adoption of distinct identities which raise their status within the outside community.

The issue of recognition for Travellers within the curriculum is not always straightforward, and not all Travellers share the same views on addressing Travelling culture within the curriculum, therefore awareness of each particular situation needs to be considered in each context as will be seen in the next section. However, of those Travellers who had experienced positive recognition and acknowledgement who were interviewed, the findings suggest that when addressed sensitively the issue does not cause harm:

> In religion we talked about cultures and that, and we talked about weddings and how the Travellers have them. That was okay. I didn't have to stand up, it didn't make me embarrassed. She just said, 'You have a different culture' I just said yes I do. And then I talked about the wedding. One teacher asks questions and makes it into a big deal but the other teacher she was just talking about weddings and religion, and she just asked about the wedding. It wasn't something directly about me. Oonagh (18)

The complex dynamics at work in these situations highlight a number of significant issues: introducing Traveller identity into the curriculum requires a careful and considered approach, without adequate consideration this attempt fails to address the wider structural forces of education which further crystallizes insider versus outsider groups, ownership of material, stereotyping Travellers, failing to recognise the diverse nature of Traveller identity, and the need to see Travellers as individuals not a homogeneous group in order to build real and authentic relationships with parents and children. Schools are active agents in the reconstruction of a limited Traveller identity, which aligns with sedentarist stereotypes. This constraint on diverse expressions of Traveller identity fails to recognise the importance of a more nuanced understanding of variations that exist within a community. In order to maintain a presence in school, Travellers are forced to 'practise' particular types of 'Traveller' identity as prescribed by the sedentary population. To 'be' a Traveller in school is to occupy a position of

lower status / class.   These findings are further supported by Bhopal et al. (2000), Clark (2004) and Save the Children Fund (2001) which advocate examination of the problems faced by Roma/Gypsy and Traveller communities in accessing the right to an education that is 'inclusive, relevant, participatory, appropriate and responsive to the needs of those engaging with it' (Clark, 2004, p.80).

Impact of Socialisation in School on Traveller Gendered Identities

According to mothers, their children's understanding of difference seemed to occur once they entered school for the first time. This is in line with Andereck's (1992) findings of Traveller children in the USA, where children become aware of difference at this time because schooling provides the first opportunity to spend time with people outside their own group. All the women who participated in the research recognised that the experience of education affords Travellers' their first understandings of their difference from the wider society, as evidenced by the next quote:

> Well my girl was about seven when she rightly got to know Tamsin. She noticed the difference. I think they always know, from when they get to school age, when they start mixing with settled kids, they realise they're different. Rosaleen (27)

Given the cultural differences associated with each environment and the cultural differences attendant upon the Travelling Community and the sedentary community, in particular in relation to women, the issue of schooling becomes contentious when young women reach puberty. Differences in moral obligations and gendered expectations become more pronounced. These gendered cultural differences create tensions both within the family and between the family and the school system, which may result in families removing themselves from the equation in order to preserve some form of equilibrium as Ailbe (28), Emily (35) and Rosaleen (27) explain:

> You have to go to school. When my little one is ready she will go to school. Don't get me wrong I'm not a big fan of secondary, and I have a sister starting, and I have another one who did it, but I think as a kid when they reach 13 or 14, confirmation, Holy Communion, they know enough to read and write. I don't like seeing girls going on until the 15 or so. They have family responsibilities, and it's the Travelling way. When Travellers get to 15 or 16, they are adults, and are thinking of marriage, and some of the Traveller lads will think, 'Well she's still going to school so what use is she?' They might be going to a mixed

school, sometimes that isn't allowed, for the girls. I think for the young fellas, they do their own thing once they start coming of age and driving, they can make their own money. Yes, there seems to be a lot of conflict with secondary school, because settled children are expected to study, and they don't understand that with Travellers it is different now. Yes they don't understand that, so it's a [school] board meeting they may be saying, 'We will be taking you to court, they **will** go, they **will** go'. They don't understand that. Ailbe (28)

They don't understand Traveller culture. They want it one way, and that is their way. When I try to explain to them, they wouldn't understand, we never made the rules, we never settle down, we go by them. Emily (35)

As long as they can read and write, I would prefer it if they didn't go to secondary. They would be picking up bad habits, because there is a lot going on in this day and age. Rosaleen (27)

Whilst the parents I spoke with are keen to preserve their Traveller culture through a specific set of distinct observances and behaviours, particularly during adolescence and, I suggest, particularly so in relation to young women, they are unanimous in agreement that mixing during the early primary school years is important for Traveller children:

They should mix. Travellers like to know what settled people are doing. Settled people like to know what Travellers are doing. This is how you get to know people, I got to know a lot of very nice people. Melissa (43)

Mixing, particularly at primary school seems to provide an education in how to manage and interact with the sedentary population. These findings would also seem to align with Andereck's (1992) and Levinson's (2005) whereby school becomes an opportunity for defining cultural identity boundaries. Parent's experiences of Traveller-only education is not something that many Travellers wish their children to experience:

Where my husband went to school, they put all the Traveller kids into one class, but no settled kids in with them at all, everyone from the site in one class, and all the settled kids had their own classes. It was discrimination from 4 years to 16 years the Travellers, keeping them all in the one class. **All in one room!** Sometimes he didn't want to go to school because of that. And if something happened you always got the blame for it. Rosaleen (27)

Whilst segregation in schools is something that all parents disagreed with, some Travellers did acknowledge that it has a place in adult education programmes and can be useful when building confidence, in line with findings from Irish Travellers

interviewed in the UK (Greenfields 2008) however the legacy of segregation is intergenerational and still colours interactions between some of the Traveller parents and the sedentary parents.   In line with findings from the UK (Save the Children Fund, 2001; Lloyd & Stead, 2001; Derrington & Kendall, 2004), Irish Traveller parents that I spoke with recognised that the transmission of anti-Traveller feelings in schools is not just due to parental legacy, but also from the legacy of teachers in previous generations:

> If the teacher said something about you, everyone believed it, some places they don't want you. I think they learned it off the parents. Rosaleen (27)

> When we started off we didn't know any better, because if I brought my little girl up and said you're not allowed to go to school, and you can only play with this crowd, would she know any difference? Ailbe (28)

Whilst discrimination through direct segregation is not as overt as in the previous generation, opportunities exist for misplaced representations to occur. The Advisory Committee to the Framework Convention on National Minorities (FCNM 2000) has noted that segregation in education has been a serious and on-going issue. This seriously impacts on children's understandings of their own and other's identities. In addition, it leads to a breakdown in trust between the parents and the school as evidenced by the following quotation, which illustrates the confusion experienced by a young Traveller child on entering an educational system, which classified her as different:

> They said that Caroline was a Traveller child. She was petrified. I think it was spite, well at the time I thought it was, to take her up in the front of the class and say she was a Traveller. When she took out the book I nearly died! She was so confused, she didn't even know what a Traveller was! They could have a, what would you call that day? When they would talk about all people? Not just out of the blue talk about Travellers. Explain that there's Eskimos and black people, and Traveller people and settled people. But not just have one discussion about Travellers. I felt so sorry for her when she came in. And immediately the kids do see the difference. I thought maybe they thought they were doing a good thing. A lot of Travellers lived in fear for ages. It's an awful way, to have to live that way. It's like carrying the shame of it. Many a time people would look at you, she's a Traveller, she's a Traveller, is terrible tough to live that way. Yes, she knows that, she knows herself now. She would say, 'This happened because I'm a Traveller.' I wouldn't mind them talking about Travellers, it's just the way they bring it up. They should talk about three or four different races, and just

tell good points about Travellers, not all the bad points. I remember, **I was never brought up as a subject.** Melissa (43)

Whilst this example highlights the challenges schools face in addressing Traveller identity, Melissa's closing statement also echoes the sadness of an identity not given full recognition, when she states, 'I was never brought up as a subject in school'. The quotation highlights the issues of symbolic violence through misrepresentation, the lack of awareness of diversity within a population and failure to include parents as partners in education thereby reinforcing taxonomies of difference. The scenario points to the limitations imposed on expressions of Traveller identity to a two-dimensional, stereotypical view. Representing Travellers in the curriculum is contentious. It fails to take into account the diverse range of identities within the community and necessitates the adoption of a particular practice of being a recognized Traveller identity, or alternatively the adoption of a hidden identity 'passing'; either way the message is the same; this identity does not fit. An alternative approach to this research is to consider engaging with Travellers in representations of them in the curriculum, in line with Best Practice recommendations in the UK (see Bhopal et al. 2000).

Opportunities for misplaced representations occur at all stages of the educational experience and are not limited to the period when children enter the educational system. The next example, focussing on Kathleen (21), occurs at the other end of the educational spectrum. Kathleen is attractive, bright and articulate with a mischievous sense of humour. During the course of my fieldwork, she was experiencing a crisis point in her life due to a number of pressures, which were exerted on her from a variety of different angles from both within the Travelling Community and outside from the wider sedentary community. Kathleen wanted to stay in school and train to get a good job. However, following a number of incidents during her time in school Kathleen became disillusioned and decided to leave school early. Following a brief period out of school, her brother began attending a local Youthreach and she used the opportunity to petition her parents to allow her to attend also; securing permission from her parents by highlighting the fact that despite the centre catering for both sexes, she would be chaperoned by her brother. Whilst Kathleen didn't particularly enjoy the subjects she was studying she enjoyed attending the centre and experienced it as a welcome relief from the somewhat stifling environment of secondary school. Kathleen settled in well

and began to make friends with a number of other attendees, particularly two girls from the Polish community.

One morning I called to the house and was surprised to find Kathleen at home at this time as she was usually at the training centre. When I observed this she informed me that she no longer attended. I was shocked by this news, as she seemed to be enjoying herself and was doing well in all the subjects. It transpired that Kathleen had to leave because her brother had been involved in some trouble at the centre and had been asked to leave. Kathleen is not able to continue attending without her brother. Kathleen then spent five months at home not attending any education or training courses. She was also under pressure from the Social Welfare officer to apply for training in order to continue receiving payments. Kathleen researched the possibility of applying to a photography or art training course, but none were available in the local area. After five months Kathleen's brother Charlie was offered a place at a local community training centre and Kathleen decided to apply for a place on a hairdressing course at the same centre. Although Kathleen's family were eventually supportive of this they had a number of reservations initially as they were anxious because the training centre is a mixed sex environment and was already attended by a number of other Travelling families in the area. Kathleen was finally able to persuade her parents to allow her to attend the course only when her brother was accepted onto the course to train as a sports instructor. Kathleen's concern was that she would be 'painted with the same brush' as the other Travellers attending the centre. Kathleen and her family did not socialise with these other families and during her time at the centre Kathleen was continually frustrated at being seen as the same as them. She began with high hopes of training to be a hairdresser.

After a few weeks I noted that Kathleen was no longer enthusiastic about the course and was thinking of training in a different subject area – her real passion was photography, but there were no local courses available and the nearest course was an hour and a half away by car. When I asked how the training was going Kathleen frequently complained about the tension she experienced in the training room. Most of the tension was caused by the 'friendly banter' of the instructor who constantly referred to her culture and made references to *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. One week was particularly stressful and ended in an argument between her and the male instructor after he asked her what she

was doing at the weekend and she told him she was going to her aunt's wedding; the instructor retorted with the comment 'Are you going to get grabbed?' Kathleen shouted at him expressing her frustration at the constant references to her cultural traditions. Following Kathleen's outburst the instructor informed the training centre manager that he did not think she had the right kind of personality for hairdressing, whilst failing to mention his taunting. Kathleen was then called into a meeting with the training centre manager and the instructor, where they informed her that her training course would be coming to completion in a few weeks and that she was not entitled to attend the centre any longer. Kathleen questioned them over this decision citing that this could not be the case as she was aware of a number of her colleagues who were able to continue attending the training centre for 2 – 3 years and to switch between courses during this time. She was then told that there were no more places available on the second year of the course as it was oversubscribed:

> They said that other people need more help than you. If you get into trouble with anyone the finger is definitely pointed at you. And that because you're Traveller, then it's was always your fault. If I had to do it again, I would. Because now they know that I won't put up with any bullshit. If they come out looking for trouble, I will give them some trouble. You know what I mean?

Kathleen is now out of education and out of training, she is unable to find appropriate work due to lack of skills, and family responsibilities where she is required to be home early to mind her siblings. Whilst there are a number of other training centres offering courses, Kathleen is not permitted to attend, unless a male relative accompanies her. Kathleen's brother is no longer interested in continuing his education and Kathleen is now at home all the time other than the one night a week she spends staying over at her grandmother's house to help care for her. Kathleen wants to stay in education and get a job, but it seems that this situation is impossible. In addition, she is experiencing pressure from the Travelling Community as she is still not engaged and is in her twenties. Kathleen's brother is now in a relationship with a young woman from the sedentary community who he met on the training course. Kathleen says she would like to meet someone, but that because her family don't mix so widely her options are limited. Kathleen is under increasing pressure from her parents to get married. Despite this she also is aware of the limited options available to her in choosing the settled option as institutional discrimination is slowly wearing her down. During the course of

the fieldwork, relations between Kathleen and her family become increasingly strained and the tension is palpable when she is in the room with her parents.

Kathleen seems to embody the conflict of living in both worlds. Furthermore, whilst she is expected to remain at home unless chaperoned, her brother is conducting a relationship with a young woman from the settled community openly. When Kathleen begins to attend the local gym and is the object of admiring glances from young men it causes further tension between her and her sisters. She appreciates being perceived as attractive and desirable, however, her sisters quickly withdraw and describe her behaviour as shameful. This tension continues for months occasionally spilling over into direct arguments with her parents and siblings. Kathleen's struggle highlights the challenges of attempting to engage in spaces outside the Traveller home place. Her desire to develop her creative and educational interests clashes with her family and community expectations of appropriate gendered conduct. She must align with traditional gendered roles; however, she is not able to continue her educational pursuits when this clashes with Traveller expectations of appropriate female conduct. Yet external forces are also at work here. The state is threatening to cut off economic resources should she not continue in some form of education or employment. In doing so, she is forced into family economic dependency, which may be part of the informal 'black' economy, for which Travellers are stigmatised. Kathleen is struggling to engage with a system that requires she negate her Traveller identity by aligning with sedentarist practices and values. The assumption of Kathleen's teacher also creates challenges to her cultural identity as she is assumed to behave in a particular way. In addition, this teacher is male, so she is struggling to deal with sedentary masculinised styles of relating which are confusing. This scenario resonates with findings which highlight intersectional discrimination in the lives of Romani girls, who face sexual, verbal and sometimes physical harassment by classmates and teachers, based on ethnic and sexist grounds together (ERRC oral statement 2007, quoted in Kóczé, 2009, p. 42). This scenario highlights the way in which outside forces external to the Travelling Community are creating pressures, which force Traveller women to adopt alternate identities. If, suggested in the following section, female sexuality is equated with adopting outsider morals there is also added guilt and tension, which create pressure within her family. Changing external forces impact Gypsy Traveller lifestyle practices resulting in what Smith and Greenfields (2013) acknowledge as socialising women into

purely domestic roles; what Kóczé (2009, p. 55) describes as 'womanizing the domain of ethnicity'.

Whilst the categorisation of Traveller and Gypsy children in schools is not unique to the Irish education system, what is unique is the fact that Ireland's education system was fashioned through the impact of colonialism. The influence of colonisation on an education system has implications for the way in which Irish Traveller identity is construed within a wider social group.

Traveller's Irish Identity in the Curriculum

Historical factors influencing the practice of an Irish identity within the curriculum have shaped the manner in which the education system, and personnel within that system, responds to Travellers. Understandings of identity are filtered through a colonised / decolonised mind set, which fought to establish a strong sense of cultural nationalism following the establishment of Home Rule in 1922 (Coolahan 1981). Whilst Travellers are beginning to be represented in the curriculum albeit with varying degrees of failure and/or limited success, the issue of an **Irish** Traveller identity represented within the curriculum seems to be a struggle. Many Travellers spoke of missing out on Irish classes and geography and history (which as stated in the PSC, includes Irish history and Irish geography):

> When we were in the Irish class, we weren't taught Irish, we had to do colouring, and sometimes you wanted to do Irish but you couldn't, I don't know if there is any Traveller kid out there doing Irish, I would have liked to do it. Oonagh (18)

> What other kids got to learn about like history and geography and all this, we didn't get that. They should have left us mixed in. They could have had her there just to help us with our reading, like a special needs teacher, just for half an hour or so, because we missed out on the Irish and geography. Ailbe (28)

> Well when we first started going, we were mixed in with all the other kids, and then one morning we just came to school and we were told to go to this room. They just said that this teacher wanted to spend more time with us, but I don't see, thinking back now, how she could have, because she had all those different classes. She had from Sixth class down to baby infants. All the Travellers in one class. I think it would have been better to have been left. We would have learnt Irish, because she didn't teach us Irish. Nessa (26)

Teacher's responses to Traveller participation in Irish classes are, on the surface at least, concerned with attempting to support the acquisition of basic literacy skills as a primary objective. Some parents did state that they did not see the need for their children to participate in Irish language classes as important. However this is to simplify the issue. O'Nions (2010, p. 1) articulates the adaptive practices of many Irish schools:

> Segregated schooling is a simple solution to the demands of effective intercultural teaching – remove those perceived as different from the classroom and eradicate the need to teach and otherwise engage with difference. Segregation thus marks the one of the greatest challenges to intercultural education.

From a social justice perspective segregation, for whatever reason, is not an appropriate response. The recent report by the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Roma and Travellers in Public Education, 47) recognises:

> Such 'benevolent' segregation is not preferable to the provision of additional support to the school in the form of specially trained teachers, appropriate teaching material and intercultural mediators. Support measures should be functionally linked to normal school activities facilitating the full integration of pupils into the normal educational process.

Obviously a failure to educate a group of people in the language, history and geography of their own nation has serious implications for the understanding of an Irish identity, however the diversity in responses from parents interviewed also highlights the differences in Traveller perceptions of their own national identity. The forced ascription to a particular status creates a disjunction in Traveller understandings of self-worth as practised in the home / family environment which, in turn contributes to a disjunction in Traveller identities and family roles (Fannon 1968). The education system becomes the conduit through which the state's ambivalence towards Irish Travellers is magnified; not wanting to fully acknowledge Travellers as 'Irish' resonates with earlier Catholic notions of the *'Limpieza de sangre'* (purity of bloodlines) not wanting the purity of Irish cultural identity to be contaminated. This can be seen in the wider context of Ireland's struggle for a distinct cultural identity following the struggle for home rule and the greening of the curriculum. The issue of Traveller specific teachers and resource teachers is also contentious and not something that is by any means agreed on as part of a consensus despite being the focus of much attention from national Traveller agencies since the withdrawal of the Visiting Teacher for Traveller

(V.T.T) posts by the Department of Education. Bhopal et al. (2000) noted the central role played by the U.K. Traveller Education Service (TES) in their review of six UK schools implementing best practice, however, they also noted that it is equally important for the senior management of a school to 'listen' to the TES, parents and pupils. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of 'collective responsibility by a school's staff and the avoidance of relying on an 'expert' and or 'go-between''. This highlights the importance of an inclusive approach at all levels (including senior management) in order to ensure the delivery of quality service, whilst many VTT are competent and committed practitioners, not all are skilled in their roles and not all schools are committed to best practice. Educational disadvantage through inferior education delivery and the associated stigma of segregation outweighs any positive benefit. The pressure from national Traveller organisations and education personnel can be understood as a struggle for political affiliation, which secures resources, however this struggle can at the same time contribute to further alienation. As O'Nions (2010, p. 474) has noted, 'discrimination cannot be addressed or, more significantly, challenged in a climate of separation and division'. Adequate resourcing is not simply addressed by funding VTT posts, these posts need to be staffed by competent, reflective practitioners, committed to on-going relevant training delivered in collaboration within the Gypsy Traveller community, fully supported in their roles. In reality, many VTT's experienced being marginalised within schools due to the nature of their work (Cavaliero, personal correspondence, 2010; Hegarty 2013) and powerless to implement change. As early as 1989, the European community resolution of the Council of Ministers of Education of 22 May 1989, *On School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children,* detailed the importance of improvements for teacher training and including using teachers of Traveller origin where possible.

Irish Traveller Identities and English Irish Traveller Identities

Respondents from both generations acknowledged the freedom of escaping a prescribed identity (with attendant negative associations) in England. This finding is interesting as it differs from much of the research conducted with Travellers in the education system in the UK, (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2003, 2006) however the chance to pass as Irish rather than Traveller certainly allowed for an easier time in school without the associated discrimination:

> We used to call them 'country kids', but we never went into school thinking they are country kids, but I think the settled kids knew we were different before we did. But we were just seen as Paddies. Marie (30)

> I found school better in England. The school system was completely different. Even the years that they put them in are completely different. In England they didn't really make a big deal about if you're a Traveller or not. But then over here they did. Once they know you are a Traveller, it's different. Marguerite (45)

Helleiner (2000) has documented the way in which the impact of colonisation in Ireland contributed to Irish Travellers being left out of the hierarchy of classification of Gypsy / Traveller groups, which may contribute to the sense of freedom from stigma experienced within the English education system which the Travellers who participated in this research alluded to. Mothers noticed the differences in the ways in which their children were viewed within the school system in the England, recognising that when in England, 'Irish' is the dominant difference as opposed to 'Traveller', thus providing certain freedoms from the stigma of categorisation. Whilst, certainly historically, 'Irish' was considered lower in the social hierarchy than 'English', for Travellers, it is an identity that enables opportunities to step outside of the limiting negative associations of being seen as a 'Traveller'. Whilst the shifting landscape of social stratification may no longer be negatively disposed towards 'Irish' for the generation of parents, it certainly still resonated. On return to Ireland, however, confusion occurred for their children who were immediately defined by their Traveller status:

> It's a different lifestyle over there than here. Back here you are pinpointed. In England, they don't pinpoint you out. They were in school as young children, they weren't called Travellers or tinkers or whatever they call them…pikeys. Back here they were coming home crying. They were being called 'itinerants' and 'Travellers' and they were asking, *What does that mean?* They have no clue. Marguerite (45)

This comment is particularly interesting as it offers an alternative perspective from research conducted with Irish Travellers in the UK (Power 2004). One reason often cited by Traveller parents as a motivator for moving between England and Ireland was in response to pressure from the educational agencies attempting to enforce attendance of teenage Travellers at school:

> Forty times over, that man has come down, and he would say to me that my [youngest] sister has not been back, and I would say yes she came back after the Easter break, he would never surrender until June. So I said to him, she went to England, I couldn't really hide a thing like that. But say she would land back here, and he came down from the school, I would say she was not here, I would have to say that for her. Ailbe (28)

This moving between England and Ireland in an attempt to avoid schooling when problems occurred was a useful device, which was further enhanced by emphasising the apparent dangers of visiting certain sites thereby discouraging interaction with educational outreach workers. The practices of avoidance can be linked to feelings of ambivalence regarding subjecting children to symbolic violence through participation in an education system, which fails to acknowledge a diverse Traveller identity. In addition, following on from the work of Andereck (1992) and Levinson and Sparkes (2003, 2006), this strategy of removing teenage children from school serves a tactical device in maintaining and mediating cultural boundaries, which become more significant once children begin to reach adolescence. This device can also be considered as an active mode of resistance in the face of wider societal forces; what James Scott (1987, 1990) dubbed 'Weapons of the Weak'.

Conclusion

This section of findings has illustrated the significance gender plays in Traveller identity. Many elements are significant when exploring Traveller women's gendered identities including class, ethnicity, religion, life stage, martial status and parental status. Gender is linked to familial roles and expectations, opportunities for and access to education, choices regarding participation in an education system, which is active in shaping notions of Traveller identity within the curriculum through practices and discourses. Gender also influences economic relations as women's earning potential is limited by their gender, through the areas of education / work they are able to choose. Education plays a key role in forging understandings of identity through concepts of nationhood, which, in an Irish context, is influenced by colonisation / decolonisation. Class shapes Traveller women's ability to participate in education and employment through the manner in which they are understood as conforming to notions of Traveller women; by choosing when and who to marry and when and with whom they will have

children, which, in turn has implications for they role they take in employment. An intersectional perspective of these findings acknowledges that whilst some members of the community are able to utilise economic and cultural capital to access educational environments, and subsequent opportunities for employment, those most disadvantaged are not able to do this. Shifting economic circumstances on a national level also influence the way in which identities are constructed as creative approaches to agency are developed through the adoption of alternate identities. In the next section, the influence of gender on Traveller spatial practices will be explored.

Chapter Six

Spatial Practices

Introduction

Most discussion around spatial aspects of Traveller life tends to focus on nomadism. Whilst this research considers the changing practices of nomadism, my intention, following Berlin (2015) has been to consider spatial organisation from a gendered perspective. In particular, questioning how do Traveller women use and think about space in a way that may be distinctive? The following chapter will illuminate the manner in which Traveller women think about and use space. The chapter begins by examining Traveller spatial practices. Consideration is then given to the way in which space is gendered. An examination of nomadism and changing practices of nomadism is then explored, moving on towards a consideration of Travellers' varying experiences of spatial organisation, including, use of space within the home, the loss of security, use of space within the school, and finally, crossing national boundaries. The image of Traveller identity, as introduced in the previous chapter, provides a vehicle through which to examine the themes of this chapter, here however, different factors become more significant as we begin to examine spatial practices.

Traveller Spatial Practices

The previous diagram (Fig. 1) introduced in the chapter on identity, provides a representation for considering how Traveller women negotiate space. Whilst the diagram is composed of the same parts as previously described in the identity chapter, Different features become foregrounded when considering spatial practices as opposed to identity. Spatial practices influence identity because identity shifts as people move through different spaces. When considering a spatial perspective distinct influences are highlighted, namely: gender, nationhood, life stage, nomadism and the Traveller / Sedentary divide. As before, each domain adds another layer to the way in which space is understood and utilised and different contexts affect the way in which each layer resonates. Gender still remains the most important feature in the home environment and outside of the home environment in the wider society (including educational contexts).

Within the home environment, Traveller women inhabit inside spaces and Traveller men inhabit outside spaces.

Generational / Life stage factors are still significant and continue to exert an influence on spatial practices as the onset of adolescence curtails young Traveller women's movement through spaces (both the home environment and the school environment). The roles that are associated within each different space shape those areas inhabited by children so that girls become mothers at a very young age. Inappropriate behaviour is, therefore, concerned with contested understandings surrounding the use of space.

Nomadism becomes more significant (following Levinson and Sparkes 2004; McVeigh 1997; McVeigh, Donahue and Ward 2004; Smith and Greenfields 2013) as in order to fully understand Traveller spatial practices we need to rethink understandings of nomadism as movement or rather transience. The divide between the Traveller and sedentary community remains significant in understanding spatial practices because Traveller spatial practices are historically centred on the importance of community (i.e. extended family) and continuity of community. Nationhood becomes a significant dynamic as Travellers, by virtue of the fact that they move, cross national boundaries. And, in doing so, negotiate alternative identities which draw upon aspects of ethnicity symbolised through blood and nomadic practice and Irish nationalism. Temporal factors also feature significantly as changes in the wider society significantly impact on the manner in which Travellers are able to practice their lifestyle. As before, what is considered inappropriate behaviour in both Traveller and the majority sedentary community is, therefore, concerned with contested understandings surrounding the use of space.

Gendered Spaces

As previously stated, the key finding from this research is that gender plays the most important role in shaping Traveller identity which in turn is shaped by those spaces, which they inhabit. Within the Traveller home environment, spaces are distinctly gendered with inside spaces belonging to girls and outside spaces to the boys:

> In my family now, the boys didn't have the same responsibilities, they had to look after the dogs and stuff, take care of the yard and stuff. Marguerite (45)

This gendered use of space comes to the foreground once Travellers reach adolescence. On reaching adolescence, Traveller women tend to remain indoors concerning themselves with domestic tasks whilst the Traveller males remain outdoors. The result of inhabiting a particular space within the home environment contributes significantly to the adoption of particular roles. Therefore by virtue of the fact that Traveller women remain inside on reaching adolescence they adopt the role of 'mother' much earlier than their sedentary counterparts:

> I was left with thirteen kids to mind them all and still cooking in the house and then cleaning up and whatever. You were like their second mother, that's how my brothers all looked at me, I don't know about my sisters, but my brothers always looked at me, I was always like a second mother to all of them, 'cos I'd helped reared them. That's the way you look at it, you don't, you didn't think of yourself as a second mother you just get on with it, 'I'm just your older sister and I'll do it. Marguerite (45)

This statement serves to highlight the way in which gender is also more dominant a feature in shaping Traveller identity than generational position. Whilst Marguerite reflects back on her childhood, Ellen (22) describes the way that young Traveller women are aware of the need to constrain their behaviour within particular environments and contexts. Ellen enjoys fishing and she recalls her love of fishing in the river, which runs near to her house, as a child with her siblings. Ellen describes an incident the previous summer when, along with some of her family, she had driven out to the sea and they were fishing off the harbour. Other Traveller families arrived and Ellen felt compelled to stop fishing saying, 'they [other Traveller women] would be shocked at seeing a Traveller woman fishing'. This event serves to highlight the fact that gendered behaviour is important in both particular spaces and in particular contexts (i.e. in front of other Traveller families). In this instance Ellen changes her behaviour not because of the environment, but because of the other people who move into the environment (i.e. other Traveller families who she feels will judge her behaviour as unfeminine and inappropriate for **Traveller** women). Whilst this event is concerned with gendered conduct within particular spaces, it is also at particular phase of the life stage during which the division of space becomes more significant (i.e. after the onset of adolescence) as prior to adolescence Ellen would have been able to fish. The scenario illustrates the way in which, as stated before, inappropriate behaviour is,

therefore, concerned with contested understandings surrounding the use of space through consideration of gender, life stage, environment and context. Hannerz (1980) has suggested that gossip operates as a form of social control, which increases directly in relation to the number and intensity of social ties within one's community. Findings from Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 122) also noted 'narratives of constraint' in relation to physical environment, collective norms, and gender expectations limited their social relations and spatial boundaries.

