Gypsies and Travellers: Secondary School and Social Inclusion

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Abstract

This thesis centres on the relations between Gypsies and Travellers and school, and seeks to explore how these relationships encourage or discourage participation in mainstream education. School is an arena where conflicts can reflect wider tensions between marginalised groups and those who are dominant in society. The thesis reveals how policies aimed at increasing the educational inclusion of minorities like Gypsies and Travellers can in fact be undermined by core procedures and processes in the education system which promote certain forms of cultural capital and are culturally closed and inflexible. This, combined with institutional and overt racism, has marginalised Gypsies and Travellers in schools. This thesis demonstrates that racist and assimilatory policies have been met with resistance by some Gypsies and Travellers. This resistance has in some cases manifested itself in a counter-culture which contains rigid notions of cultural identity that encourage distance towards, and mistrust of, the wider community, including school. Others are attempting to acculturate and are embracing formal schooling. Both strategies have profound effects upon identity and relations with the wider community

An ethnographic approach was adopted, which included participant observation, role-taking and interaction in schools and on Traveller sites. Much previous educational research has been normative. That is, there has been a focus on input variables such as intelligence measurement and social class, and a comparison of them with attainment. What happens between input and output has tended to be ignored. This is especially true for Gypsies and Travellers and explains why I adopted an ethnographic approach, and why this thesis adds new insights to the existing literature. I would also classify myself as a critical researcher. I have played an active role in the campaign for Travellers' rights and hope this thesis will impact on existing policies that affect this minority and promote positive change as well as raising important questions as to what educational and social inclusion mean in British society.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers are described by the Department for Education and Skills as "one of the most at risk groups" in the education system, on account of their low attendance, attainment and achievement. Alienation and poor relations are evidenced through high rates of bullying towards Gypsy and Traveller pupils and the high exclusion rates from school (DfES, 2003, 3). This thesis attempts to explore some of the factors behind this educational exclusion, and identify Gypsy and Traveller educational aspirations. It considers formal schooling in its present form and the relations between Gypsies and Travellers and school.

The history of Gypsies and Travellers suggests they are among the most excluded minorities in society (Fraser, 1992; Clark and Greenfields, 2006). A common theme over the centuries has been that Gypsies and Travellers have been subjected to considerable pressure to conform (Mayall, 1988; Richardson, 2006). In response, some have stubbornly resisted change, whilst some have assimilated and others have adapted (Acton, 1974). In the present climate of marginalisation in which Gypsies and Travellers find themselves cast as the ultimate 'pariah' group, a number of policy makers contend that greater educational participation, civic engagement and integration are the keys to tackling exclusion (Liégeois, 1998). Others argue that these positions merely present new means of achieving the cultural assimilation of Gypsies and Travellers, and are the policy and philosophical responses of a society only able to countenance superficial difference whilst striving evermore for conformity and uniformity from its minorities (Okely, 2001). This thesis charts the progress of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in mainstream secondary education and seeks to illuminate the reality of these competing fears and hopes, comparing them to the actual experiences of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in secondary education.

Some Gypsies and Travellers continue to interpret formal schooling as a cultural threat that has a corrosive effect upon group identity (Bhopal, 2004). This leads to a refusal by many Gypsies and Travellers to participate in the complete formal education programme of either primary or secondary schooling but primarily through a rejection of all or parts of secondary schooling (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Many young Gypsies and Irish Travellers, by conforming to cultural expectations, opt out of school and subscribe to traditional roles, which tend to be heavily gendered, for example: boys working with their fathers and girls doing domestic work (Levinson and Sparkes, 2003).

Existing UK legislation concerning education, which is also compliant with international law and conventions, enshrines the rights of parents, guardians or legal carers to choose the education for their children (Article 2, Protocol 1, European Convention on Human Rights; Section 7 of the Education Act 1996). This choice does include the possibility of parents educating their own children either themselves or through the employment of tutors. These rights, though, are subject to compliance with a set of legal conditions which, in the main, place a responsibility on parents to ensure their children receive an efficient and suitable education. A 'suitable' education is defined as one that primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he or she is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole.