Nomadism

The terminology surrounding nomadism is confusing and contested, for example the terms 'traveller' and 'settled' no longer carry meaning when applied to understandings of nomadism as illustrated in the following conversation where a Traveller father describes the need to protect his daughters from the encroaching influence of the sedentary community:

> It's just the Traveller way like. Well like it would be all right around other travelling girls, but not around settled, not the boys, well settled girls are okay. Sean (20)

This description is confusing because of the complicated use of terminology which no longer carries meaning in the same way as it once did. Sean is concerned about the encroaching influence of the sedentary community on his daughter's behaviour. In line with traditional practices of Gypsy Travellers socialising in single gender networks (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 166-7), Sean has always lived in a house and so have his children, however he does not want her to mix with the sedentary population, specifically males from the sedentary community, and he considers and then decides that mixing with females from the sedentary community would be acceptable, however everyone he is referring to in this conversation is settled – settled Traveller and settled sedentary.

McVeigh's (1997) suggestion, building on the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) of a consideration of a 'nomadology' (a particular mind set or way of viewing the world) is useful here. So, whilst Travellers may no longer travel in traditional ways, both metaphorical and symbolic realisations of movement are still adhered to across the

generations. It is important to consider here that if change and movement is the norm, then the lack of movement can be perceived as stifling and oppressive as noted in research findings by Levinson and Sparkes (2004), and Smith and Greenfields (2013) who highlighted the way in which many Travellers who had moved into 'bricks and mortar' housing drew on cultural capital based on 'histories of mobility' (Eastmond 2007, p. 1).

Findings from this research, in line with findings from McVeigh (1997) and Smith and Greenfields (2013), indicate that whilst nomadism as traditionally practised, is no longer such a central feature of Traveller life, nomadism is realised symbolically (Greenfields and Smith 2010, p. 401). New types of nomadism are emerging, which require a rethink of the ways in which traditional understandings are considered. Whilst a number of authors have described the manner in which encroaching state intervention limits the practice of nomadism (Bhreatnach 2006; Crowley and Kitchin 2007; MacLaughlin 1998) the findings from this research suggest that alternative practices are evolving. Therefore, the impact of external forces on nomadism is not only one directional i.e. towards settlement, rather it is multi-dimensional. What is more significant is that this multi-dimensional response to state intervention through alternative practices of nomadism leads to fragmentation of community and its associated problems (Dawkins 2006; Fletcher 2009).

Spatial practices have changed significantly over time due to external factors, which significantly impact on the ways in which Travellers conduct their lifestyles. The findings from this research indicate that external factors have certainly limited the ability to practice traditional Traveller understandings of extended family life, this fluctuates over the life course, for example, when young Travellers marry and set up home they are forced to move back into caravans due to the lack of appropriate and affordable housing. Marguerite (45) described memories of living in a caravan during this stage of her life:

> Then when we got married we got a caravan. He got the caravan. And I remember waking up the next morning and up over our heads there was icicles! Icicles! And I don't think we was really used to that. It seemed so strange. So I'd spent all my life in a house and so had he. So then we got the caravan. So then we had our own wee space then. Your bedroom and your sitting room was

all in that wee caravan, so you weren't used to that, you were used to your own space. It was completely different. Marguerite (45)

The lack of availability of appropriate housing has impacted on the manner in which Travellers interact within the extended family. Despite the sedentarist settlement policies adopted by the Government, the ironic situation is that, for some families who wanted to settle permanently, the sedentarist policies forced them back into travelling due to a lack of available, affordable and appropriate housing:

> We were waiting for a house a long time Tamsin, so we went to England then and we were just gone, I think it was the day after we were gone and my father rang us up and told us that we had got a house. So we lived over there. We were living in a house the whole time we were over there. So, then we came back here to the site a few years ago. Marguerite (45)

Contrary to findings in the UK (Smith and Greenfields 2013), Irish Government policies have served to force some Travellers, who would prefer to remain in housing, back travelling and into caravans. Families who are eventually housed are again often assigned inadequate, crowded housing:

> There were 17 of us kids in all. We were 11 in the mobile home. Then we were moved to the halting site at the industrial estate - near the electricity pylons. Come up from there again and there is a house on the corner and you can see all the windows are boarded up. If you look inside that you will see the house with timber on the windows. We're often up and laughing ourselves. How could we all live in that house? A four-bedroom house! Eloise (35)

Houses designed for nuclear families are inadequate for accommodating the needs of extended families. Caravans have to be close enough to facilitate the continuation of community life, otherwise, people are liable to feel disoriented and alienated. So again, spaces dictate the nature of social interaction. External pressures force Travellers to adopt changing lifestyle factors through the states' failure to provide affordable and adequate housing. This in turn impacts on the way in which they are able to access education and employment. However, moving into a caravan does not automatically imply that Travellers living practices remain the same as they did a generation ago. Houses are designed for nuclear families while Traveller tradition gravitates towards an alternative.

In line with findings from Berlin's (2012) Finnish example, movement is still evidenced in the regular changes in housing accommodation. During the course of this research, I came across a number of families who regularly moved in rapid succession through rented accommodation. Reasons for movement were cited as being due to the death or illness of a family member and conflict with neighbours. This ability to move with such regularity was remarkable considering the challenges faced by Travellers in securing rental accommodation both in the private rental sector and within council accommodation, yet this may also have been due to living environments becoming intolerable following disputes with landlords or neighbours. Whilst regular moving through rental accommodation can be understood as a response to inadequate housing / conflict with neighbours, it does not paint the whole picture as regular movement between houses also belies adherence to nomadism as described in Berlin's (2012) Finnish example. During the course of my fieldwork I came across one extended family that owned three houses next to one another in a terrace and regularly (at least once a year) moved between the three houses. When I enquired about reasons for this they explained that whilst they had been settled for many years they were still Travellers and after a visit to the pub the men would often decide to move and return home to move into the house next door. It is, however, also significant to note here that gender plays a significant part in influencing movement as it is the men who made this decision. Yet, as Crickley (1992, p.105) has stated, both the real or imagined possibility of nomadism is an important part of affirming Traveller women's cultural identity.

Nomadism is also evidenced through certain gendered and life stage practices such as visiting traditional horse fairs associated with Travellers in Ireland and England (e.g. Appleby, Ballinasloe etc.) and pilgrimage to holy sites in Ireland and Europe such as Knock, Lough Derg, St. Winifred's Well, Medjugorje and Lourdes. During the course of my research Traveller men visited horse fairs such as Smithfield's in Dublin and Ballinasloe in County Galway often bringing along their sons and taking time away from school to do so. Whilst some Traveller women also visited the fairs it tended to be the younger women (possibly because the older women were minding children at home) and those involved in my research were more likely to be engaged in pilgrimage visits to Knock, Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg. Young Travellers (both men and women) visited Medjugorje or Lourdes and were proud to tell me how often they had visited. The women (both young and old although less in the middle years – possibly because of

family commitments) visited Lough Derg and engaged in the fasting and prayer. Lough Derg seemed to be only attended by young women. Nomadism, despite the influence of state policies, remains a central part of cultural identity, yet is practised in a variety of different ways, ranging from moving house, to moving into a caravan, to engaging in pilgrimages to holy sites or visiting traditional fairs. The type of nomadism practised, depending upon whether it is chosen or enforced is determined by the impact of external forces from the wider community.

Varying Experiences of Spatial Organisation

What is clear from the research is that different housing arrangements shape different experiences whether that is rural/urban, trailer/house, or site/housing estate. These different experiences are also shaped by shifts in wider societal responses to Travellers across time and space. External forces are evidenced in the impact of Traveller sedentary divide as the encroachment of increasing private land use has created a move towards halting sites leading to a loss of contact with the wider society and a ghettoisation of Traveller spaces due to the lack of provision of adequate housing solutions.

Traveller mothers' childhoods of the late 1960's and 1970's tended to be one of significant change in relation to living spaces. Travelling tended to stop or, with the introduction of more formal school attendance, became curtailed. Changing living spaces resulted in a range of accommodation practices from static caravans, to halting sites, to country living to town living. Despite living in a town, many Travellers noted how interactions with the sedentary community reduced drastically:

> I lived in a caravan for 6 years on the corner, and no one ever came to my door, never, no teachers, no councillors. Violet (35)

> It's harder living on the site, there's less interaction with settled people now, than before when you're on the side of the road, or if you're in a house in somewhere. You never get settled people coming to the site. They don't even know how we live. Emily (35)

Emily's comment seems to imply that whilst many Travellers would prefer to remain apart, and use that as a means to maintain a distinct identity, the impression is that there

is a yearning for interaction with the non-Traveller world. Those Travellers who moved onto purpose built halting sites described how they had less and less contact with the sedentary population:

> Do you remember when everyone lived out in the village? We had more contact with country people then, because they would be passing by, but now, nobody comes here now. We would meet more people on the road. It's like a ghetto now, if you didn't know us, you would be terrified. People don't know the sites here. If we were giving directions, you would be an hour explaining. Ailbe (28)

During this time, the children of Traveller families who settled in the countryside also experienced isolation from the wider community:

> When we lived out of town, in the country a little bit, and it was a farming road, and the kids complained, as if you were diseased, like lepers, a lot like that. Anthony (40)

Whilst rural spaces are not necessarily any more conducive to Traveller living, families who moved onto sites struggled with (and continue to struggle with) inadequate living conditions. Many of the women I spoke to described how children these days were less healthy, particularly the children who were living on inadequate sites with overcrowding and poor drainage. A number of mothers noticed how often the children had kidney infections and were treated with antibiotics. Residing with extended family is often essential for continuing economic activities, which contribute towards household resources. Attempts to reside with extended family are severely curtailed by modern planning policies, which remain sedentarist in scope and fail to take into account the needs of an extended family. Planning policies which are sedentarist in scope further impact on gender as women become more isolated in the home caring for children and removed from extended family:

> We had a person in here a while back and he said, 'What would you like on-site?' and I said, 'Well we're just wasting our time with you, despite me telling you what we would like. It's not happening. For instance the kids are going to school and there is not proper facilities for them, there's no electricity in, there is no lighting, what difference does it make?' and he gives me the best answer he could ever give me, it was, 'Why did you choose to live here?' Well I moved here because my **family** is here. When you make this place you made it for **Travellers**, the **car park** with **streetlights**, that's all you can do. Anthony (40)

Anthony's comments highlight the importance Travellers place on family over peer group conflicting with values of the wider society. This excerpt highlights the breakdown in communication between Traveller families and the state in their attempt to adapt to outside influences whilst preserving family values. Travellers practising nomadism are at times forced to do so because of the lack of adequate provision. The lack of adequate provision impacts on the way in which Travellers are then able to engage with external agents (such as the education system), thereby being doubly disadvantaged. These findings support Belton's (2005, Ch. 5) description of the site experienced as carceral / punishment for failure to conform to homogenous lifestyle practices. In both the U.K. and Ireland, sites were and are often located in unsafe environments and tend to be located near busy roads and hidden from view. Other hazards include poor sanitation, overcrowding and blocked access. Often barriers onto the site are locked to prevent families pulling on without permission, yet this also prevents access for the fire and ambulance services. One typical example of a so-called transient site that I visited during fieldwork, which was originally designed for families spending two or three days actually houses families who have lived there for a number of years. There are two portable toilets (for a while there were three), which are emptied weekly but there is no change in the frequency of servicing depending on the levels of people using the site. There is also a running tap and electricity is in the form of generators. Some of the long-term residents erected small sheds to provide privacy when washing.

Some families were also struggling to deal with historical family conflicts whilst attempting to access housing and were convinced that the local councils were aware of, and manipulated, these situations in order to avoid meeting housing requirements:

> I think about the housing, the housing is ridiculous in here. Council houses boarded up, and still there are loads of Travellers living in agency houses. And I can't see why they're paying €100 a week for an agency house, when you could use that money to do up a council house. Some of the families on the site say, where there are so many on such a small area, and just trying get that many kids to school in the morning, it was hard work and they could be in a house where, it would just be a lot easier. It's like a lot of organisations, where they say they are not, but you know they are. It really puts you down. Melissa (43)

This statement highlights the challenges many Travellers face living on inadequate sites. Along with the lack of adequate space and basic facilities, there are the attendant challenges of attempting to live cheek by jowl with families whom may be in conflict with one another. Site life also has hierarchies, which are familial, generational and gendered:

> The council, they tell you the council is sound, but they are the biggest bunch of racists, of people I ever seen in my life, there could be for instance, a Traveller family living in a house over there, and they know another Traveller family doesn't get on with that Traveller family, so they offer them that house, because they know they're going to refuse it. They offered my son a house, near number 15, but yet his wife's family don't get on with them, and I couldn't explain what has caused this, and despite all this going on they still offered them that house. And then you go into them and they say, 'But didn't we offer you a house?' but they know from the bottom of their heart you can't take that house. Melissa (43)

In accordance with Kendall's (1997) study, behaviour on site is carefully curtailed within appropriate spaces, with men's space being outdoors and women's space indoors, yet women's spaces are also limited by weather and time of day – at night and during bad weather, men inhabit women's spaces, again gender becomes the most significant factor.

Use of Space Within the Home

Traveller spaces are distinctly gendered once young Travellers reach adolescence. Traveller women tend to remain indoors concerning themselves with domestic tasks whilst the men are outdoors (Okely 1983; Berlin 2015). Traditionally Traveller women went outside the home space in order to access resources for the family. As well as bearing children and caring for children, and associated domestic work, mothers described how their mothers would go 'calling' to access resources for the family. Marguerite (45) recalls her memories of her mother's life

> What she used to do you know was she used to go out begging or whatever, years ago and people'd give her clothes.

Whilst domestic appliances were in short supply, domestic tasks seemed to be more sociable with spatial practices being embedded in the affirmation of community.

Spatial practice was centred on the extended family. Modern lifestyle practices undermine and fragment the extended family:

> I remember even, and this was when we lived out of town, 'cos out there, there was no washing machine and everything had to be washed in the basin and my mother used to hand wash everything in the basin, she had about eight of us that time and I'd be helping her. And my nephews and I used to go down and they'd be down at the river washing clothes and stuff. My mother used to like it that time compared to as time went on, but I think it was more sociable and stuff.

Mothers' domestic responsibilities, as daughters growing up in the seventies, involved significant contributions to the household in the form of a range of domestic responsibilities, which included, sibling childcare, shopping, laundry and cooking. Domestic tasks were divided between the genders with men assigned outdoor duties and women assigned indoor duties. Marguerite's expectations for her daughters are extensive, however, variations seemed to exist depending on the number of female offspring and birth order with girls roles being limited to familial and domestic responsibilities:

> I don't just expect it from her, I expect it from **all** the girls. Even when Leanne was growing up I would expect **her** to do work in the house. I wouldn't though as much because she's the third one down.

Despite reductions in family size and an increase in economic resources and domestic appliances, this has not necessarily resulted in a reduction in domestic tasks. Marguerite explains how she cooks different meals for different members of the family:

> And then as for eating, it was different to growing up, I do the same dinner for everybody, no actually when they were growing up, I **wouldn't** do the same dinners for everybody, I'd cook different dinners for each one. I used to always to do that Tamsin, I used to cook different dinners for everyone in the house and then I got to the stage where I said to myself, 'What am I doing?' and then I said to them, 'This is what I'm cooking for dinner, eat it, don't eat it, I don't care. If you don't want it, cook your own'. You get to the stage of doing that.

Marguerite's experience seems to suggest that women's role in the home has contributed to increased isolation for Traveller women as domestic tasks which were

once accomplished alongside extended family members now retreat further inside the home.

Gendered use of space within the home environment remains a significant feature of the home place for Traveller women. Daughters' domestic responsibilities today still include the same tasks such as sibling childcare, shopping, cooking and cleaning along with caring for elders. Outdoor tasks still tend to be allocated along gendered lines yet spaces within the home environment, whilst being gendered, are also used as ways to exert gender hierarchies based on age, martial status and generation. Young Traveller women are expected to show respect and care for older family members. Older Traveller women are active in ensuring that younger Traveller women remain obligated to their family through their coercion of male family members as is evident in the following excerpt taken from field notes during discussions with Chevonne (23):

> My granny's so bossy. She likes to boss me around in front of my aunt Chloe. She likes to show off that she can boss me. Last week when Chloe came round to take her to Mass she said to me, 'I want you to wash all the floors and the windows and wash my dogs'. I said I wouldn't. I was already getting dinner ready for her. So I pretended I'd washed her floors. She came back and said, 'Those floors haven't been washed' and I said, 'They have' *and* I said I'd done her windows, *but* I said, 'I'm *not* doing your dog!' And she said that I should and she rang my Dad and told him that I wasn't doing what she said.

This excerpt is also significant in that it illustrates the way in which certain domestic duties are associated with different domestic spaces, which are assigned along gender lines. Chevonne accedes to Granny's demands that she washes the floors and windows, but refuses to wash the dog. Dogs are outside animals and, therefore, associated with the role of men. Chevonne, therefore, states her disapproval over the gender confusion caused by the dog being inside as opposed to outside. Her father supports her in this stating that he will come round and wash the dog. Chevonne is clear that Traveller women have never washed dogs as dogs belong outside and outside is the preserve of men:

> …and he said I had to clean for her, but not wash the dog. He said he'd come round and do that. Traveller women have never washed dogs!

Space, therefore, plays an important role in gendered performance however as Chevonne refuses to engage in what she considers to be masculine duties located

outside. Her grandmother does not consider it inappropriate that she requests Chevonne washes the dogs, yet Chevonne is adamant that 'Traveller women have never washed dogs' here matter is out of place and out of order as the dog, when outside is under the jurisdiction of men, but the dog inside is under the jurisdiction of women. It can be seen therefore that being out of place causes confusion, disorientation and anxiety.

Loss of Security

Houses are designed for nuclear families while Traveller tradition gravitates towards an alternative. Here gender and the Traveller sedentary divide are key factors to consider. Changing lifestyle practices due to external forces have resulted in a fragmentation of the extended family, which significantly impacts on Traveller women isolating them within the home. In addition, living in alien environments surrounded by the wider sedentary community emphasises the distinctions in family practices between Travellers and sedentary leading to fears of outsiders and outside influences which contribute to a loss of cultural identity. Being out of one's familiar place leads to feelings of alienation and anxiety. When Marguerite (45) moved into her caravan and started her family she was not located near the rest of her family and, as a result experienced distress and isolation at the spatial interruptions that impacted on continuation of extended family practices of communal childcare:

> I remember when I got married, I was so lonesome, even though I was only moving into town, I missed all my brothers and sisters. I used to be crying about the younger ones, especially my younger brother there, I was really close to him when we was growing up, and he used to call me, 'Mummy Marguerite', he was like my little baby. I used to *cry*. And then when I had my oldest daughter and my father used to come and take her to bring her out to visit. He used to come and get her and we'd go, 'Ok you can bring her out to the house then, and he used to bring her out to the house, out to see my mother. And I remember running after his van crying.

This finding aligns with Dawkins (2006) and Fletcher's (2009) assertion that traditional practices of residing near close kin, facilitates social support that promotes wellbeing. This is particularly important for Traveller women who are increasingly isolated within the private domain and traditionally associate in single gender networks (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 166-7).

As illustrated in the previous section, changing spaces causes feelings of alienation and disorientation, thus changing spatial practices are experienced both in home and school environments. Most families with whom I spoke with no longer lived on sites, and seemed relieved to be away from them, however ~~this may have been~~ was due to the inadequate facilities and the overcrowding. Despite being relieved to have moved from the sites, changing spatial practices have resulted in those families who have moved off site facing a different set of problems. Councils' responses to inadequate site provision have been to relocate families to housing estates where they may know few people. In line with findings from Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 117), many of those interviewed now who live in housing estates spoke often of concerns about paedophiles and outsiders:

> I know when I was living in there, it was only like a little private house, I think the parents are more afraid of kidnapping, whether they would be safe. Nessa (26)

A number of families I spoke with during my fieldwork spoke of fears of kidnappers. This is particularly significant when traditional residence practices supported Gypsy Traveller practices of collective organisation of child care (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 142). One family assured me that the 'Polish' were well known for stealing children. These fears highlight the fears of moving from the unity and containment of an extended family to an alternative arrangement. This comment highlights the way in which 'Polish' can be understood as a metaphor, which signifies 'Others' (Bloul 1999, p. 8). Spaces dictate the nature of social interaction. A house allows for spaces to retreat to, avoiding negotiation when there are tensions, and sometimes, preventing conflict resolution. Changing spatial practices significantly impact on understandings of extended family practices and feelings of security and safety. The changes in living spaces affect the way in which people interact with one another:

> It's very different in a house, 'cos in a house you've got all your rooms and if one person isn't talking to another, then they can go out this side into another room or whatever, whereas if you're in a caravan and you're not talking to each other you just, well there's an atmosphere **there**! You've just got to get on with it. They probably had to get on with one another then. I know with my mother and father, if they're not talking to one another now, she's in the kitchen and he's in the sitting room. She'd still make him a cup of tea, she'd go, 'There's a cup of tea for you' and she'd **slam** it down on the side! And she'd be in the

kitchen and she'd make his breakfast and she'd **slam** that down on the table! Marguerite (45)

Whilst changes in living space causes anxiety, the changes from inside space to outside space also causes anxiety as evidenced in discussions with Traveller parents and children regarding their experience of moving through different spaces i.e. from home to school (inside to outside, Traveller to sedentary spaces). Many Traveller parents I interviewed spoke of their concerns regarding their children being treated badly at school, and whilst the majority of these concerns were focussed on unfair treatment, one mother spoke of her own mother's concern for the safety of her children:

> I remember my younger two sisters, when they were going to school, now they didn't go to school, I remember my mother and father was always so nervous about them going and I always used to say, 'Put them in school with mine'. They were so nervous of kidnappers and whatever. But she wouldn't. Marguerite (45)

Settled society and the schools have no understanding of the incredible fears about school held be some Traveller parents. They might seem irrational to them, and perhaps, a pretext for non-engagement. Whilst the majority of children nowadays do attend school, this struggle to negotiate and maintain the distinctions between both environments is learned at an early age:

> They have to try and mix and learn their [settled] ways, because we wouldn't be allowed to do things that settled kids would, we wouldn't be allowed to go off and have sleepovers, and stuff like that. I don't think they comprehend the difficulties that these children have settling in. Nessa (26)

> It can be because they can't fit in so they force themselves into a group. Yes they don't know how to mix. Some kids don't understand why they are not being accepted. Ailbe (28)

Many of the daughters interviewed highlighted the fact that being in school around a majority of sedentary people caused stress and uncertainty brought on by the differences in cultural attitudes and acceptable behaviour:

> With Travellers, we like being around the family, having all the cousins around and knowing them a lot. And having a laugh. It's different with the country people, just like, there's a bunch of them, they look scary kind of a way. Rachel (21)

> But there weren't very many people that we could mix in with, we had our
> sisters and, with three of us, some people just didn't like us there, for Travellers.
> In England and Ireland, some of them smoked, and they used to tell you to come
> outside. But I don't smoke like, I think it's disgusting, and sure they would say
> come on, come on, come on and try and get you into having a smoke, whatever.
> I didn't feel comfortable with those people around me, I did feel like some of
> them did judge me, because of who I was, we are all the same age and it was
> hard to kind of talk to them, some of them were very awkward. Some were pure
> snobby. They were in quite tight groups, so it was hard to mix in. Some people
> did, and some of them didn't like us. Half and half like. But there weren't very
> many people that we could mix in with, we had our sisters and, with three of us,
> some people just didn't like us there, for being Travellers. No I wouldn't tell
> them about anything. I didn't want them knowing things about me, 'What's it
> like being a Traveller? Why'd you get married so young? Can you get out?'
> Louise (20)

The perceptions of the sedentary community about their culture were a cause of
frustration. Failure to recognise the variations within Traveller communities contributes
to misunderstandings and negative experiences for young Travellers within a school
environment that is already considered daunting and unusual. The school environment
provides a range of opportunities for interactions between the genders, which is not part
of the daily home life of many Travellers.

Use of Space Within the School

When examining spatial practices within the school environment, the dominant factors
are the divide between the Traveller and sedentary community and gender. These two
factors are interlinked by time and by life stage. As previously described, with the onset
of adolescence, Traveller women's spatial practices are severely curtailed. The
following section provides two examples of the way in which spatial practices impact
Traveller identity within the school environment. The first example foregrounds the
importance of the Traveller sedentary divide and the confusion over terminology, whilst
the second example details the importance of gender within the school environment.
What is important to note is the fact that Traveller women, through engaging in the
education system, run the risk of becoming overly influenced by the sedentary
community and as a consequence experiencing a dilution of cultural identity.

Spatial practices within the school environment have changed over time. In earlier
generations, Travellers experienced discrimination through spatial segregation. The

experience of being marked out as different on a daily basis, whether through spatial segregation in class lessons and playgrounds was a theme that Traveller mothers continuously referred to:

> Travellers had their own playground. We were only young, I don't know. We weren't allowed to the front of the school or to the back of the school, we were only allowed down the side door and it was covered here and covered there and that was our playground. Well some of the settled kids would sneak in from time to time, but we would be grounded if we went to the front of the school or to the back of the school. But the one time they wanted to open up a special class for Travellers. Well we'd went through enough of that as children. It was hateful. This is where all the bullying would start. That's what used to happen to us in the special class, children used to come over to us and say, 'They are from the special class'. But they didn't really want to do it but they just asked about it, which one we thought was better, [mixed or segregated classes] but the minute I heard it I thought, 'Not a hope!' In fact I would take the children out of school if they did that. Melissa (43)

The experience of being marked out as different on a daily basis, whether through spatial segregation in class lessons and playgrounds was a theme that Traveller mothers continuously referred to and this segregation also extended to separate places for eating:

> There was always bullying going on in the yard, and all of us, the six of us, used to have to take our lunchboxes into the yard. The other kids could eat them in the classroom, but we had to be in the yard. Eva (30)

> No. I didn't want to be different, but we are in our own room and we had this soup everyday, horrible or not horrible you had to drink it anyway, even if you brought your own lunch. Melissa (43)

Physical segregation of Traveller children contributed to feelings of difference, with constant reminders of their 'outsider' status:

> The Traveller kids were just left, outside, the country children were seen as more than the Traveller children. When my mother got transferred to the halting site, I went to a new school, and it was the same, the Travellers were treated differently, and we knew that as children. Davina (30)

However, whilst some Travellers were not subject to the same strict separate spatial segregation, nevertheless both the playground and the classroom provided daily reminders of difference:

That's when we would be out in the yard and we would really, we learn is that we were Travellers and different, in the playground, we couldn't figure out why we were different, but we knew we were different, we were Travellers. Melissa (43)

Whilst overt spatial segregation within the school environment does not occur directly these days, as previously noted (Chapter 5) spatial segregation practices still operate at a local level in schools in the form of what the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Roma and Travellers in Public Education, 47) has referred to as 'benevolent' practices. When Travellers are removed from certain classes for resource teaching. This practice is counter to the recommendations of the Irish Traveller Education Strategy (2006), which recommends students receive in class support alongside their peers and Bhopal et al.'s (2000) UK study of Best Practice in inclusive education which recommends extra curricula resource as opposed to withdrawal from class. In reality, much 'benevolent' segregation is a way around dealing with pupils who are perceived as disruptive. Skinner, Bryant, Coffman and Campbell (1998) have illustrated the challenges faced by minority culture children in horizontal transitions including over differentiation of time blocks and learning areas within the school day. Spatial misrepresentations are insidious and can be equally damaging as situations regarding confusion surrounding spatial practices and the attendant identities associated with them still occur. The following scenario highlights the confusion and misunderstandings surrounding the introduction of 'Traveller' culture into the curriculum. Caroline's story occurs at the period of entry into the schooling system, the persistence of an educational system, which categorises and stratifies social groups lingers in interactions and practices between children, parents and teachers:

I remember a few years ago with Caroline, she came up from school and nearly died, and she had a new book, colouring book and Travellers lived in caravans, and Caroline said to me, 'Mum, am I a Traveller?' 'Why are you asking me this?' I said, 'We don't travel Caroline'. She says, 'Traveller girls are different to other girls in my school' so she takes out the book and she shows us, and she said, 'My teacher told everyone I was a Traveller'. She showed me the thing and she cried, 'I never want to live in one of them!' she said. I nearly died! I went up to school first thing. She got shamed, she hadn't a clue, what was going on! 'They live in a caravan, they have to wash themselves out, they have no toilets!' The child was saying to herself 'What? What? I don't know what this is?' She said, 'Mummy did I go to a toilet outside in a caravan?' But she's never lived in the caravan. It really upset me. It really, really upset me. To say

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this in front of all the other children and tell them how the Travellers live. They apologised, but that didn't do much good to my child who didn't know she was a Traveller. They said that Caroline was a Traveller child. She was petrified. I think it was spite, well at the time I thought it was, to take her up in the front of the class and say she was a Traveller. She [daughter] said, 'I'm not a Traveller' and she came home and said, 'Am I a Traveller?' When she was in junior infants! Yes. So I just sat down and started talking to her. When she took out the book I nearly died! She was so confused, she didn't even know what a Traveller was! She said to me, 'Mummy what is a Traveller? We don't move around, why are they saying I'm a Traveller. They took me up to the front of the class and said Caroline is a Traveller!' Melissa (43)

This excerpt illustrates the challenges surrounding confusions of terminology of 'Traveller' and 'Settled' and their associated spatial practices. Identities shift as people move through different spaces. The consequence of misrepresentation is to limit children's conceptualisations of their own and other's identities, which, in turn limits their movement and access to particular spaces, namely educational environments. Caroline's story occurs at the period of entry into the schooling system, but the following story focuses on the dilemmas facing Britney, a young Traveller woman aged 20 who is at a different life stage. Whilst most of the Traveller women that I interviewed had not chosen to continue in education, of those that I interviewed who had chosen to continue, they seemed to be able to mix more easily with the sedentary population, but also understandably wanted the support of their peers which was not always easy and required constant negotiations and compromises as evidenced in the following quote:

It's cos of me really. Charlene and Mary wanted to stop. Reena did it for a while, but then she stopped. She thought it was boring. Charlene was going to stop, but then I persuaded her to keep going. I said to her, 'We've come this far. We might as well carry on.' Britney (20)

Britney faces many challenges in attempting to access education, which includes: issues of gender, nomadism and peer group allegiance. For Britney to remain in education she must avail of a course that is culturally appropriate and female in focus. This is also confirmed by research conducted with Irish Travellers in the UK (Greenfields 2008, p. 14, 31, 96) and immediately limits her option to one of childcare. In order to avail of the course, students are required to engage in practice placement in the work force. Britney's parents will only allow her to work in an all-female environment. In addition, she is allowed to attend the course only if her siblings attend with her. In order to

engage with the course, Britney studies a curriculum that emphasises a specifically sedentarist perspective of childcare with accompanying notions of morality, hygiene, and professionalism. These perspectives are spatialised; they fail to take into account the ways in which childcare is influenced by space (for example living in a caravan as opposed to a house which influences feeding and sleeping practices[7]). Some of the aspects of the course run counter to her own understandings of childcare which is family centred and often provided by siblings as opposed to professionals operating outside of a home environment. Discourses surrounding appropriate hygiene, feeding and sleeping practices may run counter to her previously experienced understandings. In addition, in order to participate in work placement, Britney is required to complete a Garda clearance form detailing all the addresses in which she has lived prior to this time. Britney's family have, at certain stages practised nomadism, which has involved living in numerous different locations. This issue has been highlighted as a barrier to accessing employment in research conducted in the UK (Greenfields 2008).