One could contend that traditional Traveller socialisation practices, where children leave school and are socialised through work with their parents, can be culturally justified and possibly supported by human rights law. However, the education Gypsy and Traveller parents choose for their offspring must not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he or she wishes to (Section 9 Education Act 1996). Some might argue that traditional Traveller socialisation practices and an absence of formal schooling deny children their basic human rights, as the lack of formal schooling can limit their ability to adapt and thus minimises life chances and choices. Yet others might argue that a mono-cultural education system which favours the dominant culture poses equal dangers. In this system, it is argued Gypsies and Travellers find themselves at a disadvantage in a learning environment that values academic success rather then experiential learning and skills development. Moreover, it could be claimed that it is a situation that fails to offer a safe and secure learning environment as a consequence of the

prejudice and bullying meted out to Gypsy and Traveller pupils (Bhopal, 2004), and compromises and undermines basic rights.

These are the principal legal, social and cultural issues in the debate on Gypsy and Traveller participation in formal education. This debate, and the range of options available to Gypsies and Travellers, present an important set of questions and challenges and are at the core of the discussion in this thesis, which explores whether schools are inclusive through the analysis of Gypsies and Travellers' experiences of school. In this process the study explores the diversity of responses, ascertaining their cause, nature and effectiveness.

<u>Who Are Gypsies and Travellers?</u>

Gypsies are believed to have originated from India and arrived in Europe in the fourteenth century (Renhfish, 1975, 232). After their arrival in Britain in the sixteenth century they were referred to by the term 'Gypsy' by non-Gypsy society. It is claimed by a number of historians that the term 'Gypsy' is a shortened form for 'Egyptian' and stemmed from the belief that early Gypsy settlers to Britain were held to be from Egypt (Fraser, 1990, 1992). Some scholars have argued that Gypsies used such an identity as a ruse to claim support as persecuted Christians fleeing a Muslim state (Fraser, 1992). Others believe it was to heighten their exoticism in the eyes of the gullible native population in order to increase the demand for their fortune-telling and other such practices (Okely, 1983, 14). It would appear that by the sixteenth century this alleged charade was beginning to fragment, since in one decree they were referred to as 'false Aegyptians' (Acton, 1974, 61).

In continental Europe titles such as 'Gitanes' or 'Cigany', which correspond with Gypsy, were used. In recent times this title has been perceived as pejorative, as it is a term that was framed by non-Gypsy society and is said to conjure up images of dishonesty and deceit (Acton, 1974, 61). Increasingly the term 'Roma' is being advocated by campaigners for Roma rights. The term 'Roma' derives from the Romanes language and means 'person'. The term was originally more widely used in Eastern Europe but in Britain many Gypsies refer to themselves as Romany Gypsies or Romanichals. In recent years the term Roma has become associated with the ethnogenesis of the Gypsy population. In an attempt to create unity amongst the Gypsy diaspora efforts are being made by some to create the notion of a

Rom nation (Foszto, 2000; Lucassen et al., 1998, 5).

The terms Gypsy or Roma exclude the Celtic nomadic groups, such as the Irish and Scottish Travellers. As with the Gypsies, mystery shrouds the origins of the Irish Travellers. A number of observers have asserted that they are descended from the landless poor left in the wake of the Cromwellian wars in Ireland or the Irish famine (Kenrick and Clark, 1995). A growing number of scholars argue that the origins of the group came much earlier. Robbie McVeigh states:

"Irish Travellers have their roots in a Celtic (and possibly pre Celtic) nomadic population in Ireland. They are very definitely not Roma (or Gypsies). Neither are Travellers the product of An Gorta Mor or the 'Great Hunger' of 1843 - 50. While the original Irish nomadic population may have been supplemented at various times in Irish history by dispossessed labourers and other marginalised people, there was clearly a distinct Traveller population before the famine" (McVeigh, Third World on Our Doorstep, 1997)

Irish Travellers have travelled within the UK at least since the nineteenth century (Niner, 2002, 7).These Irish nomads who now live in Britain prefer the title 'Traveller'; a term also favoured by a section of the Gypsy population. One does not need to be a nomad either to use such a term. Some housed Gypsies or Irish Travellers argue that being a Traveller is a state of mind. So long as contact is maintained with the people and family who still lead a travelling lifestyle, and many of the traditions are still practised, then it is held that people can continue to deem themselves to be Travellers (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995, 16).