Whilst Britney attempts to access a form of paid employment she, therefore, undergoes a sense of disjunction in her understandings of home, family and childcare. In order to avail of the course, Britney moves away from her earlier, familial understandings and moves towards a different, sedentarist perspective. In doing so she risks alienating her sisters and peers who have alternative reasons for accessing the course. Britney is caught here; she needs to remain with her sisters who are not particularly interested in the course, she wants to continue the education, but her peers are not interested and are pulling her away, yet the other participants on the course are older women from the sedentary community who do not share the same interests as her. This dilemma experienced by Britney again highlights the challenges of intergenerational, and Traveller / sedentary forces. Britney is forced to choose an area of education, which is highly gendered (childcare) thereby gaining approval from her family for continuing in education. However, in choosing this route she is, at the same time, being pulled away from traditional role expectations, despite her choice of subject. She has little in common with the sedentary members of her class who are a generation older. Britney's increasing engagement allows her to see the distance she has travelled from her group.

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[7] Britney explains that when they are teaching children to move from a cot to a bed they put the mattress on the floor. She also describes how they do not use a high chair when feeding as there is no space in the caravan.

This provides her with an alternative perspective; she can see how far she has come and can gain some degree of status from this outside of her community yet at the same time her Traveller peers become further removed from her. In order to traverse this route she is forced to adopt sedentary perspectives. This is reinforced as she studies a curriculum, which is sedentarist in perspective and fails to acknowledge Traveller practices of extended family care (AITHS 2010; Cemlyn et al., 2009; Clark and Greenfields 2006; Gmelch and Gmelch 1976; Helleiner 2000; Kenrick, and Bakewell, 1995; Mac Aongusa 1992; Okely 1983; Power 2004).

Both of these examples have served to highlight the significant impact of space on understandings of identity. The confusions surrounding use of space place limitations on the way in which Traveller women are able to engage in educational environments, which, in turn leads to many Travellers avoiding, or, alternatively, 'passing' as alternate identities in order to negotiate these spaces.

Crossing National Boundaries

As previously stated, identities shift across spaces, spaces, which exist at both the micro level (in the home or school environment), and at the macro level (between countries) where the concept of nationhood becomes a significant factor. The advent of modernity and the emergence of the nation state and its associated borders significantly impacted on nomadic lifestyle practices (Bancroft 2005; McVeigh 1997). Sedentarist habits required a shift in practices achieved through a series of social reform measures, based on ideas developed following the acquisition of 'scientific' data regarding specific portions of the nation's population (Foucault 1977; 2003), that focussed on the assimilation of 'deviant' populations. These emerging scientific discourses were adopted by the state in order to justify disparities in power relations through the prism of race and biological degeneracy which included gender relations (Lacquer 1990), normal and perverse sexuality (Foucault 1980), normality and mental illness (Gilman 1986, 1988, 1991a), as well as white, black, Irish and Jewish ethnic groups (Malik 1996).

Nomads became 'increasingly problematised and controlled and repressed within nation-states intent on the centralisation and consolidation of power and surveillance'

(McVeigh 1997, pp. 17-18). From this perspective the label of deviance is closely linked to power relations and power is clearly manifested in the appropriation of social spaces. McVeigh's description of 'sedentarist hegemony' is forged across axes of race and class. Cresswell (1996, p. 21) notes that, 'No hegemonic structure is ever complete, and it is always important to study the ways in which hegemonies are contested in everyday life. Mobility upsets established notions of the manner in which society operates through territorial understandings and expectations, which infuse social and economic structures. Cresswell (1996, p. 88) further notes that :

> People are expected to live in a 'fixed abode' ('no fixed abode' is a highly suspicious characteristic) and to go to a place of work. All the apparatus of state bureaucracy has depended on this arrangement for centuries. Taxes are paid according to location. Social security claimants cannot easily move without risking the loss of their benefits. Even voting rights are typically tied to particular places. Traveling people upset all these expectations; they do not have a 'fixed abode', and as they do not go to a place of work, they do not appear to work at all. In fact home and work occur together and move with each other. …Mobility, then, poses a big threat to those unaccustomed to that lifestyle. As most of society is defined by territories and the expectations that go with them, mobile people cannot help but offend such expectations. As almost every activity in the Modern Western world has its place, mobility is the ultimate kind of geographical deviance.

The geographically deviant aspect of nomadism is also shaped by class as it problematises notions of land ownership and private property (Greenfields and Home 2008) and is infused with ideas of morality (Cresswell 1996).

Again, gender plays a key role as Traveller women's morality becomes viewed against a backdrop of moral values, which are changing over time. The changing moral value system is, as before, ascribed to outside influences, however in the case of nationhood the outside influence is perceived to be the influence of English Travellers on Irish Travellers living in England.   Here understandings of ethnicity are intersected with concepts of nationhood, gender and family as Travellers within the same family identify themselves as English or Irish. The national identifiers are loaded with moral value judgements which, when ascribed to gender, equate a loss of Irish Traveller identity with the corrupting influence of English Travellers. The fear of a corrupting English influence, when considered within a wider historical context is something which crosses

the Traveller-Sedentary divide permeating Irish nationalist discourse. Ní Shúinéar (1997, 2002) identifies the way in which the Irish sedentary population deflected the projections of the English colonisers onto Irish Travellers in order to define themselves as Irish, and not English. I would argue that Irish Travellers, in an attempt to retain their identities, deflect fears of encroaching sedentary influences from the wider society, particularly in relation to female sexuality, onto the influence of the English and Irish Travellers living in England. These projections have become more significant in recent times due to media portrayals of Irish Travellers in television programmes such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*.

The majority of Travellers I spoke to identified themselves as Irish, however within some families, different siblings defined themselves as different nationalities. The children born in England stated that they were English, whilst the children born in Ireland stated that they were Irish, despite their parents both being Irish Travellers who travelled back and forth between the UK and Ireland often in response to external forces such as limited accommodation options as described in the previous section. This finding highlights the complexities involved in constructing a unified identity and highlights the challenges involved in negotiating ascribed identities, which are defined by changing spatial practices. Within one family the children can be either Irish or English. Whilst ethnicity, (i.e. Traveller) is foregrounded as the most defining aspect of identity, certain attributes are associated with 'English' Irish Travellers and Irish Travellers. This difference in moral status is also generational and is acknowledged by the older generation who are keen to ascribe the worst excesses and flaws within the Travelling Community's behaviour to the English influence, whilst the younger generation were keen to explain to me that they were worldly, more modern because they had lived in England. Certainly my own experience was that experiences of living in England affected gender relations and Traveller-sedentary relations as Traveller men were more open towards me if they had lived in England, and both older and younger generations referred to the freedoms they experienced in England when they were able to 'pass' as Irish as opposed to being trapped in the gaze of being 'Traveller' (Foucault (1977).

The liberation experienced in England was something all respondents (both male and female) acknowledged:

> I do miss England. You're more busier; back here you've too much time on
> your hands. Your day is gone. You bring the children to school, then come
> back here and cooking and shopping and whatever, but over there you had loads
> of places to go to. Town over here is so small, but over there, all the wee towns
> are so near each other and then you had the weekend, at the weekend you could
> go to markets, you'd always have something to do. Marguerite (45)

During fieldwork I noted how the different environments define the manner in which
people mix either between genders, generations, nationalities or ethnicities. Space
shapes social relations. Whether the space inhabited is in school, or home, in the local
town or further away, in Ireland or England, on site or off site. I noticed that during a
number of encounters that took place outside of the local town, especially in Northern
Ireland, the encounter was far friendlier and much more relaxed, particularly with the
strict codes for interacting between the genders. Traveller men that I knew from the
area in which I conducted fieldwork would speak far more openly outside of the local
town. One day I was talking about this phenomenon with one of the Traveller mothers
who acknowledged that she had also experienced a similar situation with members of
the local sedentary population:

> Yes it's stupid who cares what other people think, you are what you are. Yes you
> can meet them outside the town and they are friendly, then you meet them inside
> town. Yes it's really bizarre. Yes I get that from settled people too. You meet
> people that you have known they are really friendly and chatty, and then you
> meet them in town and they are not. Marguerite (45)

Different environments provided opportunities for experiencing different aspects of
identity or alternate identities, which provide relief from stigma and opportunities to
access resources. Nomadism as a distinct aspect of identity also influences the manner
in which Travellers are defined as they move through certain spaces, crossing national
boundaries creates opportunities for mixing and passing which are not readily available
back home in Ireland. The opportunities for passing as a different identity in England
allowed some Travellers to avail of employment opportunities, which they felt would be
unavailable to them in Ireland. Some also acknowledged that the recognition afforded
them in Ireland of being a Traveller meant that they could avoid pressures from the
government to actively seek paid employment, therefore crossing boundaries throws up

interesting possibilities for creating new and hidden identities which can be manipulated in particular contexts to support individuals attempting to access supports / resources:

> I wanted to go [to England], though, there was no place just for you as a Traveller, that's only in Ireland. Over there, if you walk in and say you are a Traveller they say 'What?' Back here, not being rude or nothing, the local people they know you are a Traveller, just by the look of you, or the way you talk. Some people may be rude and say you are a 'Knacker' or a 'Tinker', whatever they're going to say it doesn't matter, but what I'm saying here is when you go over there, they see you as Irish, it's like you're a tourist, you're Irish. Unless they get down to work and say you are a 'Pikey', if you used to say that you lived in a caravan, then they would know you were a gypsy, but when you went to job centres and places like that you are Irish. So sometimes it works to say I am a Traveller, and sometimes it doesn't. Leanne (18)

Attitudes towards who constitutes an outsider and mixing with the sedentary community vary, generationally however, mixing is contentious and risks losing group identity so this is something that requires vigilance and negotiation, particularly for young women and, in particular when young children begin to move towards adolescence. Certainly the older generation involved in this research seemed to mix less than the younger generation. Other respondents acknowledged that the lack of recognition for Travellers within Irish society was similar to the struggle of other outsider groups and ethnic minorities living in Ireland:

> I think we are the same as other nationalities, there will always be people who think, 'Oh they shouldn't be' and there are some people who will accept Travellers but would maybe not accept foreign people. And some people who would accept foreigners but wouldn't accept Travellers. Ailbe (28)

In contrast to UK findings (Greenfields 2008; Smith and Greenfields 2013; Power 2004) a number of Irish Travellers spoke of the possibility to pass as simply Irish in England as opposed to Irish Traveller. This passing allows access to certain freedoms from a stigma, which is not so easily shed in Ireland:

> You can be categorised, when you fill out the forms, black ethnic, Irish, or Traveller Irish, but I used to take on the Irish. Anthony (40)

> Maybe there's more cultures over there, so people are more easy-going. Ireland hasn't changed in years. Ireland is behind. Yes it's a bit like ourselves. When we came back you expect things to have changed. But they hadn't. Marguerite (45)

Despite the opportunities for assuming hidden identities in different places, those Travellers who lived in England, i.e. English-Irish Travellers were assigned the role of embodying all the negative aspects of Traveller culture, in particular the controversial aspects of 'grabbing' made popular by the UK television series *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*:

> Even that **grabbing** thing, I tell you, if anyone tried that grabbing – you'd flatten 'em! We've **never** ever heard of that until we seen that, I go, 'What the hell's grabbing?' I've **never** heard of that, **never** heard of anything like that in my life. That's what I'm saying to you, even that *Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, that's my first time to nearly **see** anything like that in my life. Marguerite (45)

This comment highlights the manner in which national identities are ascribed moral practices within the Irish Travelling Community. As before external forces have contributed to this through the impact of changing accommodation practices. However, external forces, such as the media, have also been complicit in this. The media is involved in reconstructing a Traveller identity from across the Irish Sea. These misrepresentations are active in creating new definitions of Irish Traveller identity. The response from the older generation living in Ireland is similar to the response of the Catholic bourgeoisie in Ireland following the adoption of the Irish Free State when all that was considered morally suspect was ascribed to outside influences (Ní Shúinéar 1997, 2002) and echoes earlier statements made by the Irish church fathers. Ascribing outside influences from the UK to becoming more like sedentary society (non-Traveller), is troublesome for Travellers within the same family, particularly when those defined as 'English' are female. If taking on English traits is seen as morally lax then this causes increased guilt and anxiety for young Irish Traveller women.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the manner in which Traveller women utilise space across time as they experience changes in spatial practices across the lifespan both within the home place and outside spaces, both nationally and internationally from a gendered perspective. Changing spatial practices are influenced by external forces, which, in turn, impact on the way in which Travellers experience spaces. Traveller lifestyles are certainly changing, with more engagement in education, but these changes bring with them added tensions and conflict, which are experienced within the home and family

environment. Whilst increasing sedentarism is foregrounded in much of Traveller literature, what seems to be apparent from the findings from this research is that concepts such as nomadism are experienced at particular times throughout the life cycle. In addition, outside external forces have altered the way in which nomadism is practised so that whilst Travellers may engage in nomadism, their experience of it is different in that they are increasingly isolated from extended family or trapped in adequate sites which limit the manner in which they are able to engage with outside society. Therefore, it is misleading to suggest that all Travellers want to remain outside of sedentary spaces, rather there are external state forces, which constrict their movement, lifestyle practices and obligations towards extended family. These forces are experienced in a range of settings (home and school) and influence the manner in which they engage. Traveller responses to these forces are therefore limited to either disengaging or retreating to informal economic activities, which place them further outside the wider society. Gender also operates to limit the manner in which Travellers negotiate certain spaces, however, again outside forces are complicit in forcing Travellers to adopt particular stances such as crossing national borders, removing children from school or refusing council housing. In addition, older Traveller women are complicit in enforcing appropriately gendered morality amongst younger Traveller women through ascribing changes in Traveller value systems to encroaching outside influences from across the Irish Sea. In the next section, the influence of gender on embodiment as an expression of identity will be explored.

Chapter Seven

Embodiment

Introduction

This section provides a bridge linking the previous two chapters, which focused on identity and spatial practices. This chapter is concerned with embodiment. Embodiment provides the link between identity and spatial practice whereby embodied identities shift between different spaces. Following Csordas' (1993, p. 135) suggestion that the paradigm of embodiment indicates 'embodied experience is a starting point for analysing human participation in a cultural world'. The chapter builds on Okely's

(1975, p. 60) argument that it is through embodiment that relations between Traveller and sedentary groups are understood, 'the problems arising from this relationship with the Gorgios are resolved and symbolised in the Gypsies' attitude to the body'.

My consideration has been to examine the embodied experience of Travellers from a gendered perspective. As in the previous two chapters the diagram in chapter 5 (see Fig. 1), illustrates the factors that influence embodied experiences and provides a vehicle through which to examine the themes of this chapter. Some factors remain significant whilst others are less significant. In this instance, family, peer group and, to a certain extent, class are less significant. Nomadism is also less influential, however if we consider nomadism as movement, what is significant which may be a salient aspect of nomadism, is boundary crossing; therefore, the strongest features along with gender, life stage, ethnicity and policing the Traveller-sedentary divide is boundary crossing. Through the examination of the practices, which maintain the division between the wider sedentary community and the Travelling community, this chapter draws on the earlier works of Gay y Blasco (1999), Larkin (1998), Okely (1983), Sutherland (1977) and Stewart (1997a, 1997b). In particular, the findings build on the work of Okely's (1983) model of the division between inside and outside in relation to Gypsy / Travellers and wider sedentary society.

The chapter is divided into three main themes, which are: embodiment and gender, Hygiene practices, and sexuality and religion. The findings draw attention to the embodied experiences of Traveller women in both the home environments and educational environments over time. The findings show a distinctly gendered perspective of Traveller women's home life and educational experiences. The findings also highlight changes between generations of Traveller women. Recurring images of dirt and disease are referenced in both home environments and wider societal spaces such as school. These images, which were initially experienced on a physical level by Travellers in the older generation, but now operate as metaphors in the present generation of young Traveller women, highlight anxieties experienced by both the Travelling Community and the wider dominant sedentary group as Travellers engage in accessing resources for the family, education and, to a certain extent, the work force. Within Traveller society, these images of cleanliness are present in the home environment as both physical aspects of cleanliness, but also as metaphors of sexual and

moral purity. Historical discourses of hygiene and morality centring on sedentary fears of contamination from Travellers and Gypsies have forced Travellers into a conflicting bind in which they are required to construct themselves as morally superior to their sedentary counterparts (Mayall 2004, p. 230). Embodiment, therefore, entails the Traveller individual trapped in a collective external construction of the 'Sedentary gaze' which creates awareness of the outside world's view of Travellers as harbingers of disease and pestilence. From the perspective of Travellers, they view themselves as morally superior and distinct from the sedentary community. Following on from Gay y Blasco (1999) who states that Gypsies place themselves firmly on the margin of Spanish society and culture with a particularly distinctly gendered morality, I will argue that present day Irish Travellers also place themselves firmly on the margin of a society which, although Irish, was colonised by the English, and in the process of achieving independence sought to deploy all that was considered the worst excesses of Irishness onto Travellers (Ní Shúinéar 1997). Irish Travellers seek to locate all the worst excesses attributed to Travellers as being due to encroaching English influence, which subsequently calls into question notions of ethnicity and nationality.

The findings highlight the significance of understandings of purity customs (ritual pollution), which is understood and experienced differently amongst different groups of Travellers, but interestingly in this research no mention whatsoever was made to them. When I mentioned the concept to young Traveller women they were very disparaging, referring to it as witchcraft. This finding would seem to align with Okely's (1975, p. 62) suggestion that:

> If indeed, female pollution taboos have become less important, this coincides with the relative decline in the women's external economic role, and thus my case that the two are interconnected.

Nevertheless the embodied social and hygiene practices, which they and their elders engage in, align closely with Mahrime and, as I will demonstrate later in the chapter, align with a distinct Irish pre-Christian Celtic concept of inside and outside.

Embodiment and Gender

> Gypsy men are innately pure, almost by predestination, whereas women have to aspire to an elusive purity by good works, whether as virgins or wives. Since, in their external role, Gypsy women are always vulnerable to sexual contamination by the non-Gypsy, they must be taught that their ever-present sexuality and fertility are dangerous. The woman's dress, deportment, and behaviour are matters for constant public scrutiny (Okely, 1975 pp.67-8).

Embodiment begins with gender as the most significant factor to consider within this research process with life stage also being important; the onset of adolescence signifies the careful negotiation of controlled female sexuality. Female sexual morality is the cornerstone defining Traveller ethnicity. This concept is supported by Crickley's (1992, p. 106) assertion that ethnic groups under attack from the wider dominant society utilise strict control of female sexuality as a way of maintaining group boundaries. The family is the basic unit of social organisation amongst the Travelling Community. Family honour, decency and respectability are of central concern to the community and provide the mechanisms whereby Traveller morality is performed, enacted and reconstructed continually in opposition to the perceived immorality of the sedentary community. The importance of being a good i.e. morally pure woman is centred round questions of a woman's loyalty to her family and children:

> You have to show your respect to the family. Briana (20)

The primary way for a woman to demonstrate respect is through her bodily performance (dress, deportment and behaviour) of being a Traveller (i.e. morally pure and clean). Women's bodies are fundamentally intertwined with notions of dirt and pollution by virtue of their sexuality. Cleanliness is associated with those who are close (i.e. family and those included in the group) whereas dirt, which signals danger through contamination, is associated with those outside of the group. Ritual cleanliness is an important aspect of this division, which is enforced by boundaries of insider versus outsider (Traveller and non-Traveller) and can be linked to the idea of Mahrime. Okely (1975, 1996) has suggested that amongst the Gypsy / Traveller Communities women's bodies are viewed as being troublesome precisely because they are forced to interact with the (contaminating) sedentary community in order to access resources for the

family traditionally through hawking, but also through engaging in the workforce, and interacting with health care and educational professionals. This interaction causes concern as Traveller women risk becoming tainted through contact with the unclean, polluting group - i.e. the sedentary community (Douglas 1966). Evidence of this observation was regularly made clear to me during fieldwork through the observation of daily discussions concerning the cleanliness of other Traveller families; the cleanliness was always centred on female practices, never male, and those females who did not demonstrate suitably Traveller behaviour as congruent with the standards of the observing family were referred to as 'Dirty Bitches'. Traveller women's bodies are therefore viewed as potentially polluting for two reasons. Firstly, following Okely (1975), through the contamination ensuing from contact with the sources of income (i.e. sedentary community) in order to access resources for the family; secondly, through their ability to reproduce offspring from another community thereby risking the ethnic boundaries of the group (Barth 1969). It is for this reason that women's sexuality is viewed as potentially disruptive and requires constant surveillance.

Performance of Morality

Following on from Douglas's (1966) assertion that **dirt is matter out of place,** Traveller women's association with dirt (through contact with the polluting sedentary community) and bodies (through sexuality and childbirth), and the interior (through their association with domestic space) requires that cleanliness be continually enacted. Traveller women's job is to keep the interior home place, which includes the family reputation, clean (both symbolically and literally).

Because ideas surrounding hygiene and moral purity are linked to female sexuality, life stage plays a significant role in shaping gendered behaviour; once Traveller women reach puberty they are limited in their access to certain spaces outside of the home and must be accompanied by a male relative or married woman. The practice of chaperoning young women remains to this day. Traveller women are expected to be virgins on marriage, are not permitted relationships with the opposite sex before marriage and are expected to remain married. Of the mothers I interviewed during the course of this research, they recalled their own marriages being arranged by parents,

courtship being strictly surveyed by the older generation and opportunities to spend time alone with their fiancée prior to marriage being unheard of:

> We weren't allowed out. And you weren't allowed into town on your own. That's more or less the same thing today though, so that hasn't really changed a lot that hasn't. I wasn't with my husband on my own before we got married. My grandfather went with us. **He** actually walked in the **middle** of us! I was a virgin when I got married. Marguerite (45)

Whilst opportunities to spend time together alone were lacking, some mothers also felt that they were not going into their marriages blind as they often knew their potential partners who were extended family members with whom they spent time as children:

> Well we always kind of knew each other growing up, we kind of grew up together, and he just came out and asked me then one October and then we got married in December. We just went to the meetings? You know how you go to the marriage meetings? His father came out the night before, I think, and then they said to me, 'Donnagh's going to come out and ask you' and he came out and asked me, I was in the kitchen the next morning and I remember I was putting my brother's shoes on, I was tying his shoes and I was nervous, and my mother was cooking in the kitchen and he asked me in front of them. And I was embarrassed. If she wasn't in the kitchen I wouldn't feel as bad, but in actual fact my mother was there. I couldn't look up. My mother was looking over at me. I wasn't with him on my own before we got married. Even, the time I went in to get my wedding dress. He was with his father when I went in to get my wedding dress and Donnagh went in to collect his suit. My grandfather went with us. Marguerite (45)

Practices are changing amongst some families and whilst instances of divorce are rare many Travellers seem to be well aware that changes are taking place:

> I see from my own family, if they marry in, a lot of Travellers are married to settled, it's starting to begin. Ailbe (28)

Both the younger generation and the older generation recognise that despite changing practices, respect for moral values of the older generation is necessary. This finding was not however limited to the present generation of young Travellers and was also evident when talking to the older generation about their conduct with the opposite sex in relation to their own parents.

I know a lot of them are secretly doing it and not saying anything about it, I know with a lot of them that is what they're doing, a lot of it is probably going on. Melissa (43)

During fieldwork one mother in her fifties who I spoke to, described how her sister had run away from home to England in her twenties. The interviewee described how she had been forced to lie to her mother-in-law who was visiting the family home in order to protect her sisters' reputation, telling her mother-in-law that her sister was upstairs sleeping. Along with respecting the generational divide, respecting the gender divide is still a strong deterrent for young women protecting their reputations:

It's different for the boys, sometimes with the girls, their reputation, even though nothing ever happened, there could be one out there who would ruin the child's name. Davina (30)

In the following excerpt Marguerite describes how moral expectations for Traveller men are different when she explains that whilst her daughters cannot date men from either community before marriage, her son Martin is free to pursue a relationship with Aoife, a young woman from the sedentary community:

It's different for boys, they can go with anyone and you're not seen as a whore, you see it's a man's life! That's how it is - it's always been that way. I say, 'Don't be hiding her' because nobody used to know he was going with her and we said to him, 'Why are you hiding her for?' and he said, 'I don't know what I'm doing' and then we came back from a wedding once and he was here with her and I said, 'What's the point in hiding her, everyone knows you're going with the girl?' I said, 'We don't know what your at with Aoife, whether you're going to stay with her or not, that's your choice at the end of the day, you are a boy' I said, 'It's different with the girls' I said, 'You're not a child no more'. You never hear of Martin getting into trouble or anything, you never read about him in the paper getting into trouble, he just keeps to himself, and he just gets on with it and does his training, he brings her home, the whole lot, you know what I mean? He **takes** *care* of her. Marguerite (45)

This excerpt indicates the constructions of gender and morality within the Traveller Community. Marguerite offers an insight into female Travellers' perspective on Traveller men, stating that Traveller men take care of their women, and are not troublemakers, which stands in direct contrast to perceptions of Traveller men as violent and aggressive patriarchs as portrayed in the wider society. Crickley (1992, p. 105) argues that misunderstandings of Traveller culture via sedentary feminist constructs

may be complicit in working against appreciation and acknowledgement of Traveller culture and expression of identity.

Intersectional perspectives provide a way in to examining this issue in greater detail. Whilst gender based violence affects women of all levels of society, it has not been possible to ascertain data on the extent of intimate partner violence within the Traveller community. According to Watson and Parsons (2005) no evidence suggests it occurs less or more so than in comparison with the wider sedentary community however the multiple discriminations faced by Roma Gypsy and Traveller women mean that those most severely disadvantaged are often the ones least able to respond. Contributing factors noted include; socio-economic disadvantage, persistent and chronic poverty, social isolation, family disruption, residential mobility and population density, lack of access to education and employment opportunities (Hampton et al, 2005; Kasturirangan et al, 2004; West, 1998, 2005). Power's (2004, p. 27) research on Irish Traveller women in the UK noted members might be shunned by extended family because of stigma associated with marriage failure. Also pertinent to this discussion, is the relationship between Travellers and social services, which is notoriously poor (Cemlyn 1998). Research conducted in Ireland in 2004 by the Traveller Health Unit noted that while Travellers comprised just 1% of the population, 6% of the children in alternative care are Travellers (Traveller Health Unit, 2004). Allen (2010, p. 12) has noted that in line with the wider population, Traveller women who do become involved with social work services, are often subject to the focus being placed on the abused woman's parenting ability rather than her husband's violence:

> This focus on women's responsibilities rather than their husband's behaviour is not confined to traveller families, but combined with the other barriers these families experience it accentuates the need for better understanding by social workers of the effects of abuse on women's health and parenting abilities.

Whilst it would be easy to assume that Traveller men are the main reasons why women remain in traditional gender roles, I would argue that this is a superficial reading of the situation, limited to a sedentary perspective which fails to acknowledge the role the State has played in forcing Traveller women into limited and polarised gender roles through restricting traditional lifestyle practices of nomadism and hawking. The state has been complicit in securing opportunities for middle class sedentary women to find employment outside of the home whilst reducing interactions for Traveller women to a

more polarised relationship of power and domination. Responses from the research participants reflect a complex and conflicted relationship between Travellers and the sedentary community, which requires constant adjustments in order to negotiate the pressures and tensions created from interactions on individual, group and national levels. Contact with the wider sedentary community, whilst providing a source of income and opportunities for accessing resources for the family is troublesome and dangerous. In the first place, it is troublesome on a symbolic level as being potentially polluting. On a real level, it is dangerous as contact with the sedentary community poses inherent risks to oneself and one's family.[8]

Concepts of Beauty and Attractiveness

Pride in fertility and womanliness is certainly important and a woman who has many children enjoys status and respect for her ability to produce a family. Both Traveller women and men (as far as I was able to ascertain) perceived Traveller women as being more 'womanly', more feminine and more fertile than sedentary women. Older and younger generations considered that Traveller women were also more feminine because they displayed the female attributes of being better mothers and caring more for their children citing sedentary women leaving their children in childcare and going out to work as evidence of them not putting their family first. Traveller women tend to perceive themselves as being more attractive, alluring and glamorous when compared to women in the sedentary community. A voluptuous female form along with long lustrous hair, which is worn down and loose on special occasions is celebrated. Traveller women take a keen interest in fashionable clothing and putting together glamorous looks. In the past, dress code restrictions for the older generation prevented Traveller women wearing short skirts and clothing considered too revealing. Whilst the older generation explained that when they were young they were not allowed to wear skimpy clothing or make up, they wore jewellery from a young age:

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[8] A recent case in Ireland where fair skinned children residing with Roma families in Dublin and the midlands were taken into 'custody' by the police. Following the DNA testing, which confirmed that the children were the offspring of their Roma parents, the justice minister gave the children's ombudsman special powers to investigate the behaviour of the Garda Síochána who took the children into custody (The Guardian, 2013, p.32).

I think back when we were younger we weren't allowed to wear short dresses and we weren't even allowed to wear make up! Ear piercing, now, we we're allowed to do that, my mother used to have to do that for us. We were only very, very young. We could have been 5, or 6. She used to pierce us with a needle and thread. She used to rub our ears, and your ears would be that hot and numb, and they used to be so hot and numb and she used to stick the needle, put the needle over the fire and she'd have the white thread, my mother was always doing that, but you'd actually feel it going through, it would still be a bit sore and it would kind of get stuck and she'd pull at it, at the back, and then she'd pull the thread back and forwards. And then every day she'd be at that and your ears'd be sore. Marguerite (45)

All the younger Traveller women and many of the older generation were fashion conscious and considered that they wore better clothes and owned nicer jewellery than women of the sedentary community. Young Traveller women regularly commented on the drab clothes worn by their teachers.   All the mothers I knew still enjoyed talking fashion and discussing clothes with their daughters, in fact it was a favoured topic of conversation and provided opportunities for bonding over shared interests. The younger generation enjoyed putting together lavish and glamorous looks and were quick to emulate celebrity styles as is apparent in the following conversation, which took place between Diana (35) and her daughter Rhianna (18) in preparation for an upcoming wedding:

Rhianna:	Here's my dress, yeah, I'll show it to you.
Diana:	I think it's horrible
Rhianna:	I like it
Diana:	I don't! (laughs uncomfortably)
Rhianna:	A celebrity's actually wearing it. I don't know her name, she's some celebrity, I got it on e-bay
Diana:	I think it's horrible.
Rhianna:	What don't you like about it?
Diana:	Everything!
Rhianna:	Everything? Really?
Diana:	Well I don't mind the colour, no I don't mind the colour, it's the material, it looks, to me it just doesn't look good, it doesn't look dressy.
Rhianna:	Well I think it's looks good, it's different. What about this one? (Rhianna pulls out a second dress)
Diana:	This one I like. This looks nicer. Did you try it on?
Rhianna:	I'll try it on, it's nice on.
Diana:	Oh that's short. Is it a t-shirt?
Rhianna:	It's actually quite long, look mum see!

Diana:	I think we're so used to them, when we were younger we weren't allowed to wear short dresses. Truthfully, do you not think this looks more like a top?
Rhianna:	It's not actually short on. It actually really is long! It actually really is!
Diana:	You see it all depends I think on what you're wearing, if you were wearing that over thick leggings it'd be ok.

This interaction again highlights the intergenerational discord within a family, the policing of feminine sexuality through the appropriation of what is considered suitable clothing for a life-stage event where Traveller behaviour is on show to other members of the community and options for securing potential marriage partners and alliances between families rests on reputations of purity and cleanliness for women, and respect and honour for men. In addition, it highlights the drive to pursue an aspirational identity through the emulation of celebrity styles made prevalent by external forces (the media). Dressing well shows respect, respect for family and group, but also peer group and aspirations. I would also argue that pride in fashionable and glamorous clothing draws attention to fertility of potential marriage partners when opportunities for eliciting the attention of the opposite sex are few and far between. Modesty, which may be described as a way of dressing and carrying oneself in a manner, which does not encourage sexual attention varies widely across cultures and history (for example Flügel 1930, Ch. 4; Konig 1973; Ribeiro 1986).

The display of skin among the Kalabari relates to their values placed on gendered dress for public appearances. Eicher (2001) writing about Kalabari society suggests that the display of skin relates to gendered values emphasised during public appearances. Because women are seen as the bearers of children, they are also thought to be formally responsible for the reproduction and continuation of Kalabari society (Daly, Eicher and Erekosima 1986, p. 51; Michelman 1987; Michelman and Erekosima 1992). Display of skin represents deeply held values about fecundity and virginity within society. Goffman (1963) suggests that skin exposure is related to the degree of trust and security that a person feels, arguing that a woman displaying considerably more flesh during a ceremonial occasion is articulating that she can, in this situation, expose herself without being exploited. Voluptuous figures were celebrated, however more recently I have been aware of young Traveller women discussing dieting and weight loss. The following excerpt between a mother Melissa (43), and her daughter, Rosie (20),

indicates that this focus on diminishing body size may be a recent shift in perception, certainly influenced by the wider society and the media:

Rosie:	I don't think anyone's actually really happy with themselves. Like they'd always have to get something done like or complain about something.
Melissa:	I think a lot of people now are very vain. In our generation no one talked about plastic surgery or makeup or how you looked, you just dressed how **you** felt whereas nowadays it's all competition with one another over how perfect they look. You are, you're more self conscious about stuff.
Rosie:	I don't think we are.
Melissa:	I think a lot of people are.
Rosie:	I think they're the same ways - they're just getting bigger like.
Melissa:	If you look nowadays children they're always in watching TV or playing a video game, or sitting in listening to music or playing video games, that's all they do nowadays.

This discussion draws attention to changing perceptions of the female body, which may be influenced by changes in the wider society. Young Traveller women are certainly interested in attaining and maintaining perfect bodies. During the course of my fieldwork, a number of the daughters I was involved in research with joined a local gym. Going to the gym was one of the few outings which Traveller women were allowed to engage in, often accompanied by older female relatives or driven by male family members who then trained in the separate weightlifting section of the gym. As part of the research I also attended the local gym and began exercising with some of the informants. Through forays into the local gym we became familiar with the other gym regulars who attended. Over time a friendly banter developed during the training sessions and conversations would strike up between some of the group members. During the course of one such conversation with a regular gym goer we discovered (as previously discussed) that she assumed a number of our group were Polish – this discovery occurred as she greeted them in Polish and began talking to them in Polish. The initial misunderstanding was the source of great hilarity amongst the Traveller women after the incident and led to the development of friendships being established between the two young groups at the gym.   Training at the gym not only provides opportunities for keeping in shape, working on the body, but also for socialising, recognition of an attractive female form and building strength, which is also a necessary requirement for Traveller women.

Whilst Traveller women are required to be demure, they are also required to stand up for themselves. Fighting talk and being able to fight was something, which was seen as necessary by all Traveller women both young and old. Okely (1975, p. 72) also acknowledged the importance of this attribute amongst Traveller women.

> The woman's reputation as a fighter is important for her self-esteem…Fighting prowess is useful in external relations with other Gypsies.

Ellen (22) is an attractive young woman who is extremely athletic and trains at the local gym regularly with her father and her older brother. She has carved out a niche for herself as a successful boxer, despite the initial protestations from her wider family. Ellen (22) and her sister Rosie (20) tell me about her boxing:

> They used to say she's a man because she can box. We all thought, because there wasn't such a thing as a Traveller [woman] doing boxing, they all thought it was bad, but I'm telling you I **loved** boxing, I **really loved** boxing. And I be at Dad, 'Dad can I go boxing?' and he didn't want me to box at the time because all the Travellers thought it was really bad for the girls to be doing boxing. So in the end, dad put a boxing bag up in the garage, but you just can't get motivated, I'm telling you, I couldn't, it does your head in. I had dogs running around me as well. He said, 'You're doing the boxing in the yard?' How do you get motivated like? I said I wanted to do it and he laughed, 'You're the only person I know who would try something like that'. He bring me to the boxing club then, and he said, 'I don't care, I'm not bothered what Travellers think', he said I was good at boxing. At least I can **defend** myself, he wanted us **all** to be able to defend for ourselves. He brought Rosie and Brianna and the whole lot of them into boxing. And I was doing jogging. It was tough at times because I didn't like jogging, but today I do love jogging really love training hard. I would be pure tired when they finished with the training. My cousin she was saying it was bad doing boxing, because everyone thinks you're a boy doing boxing, but I would say, 'No, I don't give a **shit** what everyone thinks'. The first time you get in a fight it's hard, and you'll never forget that. I remember the first one I got for sure.

This extract highlights the importance placed on being able to stand up and defend oneself, both within the Traveller Community (Okely 1975) and outside of the Traveller Community against wider sedentary society (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Greenfields 2008; Levinson and Sparkes 2003), yet whilst it is important for Traveller women to be strong and able to fight, who they fight is also important. Fighting with women is acceptable and fighting against the wider society is acceptable, yet fighting Traveller

men is not acceptable. A Traveller woman must be tough yet also display respect for Traveller morality and a gendered value system:

> Yes, we were bullied quite a lot even at secondary, and also when we were living on the site in England. I think because we were quiet at times, plus we didn't know how to fight or anything, but the funny thing was we didn't get bullied when we were on the site, but then once we started to learn to box, a lot of them were giving out about us learning to box saying, 'Why are you teaching your daughters to box?' So then, one fella came up to the road and they're going, 'Go on, go on, go on, fight her' - the boys telling each other to fight me, so as he is standing his ground, and started talking so I hit him, and his two top front teeth were gone and the bottom two were gone as well, then. It was actually fine, but the next day the family moved out of the site. That's because the girl had control over a boy, so the family had to move. That's actually funny, because us girls can manage the boys on the site because we knew how to fight, and also because we wouldn't let them get away with it. When I did my confirmation (age 12), I hit a boy there! There was a big fuss. The amount of Travellers there, there were, not including us there were four Travellers, two brothers, two other girls, about five of them right, and me, Rosie and Briana and there are a good few of us all doing the confirmation together. So they finished down, got the plates, of the party whatever, food, and I never liked this boy, I don't know why, but the boy was throwing sandwiches at me, so I got annoyed, and when the boy was walking out the door I pummelled his face, and the boy was crying, and my father and their father were talking. And the mother was giving out saying, 'Your daughter hit my son!' Someone said to me if you could change the past would you do it again? If I had to do it again, I would. Because now Travellers know that I won't put up with any bullshit. If they come out looking for trouble, I will give them some trouble. You know what I mean? The thing about having sisters is we are together like. Sisters are there for each other like. You don't care about being hit, you're not bothered, you're not going to get pushed around. You are not going to get bullied. Ellen (22)

Whilst an initial reading of gender roles within the Travelling Community would suggest that Traveller men are the sole defendants of a culture that forces women to remain in traditional gender roles, following Okely (1975) and Helleiner (2000) I would argue that this is a superficial reading of the situation. Historically Traveller women enjoyed more freedom outside of the home, the changes in the wider society which have limited nomadic, and in turn, traditional economic practices, in both the UK (Okely 1983) and Ireland (Helleiner 2000) forced Traveller women into limited gender roles reducing interactions for Traveller women, which requires constant adjustments in order to negotiate the pressures and tensions created from interactions on individual, group and national levels. However, recent research conducted on behalf of the Irish Traveller Movement in the UK noted opportunities are opening up for Traveller women who

engage in education and enter the common wage labour market (Ryder and Greenfields 2010).

Female Constructions of Masculinity

Whilst young Traveller women are aware of the restrictions placed on their performance of an appropriately modulated gendered morality, they are equally aware of the restrictions facing Traveller men and the limited options available to young Traveller men within their society in expressing their sexuality, recognising that despite restrictions placed on Traveller women's conduct in some areas of life they are, in this respect, allowed a wider scope. Despite the fact that recent rulings by the European Court of Human Rights 2015 (Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 2015) legally recognise and protect same sex unions, as previously noted, issues of LGBT people within the Traveller Community remain unacknowledged at local and national levels; Ireland's National Roma Strategy fails to address issues of sexual orientation. The following conversation, which took place between myself, Keela (25) and Chevonne (23) indicates that Traveller constructions of masculinity are still conservative:

Chevonne:	Traveller boys are all going gay.
Keela:	They have all started getting fake tans, teeth whitening, eyebrow waxing, chest waxing etc. Brendan is gay. Yeah he's definitely gay.
Tamsin:	But he's married?
Chevonne:	Well he's still gay. He is definitely gay. Do you see the way he walks around carrying that Yorkshire terrier? It's always him, his missus and his 'friend'. He even walks gay. You can totally tell.
Keela:	You know how some people have different gifts? Well it's a gift we have.
Tamsin:	So what do you do if you're gay and a Traveller?
Chevonne:	Probably in the old days move away. It's more of a problem for the older ones. Are you watching that TV show 'The Island'? Well there's a guy on that who says he's a Christian Romanian Gypsy, but he speaks English. Well he says he's gay and he reckons the hardest thing he ever had to do was tell his Dad.
Tamsin:	Do you think Brendan has told his Dad?
Keela:	No way
Chevonne:	The old ones don't like it, I'd say they knew all right, but they don't like to talk about it.
Tamsin:	So what do you do if you're a Traveller and you're gay

	nowadays?
Chevonne:	Well I reckon it'd be easier if you were a girl 'cos they'd just think it was a phase.
Tamsin:	So do you reckon it would be harder to be a guy and be a gay Traveller?
Keela:	Probably. I'd say you'd still have to get married to hide it though.
Chevonne:	His poor wife
Tamsin:	Do you think she knows?
Chevonne:	I'd say not – those wives are well under the thumb. I'd say she didn't know when she married him, I'd say she knows now though!
Keela:	What would you prefer? A bit of rough but basically clean or a fella with all waxed and polished teeth. No competition. It's not right.

These findings indicate the role Traveller women play, through their expectations, in shaping Traveller masculinity. This was also evidenced during a discussion with Ellen, (mentioned in the previous section), who was astounded that a male film critic on the television recommended a recently released film called *'What to Expect When You're Expecting' (2012)*[9] she snorts derisively at him and calls out, 'Are you trying to get in touch with your **feminine** side?' then says as an aside that he is a 'weirdo'. This finding also highlights the importance of recognising that Traveller women are not simply suppressed and constricted by a male society, but that this society has strongly gendered attitudes (Greenfields 2008, p. 73, p. 96) that also poses limitations on male identities and male spaces, (Baker 2002, 2015; Dezso˝2015; Walsh 2009) whereby both male and female perceptions of masculinity are central to this. In addition, Marguerite's description of her son's relationship with his sedentary girlfriend highlight the values Traveller women associate with Traveller masculinity which include the importance of developing an appropriately gendered physicality (through training at the gym) providing for, and taking care of, their partners as well as being able to mix more freely with members of the opposite sex and the sedentary community. Furthermore, these findings also highlight the limitations placed on Traveller men by wider sedentary society whereby they are seen as only violent and aggressive. Certainly Traveller society is highly gendered and patriarchal, however in viewing society only through a sedentary lens we fail to see the ways in which Traveller women are able to carve out spaces whereby they can elicit resources for the family through drawing on and

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[9] *'What to Expect When You're Expecting' (2012)* is a comedy-drama film based on the bestselling book which documents a woman's journey through pregnancy.

colluding with the stereotypes of the wider society, when the situation dictates as noted by Clark (2002, p. 184).

Hygiene Practices

Women have throughout history been defined by their bodily processes (Grosz 1994; Shilling 1993) and the findings from this research suggest that understandings of a distinct identity are experienced through the body, different bodies being marked out as different through spatial practices and performances. Embodiment involves the individual caught in a collective external construction through the gaze of the wider society. For Travellers of both genders this creates an awareness of the outside world, which views Travellers as infectious, diseased and polluting. For female Travellers, being trapped in an embodied gaze of a distinctly gendered morality necessitates the strict observances of symbolic hygiene practices within their own community as well as between communities.

Dirt and Cleanliness

Historical practices of segregation within the education system certainly highlight the way in which understandings of the Traveller / Sedentary divide are equally embodied and apparent for both Travellers and settled. Segregation contributed to fears surrounding the consequences of mixing for both Travellers and sedentary children; Traveller children then experienced these fears, as an embodied physicality of contamination and dirt:

> In one way I think maybe they were afraid that they would pick up a disease or something. I often borrowed pencils, Biros, or rubbers and you would see the kids pulling down the sleeves of their cardigans and wiping it. It makes you feel awful, you just feel so bad, I wouldn't like to see my kids or hear about my kids ever going through what I had to. As a kid you were the smelly one, putting germs on things. Why else would they clean them? Eva (30)

References to dirt and cleanliness provide insights into the embodied experience of Travellers in the education system at this time:

> I would like to know if other people were treated different, in other schools. Was it hard on them at first, getting shifted into another class? It's like that thing with the lice, people think it was the Travellers, but the Travellers heads were the cleanest ones, like with measles, that it was always the Traveller kids, that brought them in. It's like the man not being able to take a cuppa tea off you. Ailbe (28)

This recollection of cleaning up became a recurrent theme in mothers' experiences of schooling, linked with bodily associations of cleanliness and dirt. Travellers were often given 'jobs' of cleaning up. In addition to cleaning the environment, some interviewees spoke of being physically cleaned themselves, being washed in school:

> And we had a job of cleaning up the big hall with a Brillo and a cloth and I would get a stamp for every day that I'd done it, and I got £1 on my confirmation for it. She used to pick on us. That nurse would say the Traveller kids have to come in and get washed because we were living on the side of the road, and that we needed to be washed, but I still couldn't figure out why kids had to be washed in school? Melissa (43)

> We used to get teased quite a lot. They knew we were Travellers, they had them washing us because we used to live in a caravan. I just sat down and cried. Maire (30)

These experiences of difference were felt keenly and recalled easily, with the understanding that the experience of difference contributed directly to their ability to learn in school:

> Feels bad, you feel like dirt. Yes, because it was for Travellers, they classed them all the same. If you're not getting treated the same, it's hard to learn, because you don't want learn, you don't feel welcomed, you would feel ashamed going into class, because you think the teachers are looking at you, they don't want you there. You were the outsider in the group. They just look down on Travellers, sometimes people are chatting amongst themselves and were laughing at you, and you know straightaway. Rosaleen (27)

> I felt the settled kids got more attention than what we did. You would feel like you are being classed different. You weren't wanted, you know, like in a lot of places that you go to, they look down on top of you if you are a Traveller. Some teachers would be worse. The Travellers would all be put together, with the settled kids, but you would be sitting beside a Traveller kid. You wouldn't be

allowed to sit near the settled community. We weren't getting as much attention as what the other kids were getting. It's discrimination really. Rosaleen (27)

Reminders were also apparent in the apportionment of blame and accusations of theft. Apportionment of blame also extended to blame over the spreading of disease:

> If something did get broken in the class, or something went missing in the class or from the cloakroom or from anywhere in the school, the Travellers were always blamed. You would hear my name being called on the intercom, I would hear my sister being called, and my two brothers being called and two more younger ones then being called, and the six of us would be in the Hall and the principal would be pointing at us, putting her fingers to us, 'Did you take it? Where did you put it' And our schoolbags, everyday, we always went home everyday, our schoolbags we left in the classroom. You would be afraid in case you touch them, and they said the wrong thing about you. There was one girl who got the measles on a Friday, and then when we went back to school on Monday they were all saying that she had caught them from us, but we never had the measles. Eva (30)

The impact of these segregating actions, which accuse Travellers of being pestilent, contaminating thieves severely limit the range of responses available to the group. The responses available are, to deny these practices and create an alternative response (Elias and Scotson 1994, p. xxvii; Goffman 1981; Nadel 1984, p. 113) through reconstructing the 'other' in an equally unflattering light e.g. we are cleaner because we are ritually clean. Therefore, the importance of maintaining the boundary of ritual cleanliness through gendered performances again highlights the importance gender plays in constructions of Traveller identity. Alternatively, the reviled group can seek invisibility through: 'Passing', fight back through 'Practising' Traveller identity (emphasising difference), or develop a nuanced alternative, which I have chosen to call 'Polishing'; through constructing an alternative identity which takes on some of the attributes of an outsider group whilst still remaining safely outside of the wider society and thereby preserving cultural boundaries.

Outsiders and Mixing

Concerns over transmission of bodily substances pertaining to hygiene practices indicate that whilst traditional understandings of purity practices may not be perceived strongly nowadays, they are still salient reminders of caution, indicating disgust at

apparent defilement of certain practices considered inappropriate. Ellen (22) and Keela (25) describe with obvious distaste their concern over the lack of 'cleanliness' of a local beauty salon:

Ellen: When I was doing my work placement in S's beauty salon it was disgusting she was so **dirty**.
Keela: Yeah she was **really dirty**
Ellen: She used to clean the **cups** in the same sink as the **brushes** for doing the highlights. And she used to use the **same** type of bleach to clean both of them. You know just the ordinary bleach that you use for cleaning in the kitchen. It was **disgusting**. I'd never work there. No way would I. It was disgusting when I had to wash people's hair and I'd have all their **hair** all over my **hands**.
Keela: God no way would I do bikini lines – I'd do eyebrows and moustaches ok, but no way would I do bikini lines!
Ellen: No way would I do pedicures, toenails – that's **gross**.
Keela: Yeah it's **disgusting**.

The degree to which mixing is acceptable varies both within families and within generations, a conversation regarding the mixing of blood revealed interesting results. Concerns over transmission of bodily fluids from insider to outsider groups also featured during discussions over sexuality and reproduction with one mother suggesting that she would not consider taking a blood transfusion in hospital:

When I had Margaret I had a blood clot in my leg. I haemorrhaged when I was having her and there was three doctors and they wanted to give me blood and they were saying to me, 'We need to give you blood' and everything, and I said, 'No' I wasn't taking it. I wasn't taking any of it. 'You can give me drugs, but I'm not taking blood' I said, because anything could happen. And then when I had Kathleen the next one, I haemorrhaged after her, we were in England that time, and I went into hospital, but I wouldn't take a blood transfusion, I would **not** take a blood transfusion Tamsin. In case there was **anything** wrong with it, **anything** could be in it, **anything**, you know anything, you'd be thinking, 'What if something's in that?' all these things go through your mind. I don't care what happens, I'm not having strangers' blood. Marguerite (45)

This finding would seem to align with findings from Greenfields (2008, p. 87) study, which noted that Gypsy Travellers were reluctant to consider entering professions, which involved contact with blood. Discussions with the daughters' generation often

involved drawing distinctions between themselves and other Traveller families. The younger generation recognised that mixing was an accepted part of their identity in the way in which they were required to interact with outsiders:

> We were always brought up by settled people, so I find it a bit easier than most other people in work, because you can get on, with some of the others [Traveller families], they wouldn't know how to be like that. They don't mix. It can be very important to mix, to mix with settled people like. Briana (20)

These findings support Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 149) research which noted:

> Particularly amongst younger Gypsies and Travellers many of whom have spent most, or all, of their lives in housing, a degree of convergence and hybridisation of identities is occurring between themselves and other youth in their neighbourhoods.

However, the older generation were less keen to acknowledge this despite the fact that mixing obviously had played a part in their childhood; this seemed to be defined along gender lines. This finding would seem to support Belton's (2005, p. 96) thesis which argues that increasing state legislation (particularly following the post World War 2 demand for adequate housing) marginalised a whole spectrum of itinerant individuals and groups leading to the emergence of a growing political consciousness and social closure which combines and 'constitutes a defensive closing of ranks rather than ethnic homogeneity'. If a Traveller male had a relationship with a sedentary female, this was considered acceptable, whereas if a Traveller female had a relationship with a sedentary male this was more problematic, particularly when there were offspring involved, however if the sedentary partner was prepared to live by Traveller customs this was an acceptable arrangement. One afternoon as these discussions took place, Ellen (22) stated that another group of Travellers were different as they 'stick to their own breed'. Keela, as the eldest daughter in the family, was embarrassed by Ellen's statement and immediately chastised her. Keela's (25) embarrassment that this statement had taken place in front of me was evident. I had in fact heard other Travellers from different families make similar statements and I told them this. In addition, Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 194) also note similar findings. Ellen then told Keela that she had heard the families involved describe themselves this way and she too had been shocked

because it made them sound like dogs. Ellen then told me that this family was different to her own:

> They are all backwards. They believe in witchcraft and stuff. I mean you can tell them a mile off they all look the same. Those two over there are double first cousins and they're married! That's like the kid of a sister married the kid of a brother. That's why they have so many problems with their children. They don't marry out enough. Ellen (22)

Ellen's statement draws on historical notions of purity of lineage and bloodlines, ('la raza') expressing racial pride (Banton 1987, p. 1; Miles, 1981, p. 28) and Catholic heritage (Smedley and Smedley 2012, p. 69). Traditionally 'Raza' referred to both breeds of dogs and horses, along with human populations both Christians and non-Christian. During fieldwork, I was told of a Traveller woman who had been involved in a sexual relationship with a black male. The relationship was secret and the child was subsequently given up for adoption. The recounted story seemed to be more concerned with the fact that the child's skin colour made the fact of a relationship with an outsider more visible. The putting up of the child for adoption seems to run counter to the importance of Traveller understandings of the centrality of family, and, when taking into consideration the increasing practise of Gypsy Traveller intermarriage (Smith and Greenfields 2013, p. 202), in the construction of Traveller identity, however, taken into consideration with Ellen's statement and the conceptions of ritual pollution and moral purity being a gendered performance, the actions make sense; the visibility of difference through skin colour highlights the transgression of group boundaries through female sexuality thereby polluting the integrity of group cohesion. The visible indicator of difference, this time by skin colour as opposed to performance, challenges widely held notions of not mixing with outsiders and makes visible a practice, which is denied. In addition, the skin colour of difference questions ideas around racial purity and purity / moral superiority of Traveller female sexuality highlighting the need to protect group morality. A child with a different skin colour is not able to 'pass' as Traveller as their embodied presence is testimony to mixing. Traveller identity is complex, on the one hand it is something defined by blood, yet on another, the behaviour is performed and practised, like Gay y Blasco (1999) states it is a lived morality which is enacted daily, therefore certain behaviours define individuals as not Traveller despite the fact that their family members are blood relatives. This became evident in discussions with a number

of young women from one particular family who were from the Travelling Community, but as the respondents suggested, weren't proper Travellers because they had their children before getting married.

Sexuality and Religion

Enactment of morality and purity through women's sexuality is evident amongst some families and classes of families who continue to observe the historic Catholic practise of 'Churching'; the visit to a priest after giving birth before preparing a meal for the family. Indeed one woman I met the day after giving birth who explained she had just nipped up to the priest to be churched before returning home in time to cook a meal for the family. These ritual hygiene observances vary between families and between classes of families who distinguish themselves through moral value judgements based on female bodily practices linked to sexuality and reproduction. Okely (1975) has suggested that the reduction in hygiene observances of ritual pollution is related to the decreasing economic role of Traveller women in the wider society. The women in this research study who still practised Churching were of the older generation and would still have practised calling. The dilution of these practices may be due to women's decreased participation in the labour market, however this becomes problematic when we consider young Traveller women's increasing participation in education (which many Traveller women define as 'work') and the workforce. In addition, the practice of Churching is not limited to Traveller communities and was, until fairy recently in the rural Catholic North West of Ireland practised by country people. This would seem to suggest that the decrease in practise may be due to the decrease in the role of the Catholic Church in Irish society and further testifies to the manner in which Irish Travellers locate themselves firmly on the periphery of Irish society through a gendered morality, which is Irish, again questioning concepts of nationhood.

Whilst it is difficult for me to comment upon the type of Catholicism practised, not being Catholic myself, I noted that it took the form of a 'folk' type religion often practised by older country people in Ireland, with a strong belief in the power of cures, talismans, pilgrimage and the healing power of Holy Wells. All of the Travellers with whom I came into contact identified themselves as Catholics and were interested in how I defined my own religion. The extent to which Catholicism was adhered to certainly

seemed to be related to age and gender, with the older generation being more observant of religious practices, in line with findings from Smith and Greenfields (2013, p. 176) and women more so than men. Mothers were careful to ensure that children attended mass in preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. However, some young Traveller women were quick to tell me that whilst their younger siblings went to the First Holy Communion they chose not to attend and instead stayed home sunbathing waiting for the family to arrive back home. This behaviour scandalised Granny who 'scolded' them and they delighted in telling me this. Irish Travellers living in England returned to Ireland for burials and weddings of family members.