The drawing of parallels between Gypsies and Irish Travellers has not always been welcomed by all who occupy these groups or by commentators. The concept of 'pure blooded' Romany Gypsies as higher and better than 'tinkers' (derogatory term for Irish Travellers) started with the amateur Victorian ethnographers known as the Gypsylorists (Hayes, 2006, 26). The prejudice of the Gypsylorists has also been evident amongst sections of the Romany Gypsy community. In the 1970s Irish Travellers often and increasingly became scapegoats upon whom even the Gypsies heaped the blame for misfortunes caused by anti-Gypsy and Traveller sentiments. They often argued that it was not the fault of Gypsies that an anti-social action had occurred, but that Irish Travellers were responsible (Acton, 1974, 205). Such sentiments are sometimes reflected in the prejudices of wider society. In 1999, the Home Secretary Jack Straw stated that the anti-

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social behaviour of some Travellers was intolerable but not the fault of, or typical of, the traditional law-abiding Romany Gypsies (BBC radio interview, 22nd July, 1999). Many construed this as an attack on Irish Travellers (Power, 2004, 11). In recent times the media have also not been averse to the disingenuous ruse of proclaiming themselves not to be racist by applauding the 'law-abiding Romany Gypsy' but castigating the 'lawless Irish Traveller'. These themes were played out by The Sun newspaper in its sensationalist 'Stamp on the Camps' article in 2005 (The Sun, March 9th 2005).

I have included Irish Travellers in my investigation despite the differences between Irish Travellers and Gypsies, particularly on the subject of their origin, because there are striking similarities. Both have their own group languages, Romanes for Gypsies and Shelta/Gammon for Irish Travellers. Both are said to maintain rituals of cleanliness and hygiene (Mayall, 1996, 8). Both have a nomadic tradition and favour self-employment. They also maintain strong traditions of in-family socialisation and training, which at times has precluded participation in formal education (Okely 1996, 8). Above all, both groups share a common experience in terms of the exclusion that they are exposed to at the hands of a hostile majority, who themselves rarely make any distinction between the two. Probably the most compelling argument for including Irish Travellers in my study is that both groups merge in the minds of policy makers as one group, and the policies that have been framed have had an impact on Gypsies and Irish Travellers alike. Some refer to Gypsies and Travellers as a 'community' but care must be taken, despite the similarities between Gypsies and Irish Travellers, not to devise essentialised and generalised depictions of this group, for there is great variation.

Responses To Change and Persecution

Soon after their arrival in Europe in the fifteenth century, Gypsies were subjected to violent policies of 'ethnic cleansing'. In Britain it was a capital offence to be a Gypsy from the early sixteenth century onwards; an offence that remained on the statute books until the mid-eighteenth century (Sandford, 1973, 211; Mayall, 1988, 97). Such laws and proscriptions were replicated across Europe. Acton has argued that the emergence of a policy of persecution of Gypsies ran parallel with the development of agrarian capitalism

in the sixteenth century. Capitalism thus sought to reduce the freedom of movement of nomadic, agrarian labourers such as Gypsies (Acton, 1994; 1996, 45). Although being a Gypsy in itself ceased to be a matter for prosecution from the eighteenth century, Gypsies and Travellers continued to be a much maligned and excluded minority (Mayall, 1988). It is not surprising then that Gypsies and Travellers are highly suspicious of mainstream society. The Romany scholar and activist, Hancock, claims that the Gypsies' cultural preservation has been assisted by the Gypsies' cultural behaviour and by the perception that the 'gadge' (East European term for non Gypsies) pose a threat, in which regular contact with them is culturally debilitating and can even lead to contamination (cited in Crowe and Kolsti, 1991, 137; Sutherland, 1975, 258).

This distancing is connected to the Gypsy concepts of taboo and purity which involve elaborate washing rituals and marime practices. The anthropologist Judith Okely (1983) claims that these rituals and the belief that the 'gorgio' (British term for non Gypsies) are impure because they do not maintain such rituals, serves to foster a desire for separation (See also Sibley, 1981, 15). It has been claimed by some that there has been a decline in such cultural notions of pollution (Hawes, 1997, 15). Concepts of purity and taboo and 'distancing' can be viewed as part of Gypsies' ethnic boundary maintenance but also as a response to the exclusion they have suffered at the hands of the wider community as a 'pariah' group (Barth, 1975).

Gypsies and Travellers continue to suffer from marginalisation, and acute economic and social exclusion (Crawley, 2004; CRE, 2006). These current problems have their origins in the post-war period which witnessed a process of rapid urbanisation and development and greater regulation of open space (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995). Consequently Gypsies and Travellers' traditional stopping places became scarce or access to such was denied (Renfisch, 1975, 56). Simultaneously, change was afoot in the rural economy, where the increasing mechanisation of agriculture eroded the symbiotic relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the farming community, where Gypsies and Travellers had secured seasonal labour and stopping places (Acton, 1974). The economic change and the shortage of stopping places led to an increase in what government came to term 'unauthorised encampments' - temporary Traveller encampments on disused land (Adams et al. 1975). In

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some cases and much to the chagrin of the settled community, such encampments appeared within the confines of what they deemed to be their living space: on roadsides, municipal parks and housing estates (Acton, 1974). These perceived encroachments increasingly ignited conflict. In response, the Labour Government of Harold Wilson supported a private members' bill in 1968, tabled by the Liberal MP Eric Lubbock (later Lord Avebury), to establish a duty on local authorities to develop Traveller sites, which were largely council-owned and managed (1968 Caravan Sites Act).