Irish Historians (e.g. Connolly 1982) have described the prevalence of magical religion in Ireland prior to the 19th century. During this research I noticed that superstition was rife amongst all ages of the community, and in line with Ó hAodha's (2011) proposition, often the superstitions were inversions of traditional country people's superstitions (for example a black cat is considered luck in settled communities, however it was seen as distinctly unlucky amongst Travellers). When Pope Benedict XVI resigned Melissa (43), Chevonne (23) and Keela (25) all suggested to me that there was significance in the events of two meteors that had landed in Russia and America the previous week and the resignation of the Pope; they stated that perhaps it was signalling the end of the world.

Connolly (1982) has argued that the relationship between shameful sexuality and religion is a recent construct in Ireland dating from the 19th century, and that 'magical religion' permeated Holy Days well into the nineteenth century; this may explain links to a more feminine pre-Christian perspective on Catholicism. Early ethnographers of Irish society drew attention to the remnants of Pre-Christian practices and belief systems evident in Irish Catholicism (Arensberg 1937; Messenger 1969). Liam de Paor (1985, p. 37) contends that a significant quantity of folklore customs, beliefs and practices in Ireland 'has continuous connection with the almost unimaginably remote Neolithic age'. Furthermore, de Paor (1986) draws attention to the significance of the ancient Celtic concept of the division between inside and outside. This argument would seem to further support my contention that Irish Travellers locate themselves firmly on the margins of Irish society, and draw on historical legacies which ascribe lax morality to the influence of the English.

Fertility, Healing and Religion

Irish Traveller women take pride in fertility and womanliness and many of them regularly commented on my body size, and the size of other women's bodies, in fact the most common greeting was, 'You're looking well'. Most Traveller women felt that thinner body shapes (as celebrated in wider sedentary society) were too small and would be quick to comment. During fieldwork one Traveller woman who I had not seen for a while told me 'You've put on weight, that's good, you're looking well!' A voluptuous female form was celebrated. Whilst eating disorders are prevalent among the settled population and on the increase, this was something that was not common amongst Irish Travellers, however during my fieldwork one case became known to me; this was significant in that it was the only case I ever came across. However, I was certainly aware of regular discussions surrounding dieting and possibly this is linked to increasing influence from external forces such as the media.

Women visit particular Holy Wells for fertility blessings. Individual Holy Wells were ascribed specific healing benefits, one in particular, which did not seem so popular with country people, was valued as curing a local Traveller women from leukaemia. It was explained to me that if I heard a bell tolling whilst I visited it, it was a sign that a cure had taken place. In addition, visits were made to particular Holy Wells in order to gain a blessing for an infertile woman. Cures were talked about and practised, (I witnessed a mother coming into a trailer and asking her mother-in-law for her wedding ring to rub on her child's eye, the rub off a widow's wedding ring will, apparently, cure a sty). Many Travellers displayed holy cards in their homes and trailers and many, including children wore Holy Medals. Babies' prams were covered in Holy medals and protective talismans of various saints. Whilst some members of the Travelling Community with whom I met were identified as healers, these were all men (seventh sons of seventh sons) with particular cures for the croup, digestive problems etc. However, these practices are also prevalent amongst older Irish country people in rural areas, this may be linked to the previous closer connection between Irish Travellers and settled people in earlier generations.

Shameful Sexuality

Of the older generation of Traveller women that I knew many had produced family sizes ranging from 17 to 22 children. In the UK, Greenfields (2008) and Cemlyn et al (2009) note that the average number of children born to Gypsy and Traveller families is four per couple and 5.9 for Irish Traveller families).

Despite the traditional value and status placed on Traveller women who produce large numbers of children, mothers' family sizes are also diminishing in comparison to their parent's generation, seeming to indicate that Travellers are slowly moving towards what is considered the norm within Irish society and their children's family sizes are diminishing further:

> No, even my sisters and brothers are the same way, they don't have so many children. I'm the one on my side of the family that has the most children, the rest of them have 4 or 6. For people having children nowadays, you never hear the end of it, it's completely different. My girls will have 2 or 3 I think, that's enough for them. I'd say, 'Why are you putting yourselves through all this? You're the one who's gonna have to look after them and you're the one who's gonna have to do everything so'. It is a lot of hard work, you know yourself it is a lot of hard work. You always go back to your children. Marguerite (45)

The question that arises here is whether this alignment with more mainstream practices of family size has arisen from pressures within the community or from outside the community. Certainly within wider Irish society a generation ago the practice for Catholics of having larger families was considered a 'moral' and 'normal' practice but with women's participation outside the home, the reduction in the 'marriage laws' and the introduction of contraception, Irish settled women now also have much smaller families. Despite mothers bearing large families, they recall very little talk took place between them and their mothers surrounding bodily processes, in particular sexual and reproductive processes as evidenced in Marguerite's description of the onset of menarche:

> All our mothers were the same like that Tamsin, she wouldn't talk about it with us, she wouldn't talk about any of it, she was just so embarrassed by it and you just had to learn for yourself. I don't think it's really got to do with religion, talking about periods to you, I just think it was 'cos they were embarrassed, it was just private, 'cos they grew up that way, and they wore pads and stuff and they didn't tell you about stuff like that, they didn't tell any one of us. You just had to find out off cousins and stuff, but I know my own, I tell them it's a girl

thing and everyone gets it and it's normal, don't worry about it, just let me know to get you some pads. But I remember I used to always be hiding the pads and stuff, you're dying and everyone's worrying about the boys seeing pads! Can't let **them** see them, 'Hide them, don't let no one see them!' If you wore jeans and you got a stain on them she'd think it was something else and she'd be killing you! She was wrong. She was very, very particular. I did tell my sisters, but they learned in school, but I was always careful otherwise they'd bring it back and tell my mother, about what Marguerite's after telling us, I was worried I'd get into trouble for it, which was stupid. It just happened to me, and I told my cousin, and she told my mother. My mother just said to me, 'It's normal' that's all she goes to me, it's a girl's thing, a girl's problem. That's all she said! Even when I was having my first child she wouldn't tell me about it, she said, 'I wouldn't tell you about it because I don't want to frighten you in case you have a bad experience, just go through it yourself, it's better' All our mothers were the same like that Tamsin, she wouldn't talk about it with us, she wouldn't talk about any of it, she was just so embarrassed by it and you just had to learn for yourself. Even with her pregnancies she wouldn't even tell you she was pregnant, she'd keep it secret. It was just like she was getting heavier, but then we'd start copping on to it, 'Where's all these babies coming from?' Marguerite (45)

Secrecy surrounding reproductive processes and the sense of shame can be viewed in the context of wider Irish society and the morality preaching of the Catholic church at the time. However, whilst the ability to conceive is viewed as natural it is tinged with a sense of shame and reduced to the 'burden' of being a woman. What seems to be important here is the fact that the process is hidden from men. Visible aspects of fertility are kept within the bounds of the female realm, assigning and ascribing them to female responsibilities. This is important when considering the boundary between the genders within Irish society:

> Years ago people'd give her baby clothes and she used to put them up in the hot press and coming up to her time she'd have a black bag of all these baby clothes and I'd be looking wondering, *'What's she got in this bag?'* I'd be nosey and take it out and say *'Oh'* and I remember the boys would be asking her years ago why her stomach was so fat? And she'd say, *'I was eating spuds'* or *'It's a big football'* or whatever and then she'd have the babies then. Eva (30)

Whilst it is not uncommon within Irish society a generation ago to encounter widespread secrecy regarding the discussion of periods between the genders, the act of **carrying a child** is also viewed here as something not to be discussed in front of men. This is not to do with the shame of unmarried mothers, as these are women who are married, but concerns the reduction of all female functions to shameful acts. The secrecy regarding the discussion of pregnancy was also something that I encountered

during my fieldwork, and amongst more traditional families, no mention was made of a woman's pregnancy before the birth, however this process did not seem to affect the younger generation so much. Of the practice amongst older, more traditional members this may have also been linked to inside versus outside feelings where I was perceived as an outsider. Older woman would say to me in confidence that I was not to mention another woman's pregnancy if she had suffered miscarriages or the loss of a baby prior to this. Whilst some of this is certainly to do with sensitivity, it can also seen as an aspect of luck / protection from outside influences.

The mothers I spoke with during fieldwork stated that their mothers had not practised breastfeeding, however during discussions with older Traveller women on Back To Education Initiatives (BTEI) they acknowledged that they did breastfeed, despite the protestations of younger members of the group who were disgusted by this. This finding suggests that notions of economic status, class and cultural identity are all significant contributors in the performance of reproduction. Whilst I did not meet a woman from the Traveller Community who was breastfeeding during my fieldwork – the fact of being a good mother through providing and being seen to provide – i.e. to be able to afford formula was certainly an issue in previous generations within the wider Irish society. This may be the case within the Travelling Community as, of those women who discussed breastfeeding, they were from a higher class of family and enjoyed more economic status; and although the rates of breastfeeding amongst Irish society are lower than other European countries, the act of breastfeeding being considered dirty and shameful continues to equate with notions of reproduction and female sexuality being 'hidden' and considered defiling. Whilst this finding runs counter to the increased uptake of breastfeeding within wider Irish society, when considered in light of ritual pollution and the gendered performance of Traveller morality in contrast to sedentary society, these findings would seem to make sense. Similarly, midwives with whom I was in contact during fieldwork noted that Traveller men were becoming increasingly present at their wives labours, however they were emphatic in their pleas for secrecy surrounding this practice. This sense of shame runs counter to notions within wider sedentary society today and perhaps indicates the importance of adhering to appropriately masculine 'Traveller' practices. Furthermore, the fact that changes in practices were occurring, but not acknowledged openly, may have been more of an indicator of my outsider 'sedentary' status.

As with conversations regarding reproductive processes with outsiders, daughters were also conservative regarding conversations about sex. Talking about sex is a shameful act; particularly with outsiders or members of the opposite sex. Chevonne (23) and Keela (25) highlight the problematic approach to sex within the school environment which involves a muddling of boundaries between male and female, inter-generationally and Travellers and sedentary. The discussion developed after I asked them whether they thought girls should wait until they were married to have sex:

> Course they should. It's not right. I think the problem is they don't talk about it. You might think it's weird we're Travellers talking to you about this. Lots of Travellers girls aren't allowed to talk like this. They'd cover their ears and say 'That's **dirty** talk' - but I think that's the problem. They don't talk about it. Especially when they won't let them do it in class in school. Chevonne (23) Keela (25)

Whilst attitudes towards marriage vary between the generations and across the generations, discussions over recent and upcoming weddings provide opportunities to define conduct for young Traveller women by drawing comparisons between the sedentary community and other Travellers. Practices perceived as morally questionable are assigned to their peers in the sedentary community and Irish Travellers living in England. Keela describes how a young woman from the sedentary community whom she has met through a Community Training Programme is planning to marry:

> This girl in FAS, she's getting married in a registry office, 'Cos you can do it quick like in a register office. No way. I'd never get married in a Register office! I said to her, 'What d'you want to do that for? You could have a wedding reception in town for 2000 euro. You can rent the basement room of the hotel here for 400 euro. Buffet at 40 euro a head. Get the lad who works in Tesco as a DJ. Great night. 'I said to her, 'I've a dress I'd lend you'. It's a red bodice with a full white skit and a red train. I got if for two hundred quid off e-bay. But I'm not getting married for ages. Mum's sister right. She lives in England. She got married. She was pregnant when she got married! She got Thelma Madine off the telly to make her dress. She looked like a pumpkin. She was huge! Keela (25)

Despite parental concerns regarding the inappropriateness of the clothing choices of the younger generation, the daughters I spoke to were quick to illustrate the distinctions between the manner in which they dressed and the way in which their peers in the sedentary community displayed their questionable morality through poorly exercised

clothing practices. The following conversation between Chevonne (23) and Keela (25) took place as we sat in the window of a coffee shop watching passers by in a small town:

> Chevonne: The girls in town are all whores. They go around wearing nothing but leggings and a thong.
> Keela: They walk around with no underwear!
> Chevonne: They sleep with boys straight away.
> Keela: After a few hours!
> Chevonne: The boys talk awful about them. They say, 'Look at the size of her hole!' Martin says to them, 'Don't talk like that in front of my sisters'. He's very respectful of women.
> Keela: A lot of the girls in town, their mothers and fathers aren't married and their Dads aren't around.
> Chevonne: It's hard for them if they don't have a Dad to keep them in line – that's why they're all sleeping around.
> Keela: Do you know they have teenage discos in town. Nightclubs for teenagers! I don't agree with that now.

Findings here highlight once again the role of gendered division being essential to constructions of morality. The young sedentary women are seen to be 'dirt' because of the failure to adhere to traditional roles and structures within the family. Dress codes show the way in which sedentary women are unclean. Male Travellers (fathers and brothers) are described as being protective and respectful of their daughters and sisters.

If Traveller identity is morally gendered, performed and enacted on a daily basis, then the representation of inappropriate Traveller identity becomes troublesome. Most of the mothers I spoke to felt that the impact of the media and celebrity culture (Roberts 2003) has had unfortunate ramifications of the style choices of their daughters' generation:

> Lookit, look at their attitudes nowadays, it's completely different, but also I think it's got to do with their own character as well. I know with the younger ones they think they can have this, that and the other, and they see all the stuff and the advertising and they think, 'Why can't I have it?'   It's gone half naked and what not. It's like the pop singers, they go round half naked, if you go to a pub or a wedding or whatever, you see these young ones coming in half naked. But I think, they think it's ok, you see them come in dressed as Britney Spears with the high boots, belly tops, short skirts and what not, a lot of them dress like that and stuff and think it's ok. They think it's normal, they believe it's okay Tamsin, I think it's sending out the wrong message I really do. They think it's okay 'cos it's the style that's in. You see even one's going in they're pregnant and wearing skimpy shorts. Even with my younger sisters, if they call in to my

Mother's house and they're wearing skimpy shorts my mother wouldn't pass any heed now, but I'd still say it, I'd say, 'I think that's a bit too short now' and I'd say it to my daughter. Not only that, those children come in dressed like that, and dirty dancing, look at all the paedophiles who're gonna be watching on the telly, it's disgusting, it really is disgusting. Marguerite (45)

Marguerite's comments highlight her concerns over the sedentary community's outsider perceptions of Travellers, but also her own anxieties over the dilution of cultural values. The fact that if younger Travellers are being influenced by outside sources, such as the media, then this also leaves them vulnerable and causes concerns within the community over the morally gendered performance of Traveller women as they are no longer as clearly distinct from their sedentary peers.

Nationhood (English Irish Travellers)

Dress, deportment and behaviour are all ways in which female Traveller morality is judged within the community and serves to delineate the division between wider sedentary society and the Traveller Community. Variations regarding taste in clothing and fashion exist within the Travelling Community, some younger members of the Travelling Community certainly enjoy the current fashions for excess and opulence:

> One of my nieces having her communion, they were giving out to her about her dress. They said that they weren't appropriate communion dresses. It's because it's different, they don't understand the reasoning behind. Noirin (25)

Some of the Irish Travellers with whom I spoke had previously lived in England, and attended preparation classes for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. They described the English Irish Travellers as arriving at classes in inappropriate clothing, including extremely short skirts and low cut tops. I attended First Holy Communions and Confirmations with this family back in Ireland and witnessed similar attire, which certainly drew the attention of the settled members of the congregation, however this was not acknowledged, recognised or perceived. The recent media explosion of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, which purports to document the Travelling Community, is, in the main, treated with derogatory comments by the older generation:

> But even that *Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, it's madness, I think it's ridiculous. I

don't think there's a need for it. I think the younger ones, the way they're going round dressed, there's no need for that. It's 'cos it's on television, they're looking and thinking, 'Well if you can dress that way and go that way, then why can't we?' It's all competition, 'cos if you look even with children making their communion, little Traveller girls with the big massive dresses and you see some of the settled community gone just as bad. And the children get these dresses made and it's all down to competition, showing off and keeping up with the Joneses. Marguerite (45)

These concerns with the behaviour of some members of the community highlight a number of factors. In the first instance the differences within the group known as the 'Irish Travelling Community'. Secondly, the role the media plays in the construction of stereotypes of outsider, subaltern groups, which in turn influences the perceptions of insider groups. Thirdly, it also highlights the contradictions and tensions inherent in inhabiting an outsider community; when those within the community are constructed as clean and of morally pure / superior behaviour, which does not align with this, must be projected outside of the group (Elias and Scotson 1994, p. xxvii; Goffman 1981; Nadel 1984, p. 113). These behaviours are therefore projected onto the English Irish Travellers who are seen as displaying the unfavourable aspects of outsider behaviour, thereby protecting the cleanliness and purity of the centre from contaminating outside forces.

Parental concerns over appropriate clothing are no longer limited to female members of the family, and the advent of reality TV shows such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *The Only Way is Essex* (2010-2015) have begun to influence the stylistic choices of young Traveller men, which women are again active in attempting to curtail. The older generation are certainly more vociferous in their response to this, however as evidenced in Chevonne (23) and Keela's (25) earlier discussion the younger females are also complicit in this:

Even all the boys up in Dublin now, they've all gone Essex style – their sunbeds, their manicures, their teeth whitened, their hair slicked back and what not, they look, they practically look gay, you know what I mean? You wouldn't like your son coming in looking like that would ya? It's 'cos it's on television, they're looking and thinking, 'Well if you can dress that way and go that way, then why can't we?'

The worst excesses of fashion are attributed to those furthest away; the members of the Irish Travelling Community living in the UK who are exerting inappropriate influences on the fashion tastes of the younger generation:

> Even in England, you see a lot of girls with big dresses, but nothing like the massive one's in that. It's competition, a lot of them are competing, I don't, I don't believe in that. I know even my sister-in-law when she got married to my youngest brother there, that was last year, and her dress was made by that one Thelma, and it was massive, but she could barely get into the, what d'you call it? The reception. She had, you know the five hummers, she had five big hummers and the Rolls Royce and everything else. She was influenced by it, but more cause they had the money, if they've got the money they're gonna spend it, that's the fashion now. It's all competition. I think the younger ones, they're going round half-dressed, there's no need for that. Marguerite (45)

Irish Travellers resident in England regularly return to Ireland to participate in family weddings and funerals and affirm their family identity. Those Travellers who visit family in Ireland are viewed by Irish Travellers living in Ireland as being influenced by the morally lax attitudes of English Travellers and English sedentary community. Attendance at family weddings and funerals serve to highlight the differences between Irish and English-resident Irish who are the gravest offenders in the clothing, and by extension morality, stakes:

> It was a big funeral, there were more people back from England than from Ireland. I tell you how I could tell, you know? The way they were dressed. The big hair on top of the head with the big bun? It's a wig really, well every one of them had the same hairstyle, and all the blonde or black curls coming down here. And they were wearing the short black jackets and the boots up to here and the black leggings or whatever. Everyone was dressed more or less the same. And the make up! The bright lipstick! I was thinking, 'It's a funeral' not a fashion show!' Marguerite (45)

Again the worst practices are assigned to the influence of the sedentary community and Irish Travellers living in England. Irish Travellers, by locating themselves firmly on the periphery of Irish society affirm a distinctly Irish Traveller identity, which is conspicuously gendered and morally distinct from the wider sedentary community who are considered morally lax and unclean. Movement between Ireland and England and the apparent freedoms associated with a more relaxed attitude towards morally appropriate gendered behaviour have led to concerns surrounding the erosion of cultural values from the influence of English society. These concerns echo earlier Irish

concerns over the influence of morally lax cultural values from English society during the battle to establish an Irish identity as distinct from the colonising influences prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State (Watson 1979, p. 20):

> Many Catholic Dubliners affected English manners, styles, and habits, stigmatizing the Gaelic language and peasant customs as a badge of social inferiority and backwardness. Their insecurity suggests that as colonials they had internalized English attitudes and stereotypes. But because they were also nationalists, they liked to idealize and sentimentalize their roots, and they were especially vulnerable when attacked for their 'West Britonism'. This new Anglicization left the Catholic Dubliners with the painful feeling that they had no identity that they had lost their native culture without being subsumed by English customs and culture.

Irish women, clothing and sexuality were linked by the Catholic Church fathers to the portrayal of loose morals such as Archbishop John Charles McQuaid's outrage at 'scandalous display of woman's underclothing, corsets and the like, in the shops in the Grafton Street area of Dublin' (Wall 1982, p. 64) and the following excerpt from the Irish Times (1926 9th February, italics in the original):

> Today …the Free State is not only a less industrious, but a more immoral country than it was fifteen years ago. Parents are losing the capacity to control their children. Extravagance in dress is almost universal, and is most reckless among the very people who can afford it least. Fifteen years ago few women of the middle classes touched strong liquors, even in their own homes. Today many of them take wine and whiskey in public places; and women and men drink with equal *abandon* in the dancehalls of country towns and villages. Sexual morality has increased in the Free State and is increasing.

Concerns over changing appearances, which are, in fact concerns over preserving cultural identity through policing sexual morality, were once the preserve of the female Traveller and defined through dress, deportment and the body, yet these concerns are now extended towards Traveller males. These concerns are articulated by Traveller women of the older generation, and acknowledged by the younger female generation, who are concerned to preserve a distinctly male Traveller identity as well as the distinctly female identity. These concerns highlight the central importance Traveller society places on the notion of family over peer group and individuality. Failure to adhere to appropriate practices is perceived as being a failure to recognise the centrality of family life. These concerns, when considered within the wider historical context of

emerging Irish society, reflect concerns that the Irish Church fathers and politicians levelled at English society when attempting to shape a distinct Irish identity. As in previous times, and like the Irish sedentary community, this concern over the erosion of morally appropriate gendered practices is located firmly outside of the Irish (Travelling) community in English society.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the way in which identity is embodied and enacted through performance of gendered morality, which defines the boundary between inside (Traveller) and outside (wider sedentary society). It has foregrounded the importance of gender in these performances through highlighting the role female sexuality plays in understandings of ritual pollution and mixing between insider and outsider groups. In addition, it has highlighted the contradictions and tensions inherent in preserving a cohesive group identity within a heterogeneous group, which draws a significant aspect of it's identity from perceptions of insider versus outsider. Furthermore, it has suggested that understandings of the role women play in the construction of femininity and masculinity is important. Women, of mothers and daughters generations, are active in their constructions of what is considered appropriate male behaviour. It has highlighted how female Traveller understandings of masculinity also emphasise the importance of men as caretakers through Marguerite's story. In addition, it has analysed the way in which perceptions of reproductive processes and sexuality are central to notions of ethnic identity and explained why certain behaviours, which at first glance seem paradoxical, can be understood when considered in the light of ritual pollution.

The findings indicate whilst Traveller lifestyles are shifting towards wider societal lifestyles, (through smaller families) these shifts are shaped by external forces of engagement in education and the workforce. The changes in Traveller society certainly seem to indicate disjuncture between the experiences of different generations, as with the wider society, however what differs is the central role that family plays within Traveller society. Again, gender is central in these constructions as female sexuality is equated with a gendered performance which constructs itself in contrast to the morality of the outside group (wider society), therefore as gendered experiences and expectations

shift, the participants experience a heightened sense of guilt and tension from being perceived as displaying non-Traveller attributes.

Whilst Traveller identities seem to be moving closer to what is considered the norm, both class and nationhood play a significant part in this construction as variations exist within Traveller groups, particularly between those Irish Travellers living in the UK and the Irish Travellers living in Ireland. Gendered, national constructions of identity are also performed and played out through the media, which is complicit in producing single classed representations of Irish Travellers. The role played by the media in reconstructing gendered national Traveller identities is significant in that it reinforces a hierarchy of classification, which Irish Travellers resident on the island of Ireland are keen to reject, and ascribe a moral aspect to these performances. Irish Travellers attribute the influence of English values to the dissolution of the morally pure aspect of Traveller identity. Contact with the outside influences of the UK leads to Travellers being perceived as more trashy and showy, not concerned with the essential values of Traveller culture e.g. family. Whilst the findings reflect the intergenerational changes between different age groups within the Traveller Community, the ultra-conservatism of Traveller Communities places significant pressure on young Travellers to conform to familial practices, however this is complex as the media becomes complicit in reconstructing Traveller identities, which are misconstrued. The next chapter considers the findings from this study within the wider context of literature surrounding Gypsy / Traveller identities.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

This chapter places the findings from this research within the wider context of knowledge gleaned from the literature. The chapter is structured into four sections; the first three sections are concerned with the key findings of identity, spatial practices, and embodiment. The final section reintroduces the research questions that informed this process and highlights the significant findings.

Changing Identities Among Traveller Women

The findings of this research support the arguments made previously (Belton 2005; Kenrick and Clark 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Mayall 2004; Okely 1983; Smith and Greenfields, 2013) that there is a need to acknowledge diversity and difference within the Travelling Community. Furthermore, hierarchies of status, different classes and shifting allegiances also operate so that it is untenable to discuss the Travelling Community as a whole. What emerges strongly from the findings of this particular research project is the difference across the generations and, the differences within families, in particular the experiences of those individuals who have lived for a period of time in the U.K., as well as Ireland.

The findings from this research present a distinctly gendered perspective, placing Traveller women at the centre of the research project. This research provides insight into the differences between daughters and mothers. Although much of the literature on Traveller female identity is anecdotal (Duffy 2007; Freeman 2011; Smith-Bendell 2009; Warde 2009) based on Gypsy / Traveller women writing retrospectively on their memories of childhood with the result being that this writing is no longer current and often viewed through a nostalgic or dramatic lens. From an academic perspective, (Okely 1975, 1983, 1996; Helleiner 1997, 2000; Ní Shúinéar 1994) the work on Traveller female identities is limited. There are a growing number of sources (Dunajeva, Kóczé and Cemlyn, 2015; Kóczé 2009, 2011, 2015; Magyari-Vincze 2006, 2007; Muñoz, nd; Oprea 2005a; 2005b) detailing Gypsy women's identities, however,

these are outside of the UK and Ireland. The interest in Romany Gypsy and Traveller women is emerging.

Whilst previous research draws on the experiences of women, my contribution is that it focuses on the distinctions and disjuncture between the generations and places Traveller women's perspectives firmly in the centre. The findings clearly demonstrate that gender dictates familial obligations, expectations, understandings of ethnicity and sexuality. The focus on the disjuncture between generations gives the impression that young women have limited power or voice within their community and experience strong familial pressure to conform to expectations. However, these young women are at the same time establishing group strength between them, quietly challenging the values of their elders while seeming respectful. Their occasionally subversive behaviour highlights shifts in behaviour amongst their generational cohort and suggests that they are able to challenge the authority of their husbands, fathers and mothers, through choosing marriage partners, delaying marriage, and engaging in a number of different arenas such as education, sport and employment. Furthermore, building on ideas of Okely (1975, 1983) and Gay y Blasco (1997, 1999) I argue that evidence of familial expectations centre around a performed and enacted morality relating to deportment, behaviour and dress as evidence of female sexuality. Traveller women's deportment, dress and behaviour is scrutinised on a number of levels ranging from the macro to the micro both within and outside the community and is linked to ideas surrounding female sexuality.

In relation to the work in this area of Okely (1975, 1983) and Crickley (1992) I have suggested that concerns around female sexuality are understood within the context of boundary maintenance as evidence of concern surrounding cultural integrity and guarding against cultural dilution. Furthermore, gender also impacts on economic relations as women's earning potential is shaped by external changes in the wider society. Traveller women's place within the home space has become more constant in recent generations as opportunities for accessing resources (through historic practices of hawking, calling and begging) are increasingly limited so that in some cases they are less empowered whilst in other instances they are accessing empowerment through alternative routes such as education. When choosing to enter employment, Traveller women are however, restricted in the fields of employment that they are able to access

(usually distinctly gendered professions such as childcare which are low status, poorly paid occupations). Moreover, class also shapes these choices, limiting Traveller women's ability to participate in education and employment through the manner in which they are understood as conforming to notions of Traveller women; by choosing when and who to marry and when and with whom they will have children, which, in turn, has implications for the role they take in employment. Shifting economic circumstances on a national level play a key role in influencing the way gendered identities are negotiated and constructed. This places Traveller women at a distinct disadvantage and illustrates the confines of multiple inequalities of race, class and gender.

Intertwined with the impact of gender is the life stage perspective, which considers the particular significance of gender in relation to young Traveller women on reaching adolescence. Life stage is significant as role expectations increase and differentiate at puberty. As previously noted, female sexuality is the cornerstone through which the community limits cultural diffusion whether on a practical or metaphorical/symbolic level through the observance of appropriate female deportment. This means that during the reproductive years a Traveller woman is considered most dangerous and polluting to Traveller men and the Traveller group as a whole because of her interactions with the sedentary community and her ability to reproduce offspring from outside the group. The importance of family within the Travelling Community is evident as Traveller women are defined through their relationships with others (as mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, grandmothers etc.) and gain status through these relationships, therefore married women, mothers and grandmothers enjoy far greater status than young unmarried Traveller women who have little power or voice within their community. This finding aligns with earlier studies conducted (Berthier 1979; Smith 1997; Levinson and Sparkes 2006). Building on the findings of other research in this area (e.g. Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Smith and Greenfields 2013), the results from this research also suggest that expectations are shifting within the cohort of young Traveller women due to the impact of external forces such as wider and more prolonged participation in education and the changing makeup of Irish society. What is interesting from this study is the impact of other outsider groups (such as the Polish community) taking a place within Irish society and the influence this has on young Traveller women. So we see friendships developing across communities at the gym, and Traveller women assuming

different identities in order to access routes through education and into employment. These identities are then transposed to younger siblings through play so we hear Keela playing 'being Polish' games with her younger cousins.

Whilst the findings from this research clearly illustrate that there is a strongly defined difference in perceptions around identity between mothers and daughters, the results also show that mothers are caught in a quandary. On the one hand they have aspirations for their daughters to achieve a better standard of living (Greenfields 2008) but at the same time, they are keen to preserve their cultural values, which they see as being undermined by the encroaching influences of external forces such as the education system and the media. The young women who participated in this study had aspirations to achieve something beyond that of the role of mother, clearly indicating the changing aspirations between the generations. Mothers view education as important for a number of reasons: most importantly it teaches children to mix with the wider society; a vital skill in ensuring access to resources and survival. Mixing, particularly at primary school, is perceived as providing an education in how to manage and interact with the sedentary population. These findings align with Andereck's (1992) and Levinson's (2005) whereby school provides an opportunity for defining cultural identity boundaries. What is significant in these findings, however, is the gendered aspect of schooling. Differences in moral obligations and gendered expectations become more pronounced as young women reach puberty. Culturally gendered differences create tensions both within the family and between the family and the school system, which results in families removing themselves from the equation in order to preserve some form of equilibrium as evidenced also by Liégeois (1987), Derrington and Kendall (2004) and Levinson and Sparkes (2006).

Mothers also seem to be aware of the necessity of their daughters acquiring the skills required to mix with the wider society. Mothers recognise that mixing for young Traveller women is more complex and nuanced because of the gender of their offspring. Mixing is something Traveller women are required to do on a daily basis in order to access resources through the family and draw on a range of different roles (virtuous mother, oppressed wife, strong courageous champion of the family, container of societies moral values). The findings here align with and build on Okely's (1983, 1996) research that suggested the importance of foregrounding different facets of identity in

interactions with the sedentary community, but here the focus is on a distinctly gendered identity perspective.

What is important is that mothers, depending upon the age of their female offspring, view education differently. Puberty (which coincides with the junior cycle of second level education in Ireland) becomes a flash point for concerns regarding education and mixing with the wider society. The findings, therefore, illustrate that the age at which young Traveller women remaining in education becomes a point of tension is shifting. The impression emerging from this study was of a shift in the age at which there is a major tension point about young women remaining in education. Where previous generations of Travellers were concerned with young Traveller women leaving the education system after primary school, now the concern seems to be age 15 upwards. Helleiner's (2000) study conducted in Galway in the late 1980's cited the impact of the church's decision to prolong the duration of engagement as being an area of potential interest in the future. Helleiner queried whether this decision would prolong the period of adolescence within the Travelling Community, (which is typically foreshortened in Traveller society when compared with wider sedentary society). The findings from this study would certainly seem to indicate that many Traveller women are deferring marriage until a later date. However, findings from this research indicate that the impact of this decision leads to significant conflict within the individual and the family as disruption in traditional practices of Traveller female sexuality becomes equated with a sense of dilution of Traveller values and identity. In line with findings from Levinson and Sparkes (2006), the decision to remain in education becomes equated with assuming sedentary values of morality (or lack of), which, in turn, leads to a greater sense of guilt. This further increases intergenerational discord, resulting in divergence and conflict within family life.

Reconstruction of Traveller Identities Within the Curriculum

Whilst the women in this study did not feel that teaching Traveller history was important in school, again the findings would suggest that this is a gendered and Irish perspective, as the exception in this study was a male Traveller from Northern Ireland where Irish Travellers enjoy a legally recognised, ethnic, status. The gendered perspective is consistent with findings from earlier research conducted in Ireland

(AITHS (2010, Men2) noting that for Traveller men, the adherence to Traveller Community and culture is more significant than national identity. These findings not only support the assertion that concepts of nationhood cross ethnicity as argued by Mayall (2004) and Belton (2005), but also suggest that for men, cultural identity is less problematic as it is not read through their moral conduct as it is with women.

The findings from this research also illustrate the manner in which schools operate as active agents in the reconstruction of a limited and stereotypical Traveller identity. By placing control over diverse expressions of Traveller identity, schools not only become complicit in failing to recognise the importance of variations that exist within a community, but more importantly, require that if Travellers are to maintain a presence within the school they must submit to the prescribed 'practise' of a specific type of 'Traveller' identity which conforms to sedentarist stereotypes. In seeking to foster tolerance and enhance the self-esteem of Travellers through drawing attention to a picturesque heritage, schools are contributing to an outmoded and homogeneous representation that denies youngsters to a full spectrum of potential identities. The sedentarist stereotype requires that to 'be' a Traveller in school is to occupy a position of lower status / class thereby coercing young Travellers into a double bind whereby celebrating 'identity' is limited by constraints of understandings of identity within the school environment and curriculum. The alternative is to 'pass' as non-Traveller and, therefore, deny one's identity or to create a new identity. In 'passing' one risks damage to self-esteem; the forced ascription to a particular identity (and, by implication, status) creates a disjunction in Traveller understandings of self-worth as practised in the home / family environment, which, in turn contributes to a disjunction in Traveller identities and family roles (Fannon 1968; Levinson and Sparkes 2006; Smith 2005).

Guy (1975, p. 223) has indicated that 'one encounters deep ambivalence towards their [Traveller's] identity' and finds that Gypsies and Travellers are 'righteously angry at the hostile stereotypes others hold of them'. Whilst this research would suggest that Kenny's (1997) recommendation of introducing celebrations of Traveller identity into the curriculum are welcomed on the one hand, the practice of implementation is complex and perhaps challenging for mainstream schools (Kenny's study was conducted in a Traveller only school). Introducing Traveller identity into the curriculum requires a careful and considered approach. Without adequate consideration

this attempt fails to address the wider structural forces of inequality in education, further crystallizing insider versus outsider groups leading to conflicts surrounding 'ownership /authorship' of identities and material, as described by Melissa and Marie in the findings. This polarization of insider and outsider groups further disengages Traveller parents and children and is expressed through conflicts within the school environments which Kenny (1997) describes as 'naming rituals' as described by Oonagh-and further supported by findings from Derrington and Kendall (2004).

Building on Kenny's (1997) research, the findings from this research study indicate that whilst numbers of Travellers in mainstream schools have increased and they are now commonplace, the issue of Traveller-only education still seems to offer support for the older generation wishing to engage in education in order to build confidence within this environment. Differing opinions across both generations of Travellers involved in this research suggests that increased numbers of Travellers in the classroom is not always a positive experience. For the younger generation, some found that this impacts on the way in which they are perceived within the school environment; again large numbers seemed to equate with limited alternative expressions of identity and seemed to create a lowering of expectations from teachers. Also, interestingly, here class and shifting family allegiances also play a role, whereby, schools attempting to place newer Traveller students with other Travellers in order to allow them to familiarise themselves within the school environment failed to recognise that some Travellers may not want to mix with Traveller peers; just as sedentary pupils have preferences of peer groups. This finding is also interesting in that it seems to suggest that a sanctuary space as advocated by Bhopal (2011) requires careful and considered implementation in order to guard against limited options for understanding Traveller identity and brings us back to Ian Hancock's (2010) arguments for separate schools.

Travellers' Irish Identities Within the Curriculum

Ireland's education system cannot be viewed in isolation from its origins in the English education system; the influence of the English education system lingers. Ireland's education system was fashioned through the impact of colonialism. The influence of colonisation on an education system has implications for the way in which marginalised Irish Traveller identity is construed within a wider social group so considerations of

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Traveller identity in the curriculum are further compounded by the issue of an **Irish** Traveller identity represented within the curriculum, which seems to be a struggle within Irish schools. Findings from this research highlight the exclusion of both young and older generations of Travellers from the language, history and geography of their own nation, supports Hegarty's (2013) study also conducted in Ireland. Whilst schools argue that this is to provide extra literacy tuition it is worth considering whether this is a pretext for something more profound: a desire to deny rights to 'Irishness' by separating Travellers from those around them, and retaining them in the position of the anthropological Other. The implications for the understanding of an Irish identity, not fully explored through language, history and geography creates fault lines across both communities. However, the diversity in responses from parents interviewed also highlights the differences in Traveller perceptions of their own national identity and illustrate the problematic associations of concepts of nationhood crossing ethnicity as argued by Mayall (2004) and Belton (2005).

McCann, O'Síocháin and Ruane (1994, p. xiii) have argued that Traveller ethnicity cannot solely be answered by historical research, that rather a key aspect of Traveller identity is how Travellers comprehend their experiences. Yet such experiences are being actively shaped by schooling experiences under the guise of resourcing and supporting literacy acquisition.   Acquisition of literacy is, therefore, impacting on understandings of identity when being removed from particular subjects that are key to exploring an Irish identity. Both Kathleen's and Caroline's experiences highlight the impact of this influence from schooling at both ends of the educational spectrum. Therefore, the Irish education system, when viewed through the lens of history, becomes the conduit through which the state's ambivalence regarding its own separate identity is refracted and projected towards Irish Travellers. This argument supports Ní Shúinéar's (1997, 2002) contention that Irish sedentary people magnified those aspects of their prescribed identity from an English perspective onto Irish Travellers in an attempt to shed the stereotypes of an English racism. Failure to fully acknowledge Travellers as 'Irish' highlights wider Irish society's struggle for recognition and status following colonialism. This can be seen in the wider context of Ireland's struggle for a distinct cultural identity following the struggle for home rule and the 'greening of the curriculum'. This struggle to define identity within the shadow of a larger society is not new. Peter Mercer (President of the Gypsy Council for Education Culture, Welfare and

Civil Rights) speaking at a conference at the University of Greenwich Romani Studies Seminar in March 1993 regarding Gypsy identity noted that many Gypsies perceived themselves as 'Gypsies living in England' but were still prepared to join the British army and acknowledge national loyalties, 'Nationalism about who we are doesn't take away from our loyalty to the state. People are entitled to have split loyalties as had the Irish in England' (quoted in Gheorghe 1997, p. 166).

English Irish Traveller Identities

A significant finding from this research study is that respondents from both generations acknowledged the freedom they enjoyed when in England of escaping a prescribed identity (with attendant negative associations) in Ireland. This finding is unusual in that it differs from much of the research conducted with Travellers in the education system in the UK, (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2003, 2006; Levinson and Hooley 2013) yet these results clearly demonstrate that the chance to pass as Irish rather than Traveller certainly allowed for an easier time in school without the associated discrimination, thus providing certain freedoms from the stigma of categorisation. Consideration of the added burden of experiencing the ambivalence regarding diverse Irish identities in Irish school is interestingly something which Gypsy writer Le Bas (2010), describing Gypsy populations and diasporic consciousness, has suggested is the 'anxiety of dispersal'. What is important here is that whilst, certainly from an historic perspective, 'Irish' was considered lower in the social hierarchy than 'English', for Irish Travellers, it is an identity that enables opportunities to step outside of the limiting negative associations of being seen as a 'Traveller' when in England. On return to Ireland, however, confusion occurs for their children who are immediately defined by their Traveller status. This finding appears to contribute a slightly different element to our understandings of Traveller identity by implying a more nuanced and fluid dimension. It provides, too, an Irish perspective on Traveller identity because they are speaking about how sedentary society responds to them, which is distinct, and opposed to how they are perceived by the Travelling Community in England (see Griffin 2002 and Acton 1974).

The research findings from this study indicate that a prime motivator for moving between England and Ireland is in response to pressure from the educational agencies attempting to enforce attendance of teenage Travellers at school. This finding is

important because it highlights that external forces impacting on nomadism are not one directional. Earlier Irish studies (Helleiner 2000, Bhreatnach, 2006) have suggested that education has resulted in causing Travellers in Ireland becoming settled, however, this study indicates that education also enhances nomadism, particularly across national borders between England and Ireland. The practices of avoidance can be linked to feelings of ambivalence regarding subjecting children to symbolic violence through participation in an education system, which fails to acknowledge a diverse Traveller identity. In addition, following on from the work of Andereck (1992), Levinson and Sparkes (2003, 2004, 2006) and Levinson and Hooley (2013), this strategy of removing teenage children from school serves a tactical device in maintaining and mediating cultural boundaries, which become more significant once children begin to reach adolescence. This device can also be considered as an active mode of resistance in the face of wider societal forces, what James Scott (1987, 1990) dubbed 'Weapons of the Weak'. If schools are interested in genuine engagement with Traveller families and pupils then an understanding of the complexity of this issue and its attendant anxieties requires serious consideration. Theories of multiple and fluid identities (e.g. Hall 1996) and hybrid identities (e.g. Bhabha 1994) seem to have passed by Traveller communities. This may be because of the tendency of Traveller communities to set up binaries of Traveller and Non-Traveller, as well as host communities setting them apart as the 'Other'. The voices of participants in this study, however, suggest movement between identities across Irish and English contexts.

Nationhood

A significant finding from this research, consistent with the argument of Kabachnik (2009), concerns the differences within the group known as the 'Irish Travelling Community' and the role the media plays in the construction of stereotypes of outsider, subaltern groups, which in turn influences the perceptions of insider groups. Contradictions and tensions inherent in inhabiting an outsider community mean that those within the community are constructed as clean and morally pure / superior behaviour is ascribed to the insiders. That behaviour which is not in alignment with the prescribed performances of agreed appropriate morality must be projected outside of the group. These behaviours are, therefore projected onto the English Irish Travellers who are seen as displaying the unfavourable aspects of outsider behaviour, thereby

protecting the cleanliness and purity of the centre from contaminating outside forces. These findings are in congruence with Smith and Greenfield's (2013) findings that Irish Traveller girls in England were more conservative. Movement between Ireland and England and the apparent freedoms associated with a more relaxed attitude towards morally appropriate gendered behaviour have led to concerns surrounding the erosion of cultural values from the influence of English society.

A key distinction in findings from this research study is the differences drawn between English Irish Travellers and Irish Travellers. In an attempt to stave off the encroaching forces of external society (now more evident through the increasing place of new medias and media representations such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*), Irish Travellers are locating the worst excesses of behaviour displayed in the media as being located firmly across the Irish Sea. These concerns echo earlier Irish concerns over the influence of morally lax cultural values from English society during the battle to establish an Irish identity as distinct from the colonising influences prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State. Inglis (1987, p. 139) notes how following the establishment of the Free State, in an attempt to establish a distinct identity poor Catholic tenant farmers adopted the value system of a largely protestant perspective (inherited from the UK) then in a Catholic value system (Inglis 1987, p. 139):

> The Irish may have wanted to be as moral and civil as the English; they may have wanted to speak, dress, eat, and generally live as they did, but they firmly rejected the latter as a means towards that end. This is the dialectical process within the civilising process; i.e. by using different means to become civilised, the Irish avoided becoming Protestant and fully anglicised.

Those who had previously been viewed as illiterate, dirty, rural peasants now sought to claim moral legitimacy through a strict adherence to religious practices. This process of an adoption of moral legitimacy taken up by the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie through the establishment of itself as distinct from the undifferentiated masses is now mirrored in the way in which Irish Travellers respond to those Irish Travellers resident in England in an attempt to differentiate, legitimise and ensure social status.

Whilst the findings reflect the intergenerational changes between different age groups within the Traveller Community, the ultra-conservatism of Traveller community's

places significant pressure on young Travellers to conform to familial practices, however this becomes complex as the media is complicit in reconstructing misconstrued Traveller identities. Gendered national constructions of Traveller identity are then played out through the media. As found by Clark and Taylor (2014) and the Irish Traveller Movement's submission to the Leveson inquiry (2012), the limited and excessive stereotypes of Irish Traveller identity creates tensions between the communities, but also within and across the communities, so Marguerite explains that it is not Irish Travellers who are morally questionable because of inappropriate behaviour, but those Irish Travellers who are living in England. Whilst this explanation clearly aligns with Cresswell's (1996) contention about those who are out of place are morally questionable, the explanation becomes confusing when we take into account the differences between siblings in one family (some of whom are born in England and some of whom are born in Ireland) who draw upon certain distinguishing aspects of their identity from nationality. Again, this would suggest that ethnicity crosses national boundaries, but also that concepts of nationhood cross ethnicity (Mayall 2004 and Belton 2005). Following Liégeois (1986), Jensen and Ringrose, (2014) argue that these obsessions with documenting ethnicity indicate and reveal class anxiety. Furthermore, Malik (1996) and Mayall (2004) have argued that the notion of ethnicity and national identity are relatively recent concepts emerging from a particular time in history and, therefore, can only be understood from a specific standpoint in time, therefore their classificatory schema is inherently flawed. Building on Maffesoli (1996), Hetherington (1998) has suggested that actors now choose identities and affiliations, which are not necessarily tied to 'primary groups' but rather 'neo-tribes' or elective communities'. Despite this assertion, the inherently traditional and conservative aspect of Traveller identity causes profound distress as evidenced in the familial tensions which ensue between siblings when Kathleen (who was born in England) in contrast to her siblings (who were born in Ireland) struggles with conflicting family loyalties as she attempts to access an education and forge a career for herself.

An interesting finding from this study is the creative responses amongst a small number of participants from the younger generation to the prescribed identities allocated to the young Traveller women in this study. Whilst the adoption of a Polish identity would appear to be unique, when viewed within a broader context, it can be understood as an age-old response for Gypsy / Traveller Communities. For centuries Gypsies have

adopted different identities in order to survive in hostile territories (e.g. the adoption of an Egyptian identity in England during Elizabethan times). 'Polishing' highlights a snapshot of an adaptive response amongst a small group of young Traveller women to inhabiting a particular place in a particular time. The particular place is Ireland and the particular time is Ireland in the years of the Celtic Tiger, when it was experiencing waves of Polish migrants who entered the education system and the workforce. These Polish migrants are also outsiders, however they have enjoyed a level of social mobility that is largely impassable for the majority of Irish Travellers. Okely (1975, p. 60), drawing from Laing (1965) argues:

> All roles, whether trickster or victim, carry the risk of self-degradation and a dangerous sense of unreality unless the inner self is protected intact, or group integrity is maintained and expressed in an independent society.

The adoption of a Polish identity can be seen as an attempt to resolve this dilemma. Changing life choices (delaying marriage and remaining in education) and, for some, traditionally valued body shapes provides some young Traveller women with opportunities to respond to the challenges of double discrimination that they experience in their daily lives. Through experimenting with and attempting to adopt a Polish identity, they are able to resolve the conflict of being Traveller and outsider whilst also attempting a form of social mobility that offers them the promise of social mobility yet remaining distinct. The adoption of a Polish identity suggests, in line with Kenny (1997) and Gmelch (1975, p. 116) the hallmarks of 'ambivalently held ethnic identity'. Distinct from Kenny's (1997) study of Traveller children in school, however, 'Polishing' provides an alternative to a dyadic relationship of oppressor / victim. Kenny (1997) argued that the adoption of oppressor / victim relationships within St. Bart's suggested an opportunity to limit the rate of change. In this research, the act is an attempt to subvert hierarchies and access social mobility whilst also remaining separate. What is more interesting is whether the adoption of a Polish identity will extend to a wider group of young Traveller women, and, whether this response will remain once the Polish migrants have gone?

Spatial Practices

The findings from the research study indicate that Traveller spatial practices are significant in understanding how identity is constructed, understood and performed both within Traveller Communities and between Traveller and sedentary communities. In order to understand Traveller spatial practices it is necessary to view these responses within the context of the wider society as the impact of external forces plays a significant role when considering the spatial practices of the Travelling Community. In addition, it is necessary to keep in mind the link between concepts of 'inside' and 'outside' (Okely 1975, 1983) and the boundary defining it. That Traveller lifestyles are changing is clear and this results in changes in spatial practices, but these changes bring with them additional conflict, tension and anxieties which are experienced in both the home and school environment. Traveller lifestyles are changing at a quicker pace than values are shifting. In some ways, the lack of difference between mothers and daughters' attitudes suggests difficulties of adaptation to changing circumstance. It is difficult to retain the same values and roles in a changing landscape. Increasing involvement in the education system and changes in state policies towards nomadism are experienced in different ways at different times throughout the life cycle. Massey (1994, p.164) has argued that, 'Places are complex locations where numerous and frequently conflicting communities intersect'. What is clear from the findings of this research is that what is considered inappropriate behaviour by one group (Traveller or sedentary, male or female, young person or older person), is viewed as appropriate (or inappropriate) by another when viewed through the lens of different approaches to uses of space. This finding links with and builds on Cresswell's (1996, p. 87) notion concerning transgressive behaviour and contested understandings surrounding the use of space.

From a sedentary perspective, mobility, which by its very nature traverses boundaries, is a source of anxiety for the wider sedentary dominant group, which labels the 'others' as deviant for their lifestyle. Cresswell (1996, p. 87) highlights the link between morality and place, which associates ownership of property as having a 'moral value':

> Mobility, though, appears to be a kind of superdeviance. It is not just 'out of place', but disturbs the whole notion that the world can be segmented into clearly defined places. Because the easiest way to establish order is through the

division of space, mobility becomes a basic form of disorder and chaos –
constantly defined as transgression and trespass.

Mobility therefore upsets established notions of the manner in which wider sedentary society operates through territorial understandings and expectations, which infuse social and economic structures so that understandings of concepts of 'work' and 'home' are clearly linked to understandings of places. For the Travelling Community who practise a different understanding of space, place and movement the responses are different. Therefore, when movement is understood as the normative practise and, therefore may be seen as reassuring, the lack of movement may become stifling. Equally, forced movement (due to the impact of external forces from the wider society) can be upsetting and, in turn, lead to the experience of alienation and isolation from one's own community. In this way, differing spatial practices between communities impact on understandings of identity. The findings from this research illustrate that identities shift across spaces – hence different behaviour when Travellers are in Ireland from when they are in England so we hear Marguerite talking of feeling freer in England and Travellers talking more freely across the gender divide and across the Traveller sedentary divide.

Nomadism

Building on the work of Kenrick and Clarke (1999), Levinson and Sparkes (2004), McVeigh (1997), McVeigh, Donahue and Ward (2004), and Smith and Greenfields (2013), the research findings from this study indicate that in order to fully understand Traveller spatial practices it is necessary to rethink understandings of nomadism as a form of punctuated movement or transience. The division between the Traveller and sedentary community is equally significant in understanding spatial practices because Traveller spatial practices are historically centred round the importance of community (i.e. extended family) and continuity of their community. So, whilst Travellers may no longer travel in traditional ways, both metaphorical and symbolic realisations of movement are still adhered to across the generations. What is also important to recognise here is that if change and movement are considered the norm, then the lack of movement may be perceived as stifling and oppressive. This finding concurs with Hawes and Perez (1995) assertion of Gypsies and Travellers experiencing mobility as a basis for ontological security. From a gendered perspective, Crickley (1992, p.105) has

stated, both the real or imagined possibility of nomadism is an important part of affirming Traveller women's cultural identity.

Varying Experiences of Spatial Organisation

In conjunction with the differing perceptions of nomadism between Traveller and sedentary communities, Traveller constructs of space also differ from sedentary constructs. Levinson (2005, p. 510) acknowledges that Traveller sites have different temporal and spatial referents to the sedentary community and Buckler (2007) notes how Travellers talk of 'going off-site'. What is clear from this research is that different housing arrangements shape different experiences whether that is rural/urban, trailer/house, or site/housing estate. These different experiences are also shaped by shifts in wider societal responses to Travellers across time and space. The encroachment of increasing private land-use has created a move towards halting sites leading to a loss of contact with the wider society and a ghettoisation of Traveller spaces due to the lack of provision of adequate housing solutions (Bhreatnach 2006; Crowley and Kitchin 2007; Garner 2004; MacLaughlin 1998). Attempts to reside with extended family are severely curtailed by modern planning policies, which remain sedentarist in scope and fail to take into account the needs of an extended family. The implications of sedentarist planning policies further isolate Traveller women who become more isolated in the home caring for children and removed from extended family. The lack of adequate provision impacts on the way in which Travellers are then able to engage with external agents (such as the education system), thereby being doubly disadvantaged (McVeigh, Donahue and Ward 2004). These findings support Belton's (2005, Ch. 5) description of the site operating as a form of imprisonment or punishment for the failure to conform to the appropriate lifestyle (housing) practices. The result being that in order to move through home and school environments Traveller women are required to adapt creatively within their limited space whether through delaying marriage and remaining in education, attempting to subvert traditional practices (marry out), adopt an alternative identity in order to remain in education.

Gendered Spaces

Gender continues to play a significant role in understanding the use of space from the perspective of the Travelling Community. Gendered use of space comes to the foreground once Travellers reach adolescence. On reaching adolescence, Traveller women tend to remain indoors concerning themselves with domestic tasks whilst the Traveller males remain outdoors. The findings from this research suggest that the result of inhabiting a particular space within the home environment contributes significantly to the adoption of particular roles and echoes previous findings (Daly 1990; Kendall 1997; Levinson and Sparkes 2005; and Okely 1975, 1983). Generational / life stage factors therefore exert a significant influence on spatial practices as the onset of adolescence curtails young Traveller women's' movement through spaces (both the home environment and the school environment). The roles that are associated within each different space shape those areas inhabited by children so that Traveller girls become mothers through their spatial practices at a much younger age than their sedentary counterparts in the wider society. Therefore, Traveller women being curtailed in the domestic space are focussed on cooking, cleaning and childcare at a much earlier age. Inappropriate behaviour is once again concerned with contested understandings surrounding the use of space. Therefore Ellen is aware of the need to constrain her behaviour when outdoors and in front of other Traveller women from different families.

The research findings from this study further support the findings of Helleiner, (2000), Smith and Greenfields (2013) and Okely (1983) who argue that Traveller women's changing role in the home space (due to the impact of wider sedentary society) has contributed to increased isolation for Traveller women as domestic tasks, which were once accomplished alongside family members in an extended family environment. Instead, they now find themselves confined to the interior of the family home.

Traditionally much of Traveller women's work took place outside of the home space. Peddling and Hawking (selling goods such as pegs, paper flowers, religious medals and at Christmas time Old Moore's Almanacs) along with Calling (visiting households – usually farms and asking for food or clothing) contributed significantly to the family income. Women also brought along children with them, partly to elicit a more sympathetic response from the sedentary householder and partly to 'mind' them whilst

also schooling them in the arts of securing resources to sustain the family. Both Okely (1975) and Helleiner (1997) have highlighted the complex skill set necessary for the successful negotiation of these relationships, which involved playing on and manipulating the fears and desires of the sedentary population. In the past, therefore Traveller women identified themselves, and drew a significant part of their self esteem through several spatial elements that have been lost: an outdoor life, movement between places, interaction with non-Gypsy women which all provided opportunities to earn a living. Different environments provided opportunities for experiencing different aspects of identity or alternate identities, which provide relief from stigma and opportunities to access resources. Many of these opportunities have been lost, particularly back in Ireland where Traveller women's behaviour is carefully curtailed leaving Traveller women confined in the home and bored; this is evidenced in Marguerite's frustration at being home in Ireland after England.

Nomadism therefore offers opportunities for reaffirming identity (Smith and Greenfields 2013), as well as mixing and passing (as identity also influences the manner in which Travellers are defined as they move through certain spaces, including crossing national boundaries), and this in turn provides some Irish Travellers with opportunities to access resources through availing of employment in the UK, which they felt would be unavailable to them in Ireland. Equally, drawing on a Traveller identity is important for some who acknowledged the recognition afforded them in Ireland of being a Traveller meant that they could avoid pressures from the government to actively seek paid employment. When considered within a broader context of anti-Traveller racism however, sedentary practices do little to support Traveller employment.

With the advent of the *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy* (1963), which informed the state settlement policy, Traveller women's work was viewed through a sedentary lens, which assigned traditional sedentary gender roles to the Travelling Community. Mistakenly assuming a sedentarist perspective, the Commission on Itinerancy (COI) devalued the contributions of Traveller women and children towards the household income and saw only the male activities of tin-smithing and horse dealing as contributing to the household income. Therefore, the common assumption that the Traveller way of life was significantly under threat from the introduction of plastic

(which replaced tin), and the motor car (which replaced horses), failed to acknowledge the significant contributions made to Traveller households from women and children. In addition, this perspective served to justify state intervention and settlement policies whilst simultaneously ignoring the fact that Travellers are present orientated and adaptable, responding to change and innovation rapidly. With the advent of the state settlement policy, Travellers were not only coerced into settlement but women were forced into the home and expected to settle into domestic activities. The *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy* (1963) also influenced educational policy through curricula designed to reinforce traditional sedentary gender roles with women being encouraged to practice hygiene, cooking, washing, sewing and child rearing whilst men were channelled into carpentry. The outcome of this state intervention being that Traveller women experienced significantly greater losses to their lifestyle's and, in turn, their sense of identity, than their male counterparts.

Simultaneously, whilst the balance tipped against women from the Travelling Community it raised in favour of middle class sedentary women, opening up opportunities for work outside the home. Helleiner (1997) has highlighted the subsequent changes wrought by the state settlement policy impacting positively on the role of middle class sedentary women who found new opportunities for employment within the spheres of education and health targeted at socialising Traveller women. This shift in roles between Traveller and sedentary women carved out new spheres of interaction between the groups which, prior to this moment, had been limited to door-stepping and was to have consequences for shaping identities and articulating resistances between sedentary women involved in Traveller work through education and health. When hawking, Traveller women were outdoors, active, agentic, whereas now they are confined to a passive role where while some interaction continues with non-Traveller women, it is in a diminished role.