Despite the fact that successive secretaries of state failed to utilise the available powers to intervene where local authorities failed to provide sites, by the time of the abolition of this duty in 1994, approximately three hundred and twenty four sites had been created, a network of sites which continues to function (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995; Niner, 2003). Large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now live on these sites. Many occupy marginal space next to major communication networks or even municipal rubbish dumps or sewage works (Niner, 2003, 18). Furthermore, much to the anger of many Gypsies and Travellers, the management regimes on such sites are heavily regulated and regimented and in some cases have undermined the Traveller economy by banning or restraining their economic practices (Power, 2004, 32; Kenrick and Clark, 1999). Exorbitant site rents have also undermined the viability of traditional economic practices and pushed some into welfare dependency (Irish Traveller Movement, 2007).

In spite of the relatively large number of sites developed, the number did not match the demand or population growth. Many Gypsies and Travellers, either voluntarily or, in some cases through compulsion, moved into housing that was largely council controlled (Ofsted 1996, 14; Shelter, 2007). A number of Conservatives MPs also agitated for the privatisation of future Gypsy and Traveller site provision (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995). As a result the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act repealed the duty to provide sites (Clements and Morris, 1999). Gypsies and Travellers, and campaign bodies, opposed the repeal (abolition) of the duty (Clements and Morris, 1999, 2002). However, the Government did introduce a Planning Circular 1/94 on Gypsy and Traveller sites. This circular requested local authorities to assist Gypsies and Travellers to identify land they could purchase and develop as private sites (Crawley, 2004). A government circular is

considered to be inferior and less binding than a statutory duty and thus many councils gave little support to this policy initiative (Crawley, 2004).

Given that local authority provision was no longer expanding, Gypsies and Travellers found themselves under pressure due to the lack of vacant local authority pitches. Roadside encampments were not a viable option either, given the ever-present threat of eviction (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Increasingly, Gypsies and Travellers mounted retrospective planning applications where they would purchase land, move onto it and then submit an application (Richardson, 2007). The official term for these became 'unauthorised developments'. An estimated ninety percent of these applications fail, as opposed to a twenty per cent failure rate for planning applications from the settled community (CRE, 2006). This; combined with the growing shortage of pitches on local authority sites, also led to an increase in unauthorised encampments and developments (Clements and Morris, 2002). Both developments have led to escalating conflict and the increasing portrayal of Gypsies and Travellers as 'law breakers' and 'anti social' particularly by the tabloid press (Richardson, 2006). This reached a peak in the 2005 election campaign with intense tabloid campaign on Gypsies and Travellers and the Conservative Leader Michael Howard's seven-point charter that advocated greater enforcement against unauthorised encampments and developments (Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

Clearly, these external influences have had a profound effect on Gypsy and Traveller identity as families have had to overcome, adapt to or navigate major and rapid changes influencing their living space, economic practices and interaction with the wider society. The perseverance of the romantic image of the bow-top Romany wagon and unfettered nomadism makes some people think that the present Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles are a corruption of more exalted past lifestyles and that present lifestyles represent a state of deterioration (Kendall, 1997, 74; Adams et al.1975, 37). The debate as to what constitutes the 'true Gypsy' is a long standing theme. As far back as the nineteenth century, the amateur ethnographers that belonged to the Gipsy Lore Society convinced themselves that the true Romany Gypsies were a fast-disappearing group: a doomed 'primitive' of a past, pre-industrial age (Hayes, 2006, 14). Much of this debate rested on notions of racial purity. Mayall provides a critique of this analysis:

"The association of Gypsies with members of a clearly homogeneous race of people, identifiable by reference to notions of blood purity, rests on false assumptions, weak methodology, factual inaccuracy and general inapplicability. Nineteenth century Travellers derived from indigenous tinkers, pedlars and basket makers as much as from an oriental place. To become obsessed with tracing pedigrees as an essential stage in identifying a separate race is to be diverted from the key issue, the relationship between the travelling and settled societies." (Mayall, 1988, 186)

Despite the consequences of change often imposed by greater regulation of nomadism and external economic factors, Gypsies and Travellers have been able to maintain the notion of a community through a process of adhering rigidly to traditional boundaries, which has involved maintaining distance from the wider community (Hawes, 1997) but where appropriate those boundaries have been redefined through adaptation and cultural borrowing {bricolage} (Acton, 1997).