Recent policy changes, following the introduction of the establishment of the European Framework for Roma integration strategies (May 2011), requests member states to set achievable goals for Roma integration in four key policy areas; employment, education, accommodation and health. Within this, member states are now required to promote non-discriminatory access to housing, including social housing. The Framework (EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, p.7) states that:

Action on housing needs to be part of an integrated approach including, in particular, education, health, social affairs, employment and security, and desegregation measures. Member States should also address the particular needs of non-sedentary Roma (e.g. provide access to suitable halting sites for non-sedentary Roma). They should actively intervene with targeted programmes involving regional and local authorities.

Whilst Ireland's response to date has been poor, Traveller women's increasing engagement with education and, subsequent employment forges new opportunities and dialogue for extending beyond these constraints as Traveller women move into new spaces where they articulate their perspective. In line with recommendations from Framework (p. 9), these strategies are required to adhere to the ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, which include 'an awareness of the gender dimension'.

Kendall (1997, p. 83) has argued that the 'sites of resistance' that Traveller women construct through their management of the home space both within Gypsy / Traveller Communities and between Traveller and sedentary communities are also important sources of sanctuary providing opportunities for negotiating power relations. She suggests that different temporal spaces facilitate resistance so that women assert power during the day when men leave the site to go to work. What is significant from this research however, is that within gendered spaces, generational differences also resonate leading to confusion surrounding the different role expectations as evidenced by Chevonne's confusion over washing her grandmothers dogs which are inside as opposed to outside and her father's agreement that he will wash the dogs; men's space being outside and women's space being inside.

G. Gmelch (1977, p. 115), Helleiner (2000, p. 175), Okely (1983, p. 205) and Kendall (1997, p. 85-6) have described how married Traveller women spend a considerable amount of time mediating between Traveller and sedentary communities, negotiating on behalf of their families with representatives from the sedentary community, including clergy, social workers, volunteer workers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, local government officials and anthropologists involved in Traveller-related work. From this research what becomes apparent is that older Traveller women in this study believed that school provides a key learning experience in how to 'mix' and manage interactions with sedentary society. Whilst this learning is deemed necessary for survival, it is fraught

with anxiety as the women of the older generation recall their own struggles at school. The experiences of the older generation inform their interaction with the schools in the next generation when, as parents, they attempt to mediate and regulate the pace of changes and the ripples this creates within their own communities.

Overt spatial segregation within the school environment does not occur directly these days, however spatial misrepresentations are insidious and can be equally damaging as situations regarding confusion surrounding spatial practices and the attendant identities associated with them as evidenced by Caroline's confusion over her 'identity' when told in school that Travellers live in caravans and wash themselves outside. This clearly illustrates how misunderstandings over spatial practices impact on understandings of identity. Changing lifestyles have resulted in different understandings of terminology such as 'Traveller' and 'Settled'. Sean's decision surrounding his daughter's continuing education in school is confused by a terminology that no longer depicts the actors and their actions - Traveller and settled. The consequence of misrepresentation is to limit children's conceptualisations of their own and other's identities, which, in turn limits young Traveller women's movement, access to and engagement with particular spaces, namely educational environments, and in turn occupational environments. Kendall (1997, p. 86) has argued that the fact that women are the key actors in accessing education has important implications for the way in which gender roles are constructed within the family:

> The accessing of education is a particularly important spatial arena for Travellers traditionally denied access to their rights because of non-literacy. Women are at the forefront in accessing this resource both for themselves and their children. Education by the institutions of the sedentary society can be viewed as a vehicle by which the cultural norms of the dominant group are imposed on the marginal group; it may also influence the nature of gender roles within the family.

Furthermore, with Travellers increasing participation in the education system the manner in which different generations of women negotiate gender roles within their communities will be of importance.

Many studies have testified to the importance of relationships within the school environment in contributing to the development of a positive sense of identity,

belonging and security (Derrington and Kendall 2004; Kiddle 1999; Bhopal and Myers 2008); the findings of this research would certainly support this also. From a gendered perspective, Traveller women experience limited options when engaging with the educational curriculum which conflicts with familial understandings surrounding the use of space. This is reinforced for Britney as she struggles to remain in education and studies a curriculum, (sedentarist in perspective) that fails to acknowledge Traveller practices of extended family care thereby placing an alien moral value system on understandings 'care'. Traveller women studying childcare experience a disjunction in understandings of appropriate 'care', which, in turn, influences gendered understandings of their identity as Traveller women who draw a key part of their identity from their role as carers and mothers. These findings suggest similarities based not only on culture and ethnicity, but are also classed and align with Skeggs (1997) work on working class women in further education.

Loss of Security

Changing lifestyle practices created by the impact of external forces have resulted in an atomisation of the practice of extended family care within the Travelling Community. Fragmentation of extended family significantly impacts on Traveller women, further isolating them within the home. Enforced habitation within environments that impose unfamiliar lifestyle practices of the nuclear family, surrounded by the wider sedentary community, emphasise the distinction in family practices between Travellers and the sedentary society thus creating apprehension surrounding the influence of outsiders, culminating in anxieties surrounding loss of cultural identity so that Nessa speaks of her concerns about kidnappers, while Rachel and Louise describe their discomfort at being away from family. Being out of one's familiar place leads to feelings of alienation and anxiety (Levinson and Sparkes 2004; Peters 2011; Putnam 2000; Smith and Greenfields 2013; Tatz 2004).

Residing near to close kin has been noted as a significant factor in supporting and maintaining wellbeing (Dawkins 2006; Fletcher 2009, p. 133) through the opportunity of accessing social support networks (McVeigh, Donahue and Ward 2004). The role of the State in limiting mobility (most recently through the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 and the Habitual Residence Condition Act 2009) creates a

precarious living situation for Travellers which further impacts on opportunities to access education and subsequent employment opportunities which combine to promote health and wellbeing (Greenfields, 2008, p. 9; Berlin, 2014).

Crossing National Boundaries

A key finding from this research is the identification of, and moral ascription of, differences between English Irish Travellers and Irish Travellers by members of the Irish Travelling Community.   Research to date regarding this difference has been from an English perspective (e.g. Griffin 2008; Smith and Greenfields 2013) so the findings from this study present a unique insight from the perspective of Irish Travellers towards their English counterparts. Nationhood operates as a significant dynamic with Travellers, who, by virtue of the fact that they practise mobile lifestyles, readily cross national boundaries. Furthermore, temporal factors also feature significantly as changes in the wider society significantly impact on the manner in which Travellers are able to practice their lifestyle. Today, Irish Travellers move back and forth to England to access social security payments, opportunities for employment, avoid stigmatisation and mediate the impact of the education system as well as linking in with extended family.

Irish Travellers, resident in Ireland, in an attempt to retain their unique identities, deflect fears of encroaching sedentary influences from the wider society, particularly in relation to female sexuality, onto the influence of the English and Irish Travellers living in England. Whilst ethnicity (i.e. Traveller) is foregrounded as the most defining aspect of identity in much of the literature (Clebert 1963; Fraser 1992; Okely 1983; Sutherland 1975) certain attributes are associated with English Irish Travellers and Irish Travellers. This difference in moral status is also generational: acknowledged by the older generation who are keen to ascribe the worst excesses and flaws within the Travelling Community's behaviour to the English influence, whilst the younger generation were keen to explain to me that they were worldly and more modern because they had lived in England. This generational difference in moral status would seem to be supported by McKinley's (2011) autobiographical description of her experience of cultural variations amongst Traveller families living in different countries. Equally, this finding highlights the manner in which national identities are ascribed moral practices within the Irish Travelling Community building on and extending the arguments of Helleiner (2000)

and Ní Shúinéar (1997, 2002) from an Irish perspective and Kendall (1997) and Griffin (2008) from an English perspective. Yet the freedom from prescribed identities, which many Travellers described in this research, however, differs from Power's (2004) findings in the UK who found that Irish Travellers are subjected to both anti-Irish and anti-Traveller discrimination. This finding is particularly significant as it illustrates the manner in which Irish Travellers prescribe moral practices outside of their group in order to preserve cultural integrity so Marguerite strongly criticises the notion of 'grabbing' as described in the television series *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and states that inappropriate behaviour lies firmly at the door of the English Irish Travellers.

Embodiment

The findings from this research, which foreground the importance of identity, illustrate how embodiment and, by implication, a distinctly gendered embodiment operates as the vehicle through which Traveller identities move through different spaces. Embodiment provides the bridge across understandings of Traveller and sedentary communities, operating as the site through which these understandings are read and enacted. The findings in this research echo Okely's (1975, p. 60) argument that it is through embodiment that relations between Traveller and sedentary groups are understood. Identity is embodied and enacted through the performance of a gendered morality. Embodiment provides the opportunities for anxieties regarding cultural dilution to be articulated.

Traveller women's bodies are always gendered bodies linked to processes of reproduction, which is central to defining the identity of the group. Embodiment begins with gender as the most significant factor to consider; the onset of adolescence signifies the careful negotiation of controlled female sexuality. Female sexual morality is the cornerstone defining Traveller ethnicity (Crickley1992; Gay y Blasco 1999; Okely 1975, 1983) through emphasising the significance female sexuality plays in understanding notions of boundary maintenance between Traveller (inside) and non-Traveller (outside) society. Maintaining the visibility of the boundary between inside and outside is located within a Traveller woman's body and enacted through performance both within the Traveller Community and outside in the wider society. External forces causing shifts in the social landscape require careful negotiation as

appropriate gendered morality is enacted and understood by both sides (Traveller and non-Traveller). The importance of the performed aspect of morality cannot be emphasised enough; like Caesar's wife, Traveller women must be **seen** to be beyond reproach, which, in this context, means ritually clean (Gay y Blasco 1999; Okely 1975, 1983). The performance of gendered morality locates itself at the site of the Traveller female body and serves as a metaphor for the Traveller body (group) as a whole. These performances are then 'read' through the way Traveller women move, dress, speak and act. Moreover these performances are then scrutinised by wider sedentary society and Traveller women are required to negotiate the rocky landscape of the wider society as they move through education spaces and attempt to access employment. Embodiment is, therefore, tricky and requires considered and careful negotiation in a variety of different contexts.

Choice of clothing plays a significant role in the negotiation of a gendered identity. As Tseëlon (2001) states, 'One cannot talk body without talking clothes'; likewise, one cannot talk clothes without talking body. Yet in the past, clothing choices (particularly in Ireland) were limited. For the current generation of Travellers there is the added dimension of the influence of the media whereby intergenerational discord over clothing becomes significant and, as previously mentioned, the significance of family here becomes key as familial discord creates tensions and guilt which read particular fashions / styles as being associated with becoming 'English' or 'settled' with all the attendant meanings. The findings from this research therefore signify differences from Okely's (1975) study which did not consider inter-generational disjuncture here, or presumably, in her research context it was not a salient factor, so that clothing now plays a considerably more important role than in previous times.

Clothing discourse is intimately intertwined with discussions of morality and immorality; what is 'good', 'proper' or 'appropriate' clothing. As well as the practical function of protection from cold, clothing also functions to decorate, as well as demarcate and demonstrate identities. Clothing practices therefore provide opportunities for Traveller women to perform identities, as clothes function to provide an awareness of a division between groups and, in so doing, facilitate reinforcement of identity. Young Traveller women use style as a way of articulating aspirant identities and mobilising new ways of being and becoming. Differences across the group allow

for articulation of diverse identities by placing themselves in opposition to other groups in order to define themselves. Clothes help to articulate these newly emerging identities. Newly emerging groups adopt a definitive style as a way of accessing power through recognition and legitimacy (by emulating wealthy celebrities) outside of traditional power structures as they attempt to dress themselves into power and future imagined histories. As previously stated, Travellers are not a homogeneous group; they are raced (through claims for ethnicity), classed and gendered. Clothing practices provide sites for play and boundary maintenance whereby actors can 'try on' and practise new identities. As with housework and other 'feminine arts' clothing is intimately intertwined with discourses of hygiene and morality. Sociologists examining youth subcultural styles have argued that dress is a way of exhibiting commitment to a particular group (Hebdige 1979; Willis 1975, 1978; McRobbie 1981, 1991, 1994) whilst defining themselves in opposition to a dominant group. Subcultural groups tend to be defined in the media through a series of 'moral panics', which often emphasise the deviance of a particular group and the danger they pose to society. The majority of work around subcultures has initially been conducted around male working class groups (such as mods, rockers and punks) and McRobbie (1981, 1991, 1994) has argued that this has resulted in a significant omission on the place of female youth. Indeed, McRobbie argues that reasons for this include the fact that male members of subcultures are more 'visible' due to the spaces they inhabit, whereas female styles are less visible when contained indoors away from the street. However, the advent of recent media interest in Gypsies and Travellers through television documentaries such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* has raised the visibility of certain female Traveller styles.

Following Gay y Blasco's (1999) argument, the way Gypsy women dress is linked to the negotiation of power (but in her case Church and family), the findings from this study suggest that influences of the media and celebrity culture impact on the way young Traveller women dress. Brownlee's (2011) study of Travellers at Knock further illustrates the manner in which sedentary society views female Traveller bodies as out of place, highlighting the fact that whilst the Church may not influence the way young Traveller women dress, their clothing choices represent a different perception of the use of space, whereby, due to limited opportunities for socialising (due to gender) pilgrimage is not only a religious and spiritual event, but also a major social event. This

research further substantiates that claim that misunderstandings of behaviour are caused by different understandings of the appropriate use of space.

This research also highlights the changing perceptions over time of Traveller female bodies within the community due to the influence of wider external forces. Traditional preferences for a voluptuous body, which symbolises fertility, are shifting. The preference for a slimmer body certainly seems to impact on Traveller perceptions of the female body as evidenced by the recent focus on dieting, all serve to illustrate how the Traveller body (group) is being shaped by external forces which then impact on identity and are shaped and inscribed on the body.

Earlier research has highlighted the value placed within the Traveller and Gypsy communities of women being tough (see Okely 1975, 1983; Helleiner 2000; Levinson and Sparkes 2006) and this can be viewed within the context of young women negotiating new identities through embodied performances (such as boxing as described by Ellen). Yet these emerging identities still require careful and calculated appearances as evidenced by Ellen's description of tailoring her performance in particular spaces in accordance with the views of other female Travellers. What is interesting here also is that it is Ellen's **Father** who supports her desire to box, suggesting that some Traveller men support changing perceptions of emerging female identities in this context. Both Traveller men and women play key roles in constructing gendered moralities. These complex constructed moralities are then further influenced by cross-generational familial expectations.

Female Constructions of Masculinity

Equally, the findings from this research indicate that Traveller women play a significant role in shaping Traveller constructions of masculinity. The young women involved in this study seemed to be all too aware of the limitations placed on Traveller men attempting to explore diverse expressions of sexuality and, furthermore, recognised that the scope for exploring alternate sexual identities is significantly limited for men also. The only outwardly homosexual Traveller they mention is the Romany Gypsy from England (again encroaching lax moralities projected onto outsiders) yet they recognise hidden performances within their own community and acknowledge that this is difficult

as there is a need to conform to the expectations of an older more traditional morality (as evidenced in the conversation with Chevonne and Keela). Recent research on alternative Gypsy Roma Traveller sexualities is emerging both academic (Baker 2002, 2015; Kurtić 2014; Dezsö 2015) and autobiographical (Walsh 2009), yet this can be problematic for those who wish to remain within their communities (Baker 2002, 2015).

Concerns over clothing are being extended to men now. To summarise, concerns over changing appearances, which are, in fact concerns over preserving cultural identity through policing sexual morality, which were once the preserve of the female Traveller (defined through dress, deportment and the body) are being extended to young male Travellers. These concerns are articulated by Traveller women of the older generation, and acknowledged by the younger female generation, who are also concerned with preserving a distinctly male Traveller identity as well as a distinctly female identity. Male Travellers (fathers and brothers), in contrast to constructions of male Travellers by wider sedentary society, are usually constructed as violent and dangerous (see Helleiner 1997, 1998, 2000) whereas, amongst their own community, they are described as being protective and respectful of their daughters and sisters. A specific female identity may, therefore, be dependent on the construction of male identities that provide some sharp contrasts. Tough masculine behaviour may be evidenced in machismo (when Kathleen says people are scared of a local Traveller man, not because of who **he** is, but because of who he is **related** to) that can spill over into violence.

Male Travellers (fathers and brothers) are described as being protective and respectful of their daughters and sisters which again highlights the importance of listening to Traveller women's voices when considering gender roles within the community and not placing well meaning, but possible misguided sedentary perspectives on Traveller gender roles. Whilst female Travellers of both generations are complicit in their active constructions of Traveller performances of masculinity again leading to the argument that traditional readings of gender roles may require careful rereading, descriptions of 'tough and caring' must equally be tempered with considerations of domestic violence within the Traveller community where breakdown of marriage can lead to a woman being shunned from her community (Power 2004). Cultural differences are not the only causal factor in incidences of domestic violence within minority communities

(Hampton et al, 2005; Kasturirangan et al, 2004; West, 1998, 2005), more significant is the role of poverty and lack of access to education and employment opportunities.

Hygiene Practices

For Travellers of both genders, the distinction between Traveller and non-Traveller society creates an awareness of the outside world, which is understood through distinct hygiene practices. The findings from this study suggest that the extent to which hygiene practices are observed varies across the generations and between different groups (classes) within the same generation. For female Travellers, being trapped in an embodied gaze (Borrow 1841; Hancock 1996, 2002, 2004; Mayall 2004; Okely 1983, p. 201) of a distinctly gendered morality necessitates the strict observances of symbolic hygiene practices within their own community as well as between communities.

Older Traveller women recall the experience of being viewed by the sedentary community as polluting, infectious and diseased; accused of spreading measles and being seen 'like lepers', and remember keenly the humiliation endured through being washed in school.   This aligns with findings from Gropper (1975), McVeigh (1997, p. 12), Stewart (1997b), Sutherland (1975), Okely (1983) and Salo (1977, 1979). Whilst the younger women talk of other groups being 'backward' and believing in 'witchcraft' the folk memory of ritual cleanliness is evidenced through the feelings of disgust when coming into contact with the bodily waste of the sedentary community (as evidenced in Ellen and Keela's discussion of the beauty salon).

The impact of the hygiene observances also limits the types of employment available to some Traveller women (the beauty salon, the hair salon and the changing of nappies are areas of profound disgust when coming into contact with the contaminating forces of the sedentary community). Yet many Traveller women work in these areas so, as with finding from Greenfields (2008), whilst this is an issue for some members of the community, it is not the case for all members. The importance of maintaining the boundary of ritual cleanliness through gendered performances for some female Travellers foregrounds the importance gender plays in constructions of Traveller identity.

Outsiders and Mixing

Whilst Mahrime was not spoken of, but evidenced through recollections and observances in some families in line with Smith and Greenfield's (2013) findings, the findings of this study are premised on Okely's (1975, 1983) argument that a decrease in female pollution taboos is linked to women's declining economic role in outside society. However, if we view education as increased participation in the wider society, then this changes, and is perhaps more relevant, when we look at cleanliness in school; these discourses are still apparent, but have changed to become more insidious. Perhaps, more importantly, it is the performance and the visibility of the performance that must be observed (Gay y Blasco 1999); therefore, it is not that mixing does not occur, but that the visibility of it causes anxiety (the ripples of which are felt through the family). So, Marguerite talks of refusing the 'stranger's blood' when offered a blood transfusion in hospital following the loss of blood after a difficult labour and the black child is given up for adoption, despite Travellers celebration and adoration of children and the central role fertility and motherhood play in Traveller female identity because the skin colour emphasises that mixing does occur. Boundaries between Traveller and non-Traveller groups are not constant; mixing does occur, therefore, in line with Belton (2005) I would suggest that it is hard to use ethnicity as the defining factor of Traveller identity. Despite the challenges of defining distinct ethnicity, Travellers themselves use the terminology of bloodlines and purity (as evidenced in the discussions of different 'breeds', drawing comparisons with purity of bloodlines, despite Dawson's (2005) genealogical research which implies that since 1700's a third of Gypsies have married out (in the UK) illustrating how certain tropes are drawn on by both groups in an attempt to preserve boundaries and, in turn, cultural integrity.

Sexuality, Religion and Shame

Differing attitudes towards sexuality cannot be considered outside of the influence of the Catholic Church, particularly in Ireland. In the past the practise of Churching (the visit to a priest after giving birth before preparing a meal for the family) was commonplace, and among more traditional groups was still evident during this fieldwork, suggesting that Okely's (1975) contention of women's decreased participation in labour market impacts on levels of observance of ritual hygiene practice requires further exploration and consideration, suggesting that the decrease in practise

may be due to the decrease in the role of the Catholic Church in Irish society. McDannell (1995) and Inglis (1987) have argued that Marian practices are gendered and the findings from this study certainly suggest that religious practices are both gendered and generational; however, young Traveller women should still be **seen** to attend church. This performed gendered morality is yet again linked to life stage, with Communion and Confirmation defining significant stages in young Travellers' lives which are aligned with the importance of observance of ritual and symbolic practices intertwined with gender and life stage. Despite this requirement (particularly on the part of young Traveller women) the findings from this study highlight small resistances on the part of the young Traveller women choosing not to attend their younger siblings' First Holy Communion and staying at home to sunbathe instead. Yet these resistances are framed within the context of continued observance of traditional practices, so whilst they choose not to attend their siblings' First Holy Communion, they still participate in the ritual of First Holy Communion, and Confirmation themselves. This would, therefore, seem to suggest that the observance of traditional religious practices is still viewed as morally gendered and linked to the appropriate behaviour of Traveller women. So Pope Benedict XVI's resignation is viewed by both generations of mothers and daughters (Melissa, Chevonne and Keela) that all was not right in the world.

Brownlee (2011) notes the sedentary community interprets the ritual practices of Irish Travellers at Knock differently. Yet religion also plays an important role in opportunities for socialisation, which, due to the decline of women's role outside of the home are severely curtailed. Therefore religious rituals operate as opportunities for mixing with members of one's community particularly for younger Traveller women, so we hear Kathleen remarking describing Mary's comments at the funeral, 'I'll have you as a daughter-in-law!' Sexuality and religion provide the language whereby Travellers are able to articulate their concerns over fears of an encroaching sedentary society. This would seem to further support the notion that Irish Travellers resident on the island of Ireland are attributing the excessive performances to those Irish Travellers living in England as, in earlier times the sedentary Irish attributed all that was wrong with the country to the corrupting influence of the English. Historically, religion provided the spectacle whereby those sedentary Irish who had previously been viewed as illiterate, dirty, rural peasants now claimed moral legitimacy from the English through a strict adherence to traditional religious practices. Irish Travellers who were living in England

returned to Ireland for family weddings and funerals and were viewed by Irish Travellers living in Ireland as more concerned with outward displays than religious observances. Similarly, Irish Travellers, through the establishment of themselves as morally untainted by outside (English) influences respond to those Irish Travellers resident in England in an attempt to differentiate, legitimise and ensure social status.

The observance of a distinctly Traveller type of religion which is superstitious, aligns with Barnes (1975). The differences through which Travellers perceive Mary or Our Lady seem to be more linked to folklore and earlier notions of spirituality which celebrates fertility as described by Brownlee (2011) who states that:

> Travellers approach Mary on a personal level, and she is called on directly to intervene in human affairs. Mary as mother is a dominant motif in Traveller discourse; she is commonly referred to as 'our Mother' or 'our Blessed Mother.' As a female, she understands the trials that women face in life. As a mother, she understands the perils of childbirth, the worries of caring for a family, and the pain of the death of a child. The church emphasizes Mary's virginity, passivity, obedience, and self-sacrifice, Traveller discourse, in contrast, highlights Mary's strength, courage, motherhood, and womanhood.

This argument would seem to further support my contention that Irish Traveller women celebrate the need to be courageous and tough as well as locating themselves firmly on the margins of Irish society, and draw on historical legacies which again ascribe lax morality to the influence of the English. The practise of inverting superstitions of sedentary community is also evidenced in Stewart's (1997b, p. 12-13) study of Hungarian Gypsies. More recently, (Ó hAodha 2011) has illustrated how Irish Travellers invert sedentary folk tales through his examination of reports of the Irish Folklore Commission. Similarly, with regards to healing, the sedentary association of women and healing was inverted so the healers that I was referred to during the study were all men in the Travelling Community. This finding also supports the consideration of the danger of Traveller women as polluting to the group identity. Perceptions of reproductive processes and sexuality are central to notions of ethnic identity and the preservation of group integrity.

The different ways in which Traveller women approach religion, as opposed to sedentary understandings, suggest that the hygiene observances are less to do with

morality of Catholicism, as preached by the church, than morality as expressed through gendered performance of boundary maintenance. According to Okely (1975) visible aspects of female fertility are kept within the bounds of the female realm, but again as with mixing, it is the visible outward observance of these boundaries that is most important, so, Traveller men do attend births at the hospital, but they do not want anyone within their community (particularly other men) to be made aware of this. Breastfeeding is not generally practised because it is evidence of shameful sedentary practices of boundary crossing (inside and outside) yet older women did practise breastfeeding, and the current generation of Traveller mothers are interested in the practices of the sedentary society, yet the extent to which this interest is in-part linked to the promotion of breastfeeding as a weight loss strategy also illustrates the changing shape of Traveller women's bodies. Again, external forces are also changing in family size and structure. Reductions in Traveller family sizes are linked to the influence of the wider society and changing economic roles including prolonged participation in education. Family structure is changing through the impact of external forces on spatial practices within the family.

Gendered divisions within the community are considered to be essential to understanding constructions of morality. The young sedentary women are seen to be 'dirt' because of their failure to adhere to traditional roles and structures within the family. Dress codes are called on to provide evidence of the way in which sedentary women are unclean (most notably their lack of underwear which hides genitalia – evidence of reproduction). The lack of clearly demarcated divisions between the genders within sedentary society is seen as contributing to the lax morality of sedentary society and drawn upon in discussions to highlight the contrast to the gender divisions within Traveller society where each gender has a distinct place. Older Traveller women's concerns over the sedentary community's perceptions of Travellers, can be viewed from the perspective of Traveller mothers' protective responses to their children growing up in a harsh world, but also must be understood as their own anxieties over the dilution of cultural values within their community.

Conclusion

Through a detailed exploration, from a distinctly gendered perspective, this research project aimed to approach the question of how Traveller women negotiate the home-school interface from a cross-generational perspective which foregrounded the voices of mothers and daughters within the Travelling Community in the Republic of Ireland. The way in which this was conducted was by examining the following six key questions. Firstly, how does the school environment impact on Traveller women's experience of themselves? Secondly, how has Traveller women's educational experience changed over time? Thirdly, how has Traveller women's home experience changed over time? Fourthly, how do Traveller women experience these different spaces? Fifthly, how do different contexts impact the choice of behaviour and/or response? Finally, how is education shifting Traveller identities?

These questions led to significant insights into a number of key areas, namely, the changing perceptions of ethnic and national identities are ascribed moral values understood through the unique relationship between Ireland and England. The legacy of English colonialism impacting on understandings of an Irish Traveller status within the Gypsy racial hierarchy from an historical perspective (emerging out of Victorian perspectives within the context of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* and Walter Starkie) through to the acquisition of status by reclaiming moral superiority through the adoption of a set of practices at once projected onto Irish Travellers, which they in turn, refract and project back onto English Irish Travellers.

The careful negotiation of distinct hygiene practices which are embodied and understood within the school environment and evident in discourses of hygiene and cleanliness are experienced by the women involved in this research and passed onto their children. Amongst a small number of women the careful negotiation of a distinct, but different identity allows for social mobility through the adoption of an alternative Polish identity which was passed onto younger siblings through identity play at 'being Polish'. Furthermore, the recognition that, in order to control the rate of change and, at the same time, access education, requires creative adaptations to age-old problems which are refracted through the lens of time and space. So, in the past Gypsies claimed 'Egyptian' identity for the purposes of securing resources within a hostile environment,

whilst today some young Traveller women negotiate the minefield of controlled, appropriately performed female sexual morality through passing and some through adopting an alternative Polish identity.

The next chapter provides a conclusion to the research, by identifying possible areas for future research and examining the challenges and adaptations to the research project, which were necessary in order to glean the relevant information.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

This chapter provides a conclusion to the research, by identifying possible areas for future research and reflecting on the challenges and adaptations to the research project that were necessary in order to glean the relevant information. The chapter is divided into four sections which highlight the importance of these areas when considering conducting similar research, they are: the significance of time, the importance of context and place, suggestions for further research and, finally, consideration of the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

The purpose of this research was to examine the ways Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, how they negotiate the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. The reason for this was because of the substantial variations which previous researchers on Gypsy / Traveller women viewed as redundant as they departed from engagement in the wider society through their retreat from the workforce into the home place (Helleiner 2000; Okely 1983). Yet a groundswell of increasing participation amongst Traveller women within the educational sector has had a noteworthy influence on the manner in which Traveller women's identity is comprehended and negotiated within and between communities.

This research led to significant insights; changing perceptions of ethnic and national identities are ascribed moral values that can be understood through the unique relationship operating between Ireland and England. The legacy of English colonialism that influenced perceptions of Irish Traveller status within the Gypsy racial hierarchy from an historical perspective (emerging out of Victorian perspectives within the context of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* and Walter Starkie) resulted in the acquisition of status by reclaiming moral superiority through the adoption of a set of practises at once projected onto Irish Travellers, which they in turn, refract and project back onto English Irish Travellers. The findings of the experiences of Irish Travellers living in Ireland and English Irish Travellers both within family groups and between them, particularly from an Irish perspective, are especially useful in order to develop understandings of the challenges presented when engaging with both groups in ensuring

quality community relationships and to allow for adequate responses in educational, employment and health environments.

Careful negotiation of distinct hygiene practices, are embodied and understood within the school environment, and evident in discourses of hygiene and cleanliness that are experienced by the women involved in this research and passed onto their children. Amongst a small number of participants, the emergence of an alternative (in this case Polish) identity provided opportunities for accessing social mobility. Amongst this small number of participants the adopted identity is then transmitted by older siblings to younger siblings through identity play at 'being Polish'. Though only prevalent in a small group of the research cohort, this process acknowledges the challenges faced by Traveller women attempting to manage the rate of change and, at the same time, access education, which requires creative adaptations to age-old problems that are refracted through the lens of time and space. Visibility becomes a matter of choice defined by circumstance and environment signifying a proficient aptitude for opacity. Whilst in the past, Gypsies claimed Egyptian identity for the purposes of securing resources within a hostile environment, in today's environment, this small group of young Traveller women negotiate the minefield of controlled, appropriately performed female sexual morality through adopting a Polish identity.

In my conclusion, I wish to reflect a little further on certain substantive issues, and in view of the nature of this research, highlight some salient features that surround the methodological aspects of the research. Specifically, in order to conduct meaningful research with vulnerable and marginalised groups, it is necessary for the researcher to develop close and deep relationships that are likely to extend beyond the scope of a single research project. These relationships require sensitive and extensive negotiation on both sides.

Importance of Time

The research conducted for this study took place over a considerable period of time (i.e. 6 years) however, the seeds of this research began much earlier (I first began working with members of the Travelling Community in 2000 on a Back to Education Initiative) and this research would not have been possible had I not spent many years building

relationships with the local Travelling Community. Research relationships take time to nurture and grow. Trust is built slowly and steadily over time as researcher and participants come to know each other. The research participants first came to know me through my participation in their lives in other contexts (all in the area of Traveller education and Youth work). The fact that I had previously managed to successfully establish a number of local Traveller youth projects, made a number of films with members of the local Travelling Community and established a Traveller Homework Club at one of the local schools, all contributed to the establishment of these research relationships. Those members of the community who became my key informants have since become my friends and have taught me much about understanding the importance of developing, maintaining and respecting research relationships. These relationships were not always easy and I made many mistakes along the way, but one of the important things I learnt was the importance of engaging in an on-going relationship. Whilst on-going relationships provide the researcher with many advantages, namely, the ability to address sensitive topics, review data and return to it over time, there are, however challenges to this type of relationship.

Prior to and during the establishment of the research relationships I attended a number of local events including Christenings, birthday parties, First Holy Communions, Confirmations, weddings and funerals. I also attended a local boxing club for a few months as well as visited local sites of holy significance such as Holy Wells and graveyards. I took many photographs of Traveller gravestones, visited graveyards to try and track down unmarked graves of siblings who had died many years previously at the request of some families. I went horse riding, visited children in hospital[10] and mothers in hospital who had just given birth. I trawled through old copies of local newspapers to find photographs of long dead family members. I also obtained information regarding courses and training, helped them do homework and later on helped them complete portfolios during Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) training. I joined the gym with them, went shopping, went dancing, singing, visited the beauty salon, went on trips to the tattoo parlour, visited the beach and went for walks, and stayed in the home. The most important aspect of this research encounter was

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[10] Hospital visits tended to involve playing cards or draughts with children of families that I knew who were recuperating after tonsillectomy, appendectomy and such like.

'hanging out' and 'being with' the research participants. Hanging out provided the best insights into the participants' lives, their struggles and their celebrations.

Whilst it was certainly useful that I had previous connections with the research participants, moving from one role to another was not without difficulty. I encountered more anxiety when asking participants to become involved in the research as I felt that I had more to lose when I asked them to participate. I was aware during the initial stages that I was being vetted, particularly at certain events, as I was aware that Travellers who had initially seemed interested in the research were watching me to see how I would behave; whether I would be respectful and mindful of their relationships. I hope I have managed this. I also learned the importance of honesty in the research encounter; I started by stating that the research would be useful in helping to improve educational experiences for them and was crushed by many I approached who refused. After a period of reflection I went back and asked differently, (and more honestly) saying, 'I need your help' rather than 'this research will help you'; participants were then more willing to oblige me. On reflection, those who chose not to engage in the research project were wise in their decision; many were currently experiencing their own difficulties as parents of children embroiled in on-going challenges with their local school, or, had too recently left schooling and did not wish to revisit the experience. This experience allowed me to gain an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics within the research encounter, what Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) distinguish as 'working actively with issues of power'. They propose that the researcher must explore different facets of power involved in an attempt to create 'mutuality' enabling participants to engage on equitable grounds in the research encounter in order that the research can 'attend to and moderate your own 'power over' which derives from unearned, or earned, privilege'.

Despite the challenges encountered in the shift from one role to another, the importance of having been known to the participants in a previous role cannot be emphasised enough. A factor which was to prove key in the development of trust between myself and among research participants was in negotiating with school personnel; early in my professional work as a Liaison Officer I was witness to an incident in school with a young Traveller who was challenged by the school Principal. The Principal automatically assumed that because I worked in the school I would agree with him.

Whilst I was not aware of the significance of this at the time, the fact that I chose not to side with the principal and openly disagreed with him certainly went a long way in establishing trust, yet choosing to challenge school personnel often made my professional life extremely awkward. These professional trials however ignited my interest in researching the challenges facing Travellers negotiating the home-school environment, as I attempted to negotiate it myself.

Research relationships do not only take time to establish, but also the findings from this research are significant **because of** the time it took to do the research; if I had conducted this research over a shorter period of time, many of the key findings would not have been apparent to me from an initial reading of the situation. Had I completed the research in a shorter period of time I would not have been as aware of the challenges faced by the young women who participated in the research. When I first met many of the young women they were just starting secondary school and were full of enthusiasm for their education and subsequent career prospects. The prolonged engagement with the education system (a recent phenomenon for many young Travellers) seemed to be working; the fissures between home and school only became apparent, as the participants grew older. An earlier initial reading would have failed to see the impact of later marriage and prolonged involvement with the education system. Furthermore, the prolonged duration of the research also meant that I came to know participants who left for England and returned a number of years later. This then allowed me to develop the insights surrounding the differences between Irish Travellers' perceptions of English Irish Travellers and the tensions within family groups and between different family members depending on where they were born. Good research therefore takes time, time, which allows for meanings to evolve and develop; this is difficult when attempting to conduct academic research within a tight time frame. The extended time element therefore allowed me the luxury of looking back on certain events and reviewing them with the participants, discussing together our understandings and meanings of them.

Building intimate and trusting research relationships also requires sensitivity on behalf of the researcher, again a factor that does not easily slot into tight time schedules. Throughout this research process, there were times when informants were not in a suitable frame of mind to participate in the research due to personal reasons such as

illness or family obligations, again, a shorter research process would then not have allowed for the subsequent exploration of data with these particular participants as I would have been unable to revisit them and consider their reflections following an absence. This understanding is also supported by Levinson's (2004, p. 135) work on the shifting nature of access where he states that, 'what seemed acceptable one day was evidently not the next'. Agreeing research parameters with different family members at different times and their disclosures altering the focus of the research led to constant negotiations which also influenced the course of the research process. My own research period was prolonged by a succession of difficulties, but these problems, ultimately, enabled the formation of relationships that took the work much further than might otherwise have been the case. Most students enter doctoral research with a sense of a specific time-frame. Universities are under pressure to ensure completion within that time, and this is projected onto students, however some types of study require longer periods. Therefore, there is a need to examine the nature of doctoral study, in order to prevent the possibility of it becoming conservative and risk-averse. This a challenge for researchers are attempting to engage in ethnographic research which, by its very nature takes time, and yet, because of the extensive time period, this yields insights which are not readily available through short term research. This is particularly so when engaging in research with vulnerable or marginalised groups, particularly marginalised voices within those marginalised groups.

The Importance of Place and Context

Research is not only influenced by time, but it is also place and context specific. I certainly discovered the importance of place in the acquisition of quality of data. Those answers I received when I conducted interviews / observations in a school setting were completely different to those I received in a home setting and they changed again as my relationships with the participants deepened. Being in the home provided insights that I would never have noticed at school about resistances from the young women, (e.g. Ellen's interest in boxing and Chevonne refusing to wash Granny's dogs). Also, in order to conduct gendered research it is necessary to enter gendered spaces. Being in the home space provided me with many insights into the isolated nature of some of the women's lives; a number of them spoke often about how they enjoyed the visit and an opportunity to talk. What struck me most in these encounters was the way in which

outside external forces that have caused Traveller women to be isolated within the home through increased settlement, fragmentation of extended family and ghettoisation of housing arrangements has had such a massive impact on the way in which social relationships are experienced amongst women in the Travelling Community.

Being in different home spaces over a period of time also produced different results, so when Kathleen moved house it provided me with opportunities for discussions about space from a different perspective; Kathleen's new home was a bungalow with large vista style windows, located in a rural environment, in contrast to the previous house which was a semi-detached, cramped 3 bedroom two-storey house on a run down housing estate in an urban environment. My shopping excursions provided me with insight into the way in which Traveller women were treated in shops by the wider sedentary community as they were consistently followed around stores and accused of shoplifting; this then led me to examine the recurring stereotypes that are levelled against Travellers and inform the majority society's perceptions and reactions to their presence. Witnessing Traveller women's frustration at the way they were constantly treated in shops and their subsequent adoption of a different but distinct identity which was viewed less suspiciously by the outsider group provided me with insights into the creative approaches young Traveller women applied to age-old problems of stigmatisation and discrimination.

Equally important in the research process was that I knew of those people who moved in their milieu, so conducting research with Travellers required me to have knowledge of members of their group who were not necessarily involved in the research itself, whom they talked about and had been present at certain key events in their lives (birthdays, weddings, Christenings, funerals, Confirmations and Communions), thereby providing me with the ability to talk with them about the people they knew. This was important not only for the members of the Travelling Community I knew, but also for those members of the sedentary community with whom they came into contact. Here, being a Youth worker in the local area certainly helped as it meant that I knew the young people to whom they referred, which certainly had implications for understanding the development of cross community relationships. This is something that requires further the exploration as described by Smith and Greenfields (2013) in

their discussion of the 'wannabe' Travellers from the research they conducted in the UK.

Significant to the research was my own position as a (married) woman and mother that certainly afforded me opportunities to explore conversations surrounding sexuality and secrecy which I feel I would have been unable to explore otherwise. Equally important, however, was the fact that I was English; if I had conducted this research with a different group of Travellers who had not travelled to England maybe this would have been different.

Correspondingly, the wider societal context is also significant. The adoption of an alternative Polish identity by a small cohort of the young women involved throughout this research process is almost certainly linked to temporal changes that took place in Ireland during the time this research was conducted. Irish society was experiencing the dizzying effects of the Celtic Tiger and its associated industries, most significantly, a boom in the construction industry that created the employment opportunities for a wave of migrants from Eastern Europe in search of work. If this study were conducted again, within the context of Irish society in a recession it would likely produce a different set of results. The adoption of an alternative Polish identity may be context specific; however, it echoes earlier Gypsy / Traveller responses to living alongside an antagonistic host community (e.g. the adoption of Egyptian identities by Gypsies in Elizabethan England). As Hancock (2010, p. 42) states:

> It is true that much of the 'gypsy myth' has been intentionally created as a smokescreen by Rom themselves to insulate Rromanija from gadzikanija'.

What will be interesting in the future in relation to the context-specific aspect of this research, is whether, following the economic crash and the move of many Polish migrants away to other shores, these young women will continue to adopt a 'Polish' identity or whether an alternative identity will be selected.

Areas for Further Research

The findings from this research point to a number of potential areas for further investigation. More research surrounding engagement with diverse communities of

Travellers across the spectrum of the Irish Travelling Community and across Gypsy / Traveller communities is required in order to allow for the voices of wider identities within the group referred to in the literature as the Travelling Community. In particular, additional areas of inquiry into cross-generational perspectives are required in order to explore the awareness of diversity that exists across the communities and between the generations. Further research is necessary into the differences that exist between the experiences of Irish Travellers living in Ireland and English Irish Travellers both within family groups and between them, particularly from an Irish perspective, in order to develop understandings of the challenges presented when engaging with both groups and to allow for adequate educational, employment and health responses.

Further research into gendered understandings of Travellers is required, and in particular, careful consideration of the impact of life stage on engagement with education and employment sectors from a gendered perspective. Moreover, more ethnographic approaches that place Traveller women at the centre of the research are required. Whilst the interest in Romany Gypsy and Traveller women is emerging, the limited literature available to date creates an over-reliance in the literature on a couple of key ethnographic texts (e.g. Helleiner 2000; Kenny 1997; Okely 1983) all of whom only worked with one particular community with the result that generalisations are based on one particular community. This research has clearly shown that variations exist across groups, within groups and between the generations, therefore there is a need to explore the differences of groups within the Travelling Community and develop further research in this area. Currently, researchers are dependent upon a small number of ethnographic texts (S. Gmelch 1986; Helleiner 2000; Kenny 1997; Okely 1983) and these texts, whilst placing women's issues within the research, do not draw the key data from a gendered perspective, but from a whole community perspective. More contemporary research concerning the lives of Traveller women is also required.

Much of the literature on Traveller female identity to date is anecdotal (Duffy 2007; Freeman 2011; Smith-Bendell 2009; Warde 2009) based on Gypsy / Traveller women writing retrospectively on their memories of childhood. From an academic perspective, (Okely 1975, 1983, 1996; Helleiner 1997, 2000; Ní Shúinéar 1994) the work on Traveller female identities is limited. There are a growing number of sources (Dunajeva, Kóczé and Cemlyn, 2015; Kóczé 2009, 2011, 2015; Magyari-Vincze 2006,

2007; Muñoz, nd; Oprea 2005a; 2005b) detailing Gypsy women's identities, however, these are outside of the UK and Ireland. This groundswell of sources is important, both within Romani Communities and within academia. Kóczé (2015) argues, for adequate consideration to be paid to the power dynamics present within academic discourse that have previously failed to acknowledge racism and sexism by limiting analyses to a dominant hegemony.

As previously noted, identity is not a permanently fixed phenomena rather it is fluid shifting in response to environmental and economic contexts. Negotiating identities has been a response to changing circumstances from Gypsy Roma Traveller communities throughout history. Embryonic identities create possibilities; opening pathways to build bridges across and between communities at local, national and transnational levels which create broader platforms for equality and social justice issues to be combined in order to alleviate inequalities. In addition to research on diverse identities, research on diverse sexual identities within Roma Gypsy Traveller communities is also required. Lack of visibility of LGBTQIA[11] Gypsy Roma Travellers is a pressing issue as outlined by Baker (2002) and Kurtić (2014). These diverse identities offer insights into rethinking earlier notions of hygiene practices as Baker's (2015, p. 90) study found that 'non-Gypsy perceptions of Gypsies were similar to Gypsies' perceptions of Gays, that is, unclean, problematic, threatening and unwelcome'. Failure to explore divergent identities is a key human rights issue as well as an issue facing Roma Gypsy Traveller communities, as voices remain unheard and marginalised. Intersectional approaches offer new ways to explore these themes recognising that not all Roma Gypsy Traveller men or women have the same experiences, as borne out by the findings in this study. As Bogdán et al. (2015p. 4) note:

> To be Gay and/or a Feminist and a Roma makes us realise that identity and tradition are not rigid and fixed phenomena, and therefore should not be oppressive but should be dynamic, inclusive and innovative, keeping the best of the old while reinventing and mixing identity with new outlooks and behaviour.

Whilst the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies has highlighted struggles facing Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, Ireland's response to date has

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[11] Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual communities – an umbrella term that is used to refer to the community as a whole.

been poor. A transnational European platform offers opportunities for extending Gypsy Roma Traveller inclusion, however this is at the risk that at a national level states absolve themselves of responsibility seeing it as a European issue as opposed to a national issue (for example in Ireland the response to the framework was to publish an overview of existing initiatives, some of which had already been scrapped without any engagement with Gypsy Roma Traveller forums). In addition, specific policies addressing Roma inclusion can also continue to create distance as they are singled out as a group requiring special attention and extra resources, what McGarry (2011) borrowing from Fraser (1997) has dubbed the 'redistribution/recognition dilemma'. The active participation of Roma is highlighted as one of the ten key elements in line with the Common Basic Principles on Roma inclusion, one on which to date Ireland falls sorrowfully behind. McGarry and Agarin (2014, p.4) highlights the importance not only of participation but active participation which extends beyond visibility:

> *participation as presence* is but the first building block for effective participation, leading to *participation as voice,* whilst only with *participation as influence* does a minority group ensure a degree of control over institutions and policies which affect them.

Opportunities to realise participation as influence are hampered by institutional frameworks, which ensure that the State dictates when, and how policy interventions are designed and implemented (Lukes 1974). The State is therefore responsible for creating routes to Gypsy Roma Traveller participation as influence, it is here that McGarry and Agarin (2014, p. 17) argue that 'the national context remains the primary concern.'

Under the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Framework* (2014, p. 68) the Irish Government recognises:

> The importance for a child or young person to have a sense of belonging within school and the community, and the fact that schools and youth organisations play an invaluable role in building inclusion, supporting them to feel part of their community and creating stability in their lives.

Research indicates that interdependency of services contributes towards improvements in all areas of life (McVeigh, Donahue and Ward 2004, p. 48). From an educational perspective the research indicates that greater consideration into the introduction of

'Traveller' identity into curriculum. As Kenny (1997, p. 294) previously argued, 'Outsiders, as teachers usually are, must exercise sensitivity about teaching culture 'content'. Support structures for Roma Gypsy Travellers in education require genuine commitment at all levels of the school system from Early Years right through to third level. These supports require holistic engagement from all levels of education personnel in order to ensure lasting partnerships with parents to secure on-going education with their children (which translates into greater employment opportunities). Including issues of identity in the curriculum does not just benefit socially marginalised groups, but benefits all children. Education systems that explore the impact of oppression on groups in society invite students to engage in broader considerations of issues of identity and power. Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1992, p. 32) note that 'lack of reflectiveness is the privilege of power.'

Local practices of 'benevolent segregation' justified within individual schools as providing much needed resource teaching need to stop. In line with guidelines from the UK (Bhopal et al. 2000) and Ireland (DES 2006), along with EU directives (ERIS 2011) resources should be provided in class or extra curricula; removal from class is unjust, illegal and contributes to further marginalisation. In practice this requires examination of teaching attitudes and methods, which can be challenging for some teachers.

The pressure from national Traveller organisations and education personnel can be understood as a struggle for political affiliation, which secures resources, however, this struggle can at the same time contribute to further alienation through emphasising ethnicity above all other perspectives. Whilst extra resourcing of support for Visiting Teachers for Travellers is important, coupled with this should be an awareness that an overreliance on individuals is dangerous and that broad alliances need to be made. Clark's (2014, p. 38) research into the Roma population in Glasgow has highlighted the need for intersectional approaches to research as:

> It is apparent that much research with Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities is often seen through a highly racialised and/or ethnicised lens and this might be appropriate with certain environments and contexts. However, there are surely dangers with such reductionist and limited critical thinking, failing to capture the complexity of, for example, issues of gender and class and how they connect to 'race'.

Intercultural training, developed in conjunction with Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, should be incorporated into all teacher-training programmes including intersectional perspectives that allow critical reflexivity on positions of privilege. Designing curricula (materials and pedagogic approaches) in tandem with Gypsy Roma Traveller communities would offer opportunities to value identity rather than exoticise difference.

In line with findings from Greenfields (2008), more awareness raising of career options for Gypsy Roma Traveller communities developed through career taster days delivered in tandem with on-going adult education, is necessary in order to support aspirations amongst the younger Gypsy Roma Traveller community and to build trust between Gypsy Roma Traveller parents. Cognisant of the fact that whilst traditions are shifting in Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, many women still marry young and have families early, therefore a need for flexible training programmes which recognise lifelong education offering a range of options for women to dip in and out of as they manage family responsibilities will be important for Gypsy Roma Traveller women.

Significant and prolonged increases in Traveller engagement in mainstream schooling suggests a need for further in-depth research on aspects of teacher training, developing relationships with parents, and broader sociological understandings of society included in teacher training in order to examine the impact of structural inequalities in the wider society. The implications for the understanding of an Irish identity, not fully explored through language, history and geography creates fault lines across both communities; however the diversity in responses from parents interviewed also highlights the differences in Traveller perceptions' of their own national identity. Acquisition of literacy in geography, history and Irish is, therefore, impacting on understandings of identity when being removed from particular subjects that are key to exploring an Irish identity. Recent Government reports (*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* 2014, p. 52) identify Young Travellers and Early School Leavers as 'a priority in terms of policy and provision'. Adrienne Rich (1980, p. 632) notes how:

> When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you…when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing. It takes some

strength of soul – and not just individual strength but collective understanding – to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.

This highlights the need for a change in practice and understanding which values collaboration between organisations and institutions, developing cultures of respect that acknowledge the rights of the child through genuine consultation and involvement. Whilst these changes are welcomed, they are located in cultures of accountability and reporting which challenge researchers to develop flexible and accommodating practices within constraints of time and austerity. This suggests that there are significant challenges facing researchers and educational practitioners and policy makers in establishing quality relationships with the Travelling Community.

In line with other research findings (Kenrick and Clark 1999; McVeigh et al. 2004; Levinson and Sparkes 2004; Smith and Greenfields 2013), reconsideration of more varied understanding of nomadism and movement within Travelling communities is required. The findings of the experiences of Irish Travellers living in Ireland and English Irish Travellers both within family groups and between them, particularly from an Irish perspective, present new research opportunities when engaging with both groups in ensuring quality community relationships and to allow for adequate responses in educational, employment and health environments and therefore require more investigation. Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006) have argued that 'social science research has been relatively 'a-mobile' until recently' suffering from a Cartesian type split in understandings of movement between either a typically sedentarist mind-set (McVeigh 1997) or nomadic thinking. Massumi (2002) has suggests the notion of 'punctual' understandings of movement, which ignore the very process of travel and what happens on the move. Furthermore, Helleiner (2000) has highlighted the challenge to sedentary understandings of travel whereby nomadism, which is often mistakenly perceived as continuous movement, may actually be practised through residing in one particular place, camping (i.e. living in a caravan but not moving). The findings from this research would certainly suggest that wider considerations of nomadism are required. By far the largest number of Irish Travellers live in houses (73 per cent), but a significant number (18 per cent) live in trailers, mobile homes or caravans and 7 per cent (2,753) do not have access to basic services such as running water (AITHS 2010). The Irish Traveller Movement estimates that a third of all

Travellers are mobile at any one time. Travellers practising nomadism are at times forced to do so because of the lack of adequate provision. This, in turn, impacts on the way in which Travellers are able to engage with external agents (such as the health, education and employment sector), rendering them doubly disadvantaged. In addition, the findings from this research clearly show the impact of changes in accommodation practices within families and the subsequent negative impact on social interactions. Within wider understandings of nomadism, recognition of the confusion surrounding terminology such as 'traveller' and 'settled' which remains, but is at times obsolete, must also be considered. As Kenny (1997, p. 290) has noted, 'Changes in terms have resulted in a conceptual vacuum, or in silent maintenance of space for old constructs behind new terms'.

Relationships Between the Researcher and the Researched: Synchronicity and Merely Anecdotal

Because of the issues surrounding fieldwork that I have already explained, much of my data was generated through just talking and was anecdotal. Okely (2011, p. 25) has put forward the argument that the anecdotal has much value to it, stating:

> But I was to find that an entire worldview or system may lie in a single anecdote, which reveals an entire structure. The new trendy 'evidence based' label for research depends on the quantitative, but implies that none of our research is evidence based, i.e. we invented it.

The question running through much of this research was 'When does the anecdotal have meaning?' and one of the key challenges was the tension between gossip and real data. Much of the 'mere gossip' was actually the basis of the key findings as Okely (2014, p. 70) notes, 'Often key insights occur during shared activity and experiences'. Feminist researchers (see Roberts, 1981) highlight the significance of friendly gossip, chatting and informal conversation, as key sources of data and information. Knowing and trusting the value of the information and being in what Keats has called 'negative capability…without any irritable reaching after fact or reason' (Rollins, 1958) certainly allowed themes and ideas to emerge. The difficulty arises when the relationship with participants is close; how to sift the responsibility of in-depth information about people's lives onto the page and commit to the findings. As previously noted, I was

hesitant to do this at first but again, connecting with a community of scholars certainly helped. Beginning to read around the subject later rather than at the start of the research process was useful because it allowed initial themes or fragments to evolve, then later gain traction when these themes appeared in other literature in the area. Yet the closeness of the research encounter causes confusion: The question emerges whether, had there been no previous research with participants, the anecdotal evidence might have been considered as 'real' data.

Much of the data seemed to be influenced by my position in the field, also by synchronicity and embodied responses that I was initially hesitant to note. Yet Marshall and Reason (2007, p. 375) have argued that this type of research is necessary and that in order to engage in quality research we must develop capacities for working with multiple ways of knowing so that, 'Our knowing is then consummated in practice, the skill or knack of doing things in the world which, of course, gives rise to new encounters'. The research participants were, therefore, key in helping to identify the more salient themes as I returned to topics that seemed to be important and asked if they would talk more about them. The themes, therefore, emerged as part of an organic process. In addition, some themes were discounted because they were potentially harmful to the participants through revealing certain aspects of their lives / views. This partly depended on my key informants and what was going on in their lives at that time. This would seem to align with the argument that participation in research is political (Freire 1970; Reason 2005). Furthermore, this example would seem to align with Okely's (2011, p. 23) suggestion that, '…when they first hit the field. They should be open to what is there. This could indeed be a form of drifting'. Consequently, the decision to focus on these particular themes took a significant amount of time; as the research evolved I was drawn to an eclectic number of seemingly disparate themes that took a while to piece together into the particular story of this research. Another researcher might have selected different aspects as significant, however research is, in my view, an 'art' not simply a science.

Okely (2011, p. 28) has stated that, 'fieldwork is an embodied experience, not simply a cerebral one'. My experiences were certainly informed by embodied responses and influenced me unconsciously in the minute adjustments to dress. This drifting and embodied understanding led to my interest in clothing discussions and provided much

opportunity for discussion. A challenge for the inexperienced researcher, however, is being 'led' by the participants rather than drawing from the data. Again, the duration of the project was also important here however as throughout the research not only did the participants' lives change, equally mine did; my children grew older and my mother retired and became elderly. These experiences certainly allowed me to identify with some of the issues that participants were experiencing and also helped to highlight the differences in struggles of different classes and ethnicities, but of the same gender.

Throughout this research process, the relationship between myself as researcher and the participants evolved into what I subsequently came to view as a braided approach that developed into two parallel relationships: the first being the academic researcher and the participant, and the second being close friendships. These two distinct aspects of the relationships can be perhaps best described as intertwined with the result that it becomes difficult to separate the two aspects. Both sides become interwoven, creating a challenge when attempting so disentangle **evidence and** elucidate **data** from personal interaction. The following paragraph illustrates the braided nature of these relationships along with some of the insights and opportunities that developed as a result of this relationship. One aspect of the embodied experience of fieldwork presented an opportunity for examination when my son became sick during the research process and I explained my anxieties to the research participants. During this time, my son had to eat a specific, highly restrictive diet and preparing it consumed much of my time and energy. During this time, I was deeply touched when one of my participants fed me and ensured that whenever I called she had food on. Perhaps it could be argued that I was always there at meal times, but I did not change my visit times. I certainly felt that I was being emotionally supported and nourished by this relationship. Throughout this difficult and stressful time we spent a considerable amount of time discussing food and food preparation. During this time, I became aware that my research participant also began a healthy eating campaign and removed all junk food from the house. Prior to this the younger children in the family had consumed lots of junk food and sugar.   Gift giving also provided insights into participants' emotional lives.

Engaging in this research process has also influenced my own world-view. Struggling as an adult learner to balance the familial responsibilities, financial pressures and struggles over self-belief and confidence certainly provided me with an insight into the

challenges faced by people choosing to engage in education.   In addition, throughout this research process I have become aware of the complicated nature of discrimination, the fact that it is intersectional and complex, insidious and pervasive. My understanding of research has altered throughout this process so that I recognise it as evolving; no one particular approach can be considered ethical rather it is a practice that must be constantly worked at and strived for.

For the participants in this research, I understand that the values they started off with as youngsters are now tempered by the knocks to confidence they have experienced throughout their life journeys in attempting to engage with a system that is exclusionary and, at times bewildering. Yet they are also quietly gaining strength in their choices regarding their own life journey. My admiration for their tenacity in the face of adversity and challenge causes me to consider the need to continue this process as their lives and my life evolves, particularly as they transition into different life stages. I am also struck by the gift of friendship that I received as a result of this research process. Recently I was made aware of this as I met with some of the participants in a local café. They brought along a friend (also in her early twenties) who was naturally suspicious of me and unsure of the nature of my relationship with them. As we sat chatting in the café, the friend and some of the participants engaged in typical youngster behaviour of goofing around, exchanging flirtatious glances with other customers, whilst simultaneously attracting disapproving glances from others and taking endless 'selfies'. I wondered about the likelihood of women of a different generation, social background, education, country of birth, and life experience having the opportunity to come to know each other in such circumstances. I also reflected on the fact that I had witnessed their celebrations and struggles over the last decade. This has been an honour for which I am truly grateful.

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