The dramatic economic and social changes of the post-war period have produced a range of responses from Gypsies and Travellers. Acton (1974) devised a typology reflecting the various strategies adopted by Gypsies and Travellers. Some rigidly resist change, whilst others adapt and acculturate, whilst retaining some notion of ethnic identity. Others choose to assimilate and reject their membership of the group outright, whilst some are overwhelmed by the pressures of external change and undergo a process of cultural disintegration in which cultural identity and economic practices are undermined.

Table (1.1) – Gypsy and Traveller Responses to Change

Conservatism
Gypsies minimise their cultural contact with the outside world and either oppose or are apathetic to any change in their way of life.
Cultural Adaptation
Gypsies accept influences from other cultures but as a bonus rather than as a replacement. Nationalist tendencies among Gypsies are a form of cultural adaptation, as they seek a new status within the host society.
Passing
Gypsies decide to compete with 'gorgios'(non Gypsies) on their own terms, concealing their origins. This is essentially integration by individual decision.
Cultural Disintegration
Gypsies become impoverished and demoralised, losing self-respect and self-confidence. The collapse of their economy destroys the will to resist the dominant cultural perspectives of the host society.

Adapted from Acton, T., 'Gypsy Politics and Social Change', Routledge; Kegan Paul, 1974, 35-36.

These strategies and outcomes can have clear consequences for educational participation. 'Conservatives' reject formal schooling, particularly in the early or later stages, and continue to prize traditional in-family training and socialisation practices (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). The educationalists, Heighway and Moxham, describe the process of separation by traditionalists and avoidance of school for their children:

> "From the point of view of the Traveller, there is the ever present risk of his children being subjected to the influences of a system of values foreign to traveller traditions and culture, which, moreover, he does not wish to acquire" (Heighway and Moxham, 1998, 7).

The Gypsy Tommy Lee further emphasised the cultural fear of school, which at times has been profound:

> "The young people today, the moment they sit down they've got a book in their hands. It's all wrong. I don't reckon that a lot of education is any good. If you've always got a book in your hands you ain't got time to do anything else. I've seen a lot of travelling children being educated. I reckon they should be left alone. I reckon that if a Gypsy wants to be a Gypsy, if he's going to be a Traveller, let him be." (cited in Smith, 1975, 15)

Some Gypsies and Travellers use education as a means to seek out new economic activities and status yet continue to self-ascribe as Gypsies and Travellers, and retain some or many of the group's traditions and thus acculturate (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Clark (2001) has suggested that hostility towards school has shifted with economic change and that a growing number of Gypsy and Traveller parents are beginning to accept the value of schooling (See also Cemlyn and Clark, 2005, 156). Those who engage in greater participation in the education system and the other institutions of society may incur the opprobrium of their more traditional peers who may also castigate their change and adaptation. Liégeois captures this predicament:

> "The Gypsies face a fundamental dilemma: to remain Gypsy in the face of the new policy of assimilation, they must organise; but organising to deal with non-Gypsies means learning to use their tools (such as associations with presidents, treasurers, secretaries, and so on), which in turn means accepting values and ways of doing things that modify lifestyles. These come to resemble those of non Gypsies, which is just what the Gypsies are seeking to avoid. The organised Gypsy now in a position to respond to the non-Gypsy looks around to find that tradition has been left behind". (Liégeois, 1986, 167)

Others, in response to marginalisation and the internalisation of stigma, succumb to assimilation (Power, 2004). According to Joyce these processes have damaging implications:

> "The negative stereotypes of Travellers that exist generally within Irish Society have a negative impact on Travellers' image of themselves, particularly young Travellers. They begin to hide their identity. Much of the reason for this is linked to

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their experience in school. The fact that a Traveller is Irish and white means that they can often pass for a settled person. But many younger Travellers in housing estates face a crisis, because they are sometimes not accepted by settled people as their neighbours. The negative images of Travellers affect their confidence and their pride in their own identity and community and their desire to protect or change it." (European Roma Rights Centre, Issue 3, 1999, 37)

For some, the pressures of exclusion are such that they succumb to a process of cultural erosion (cultural disintegration) and are unable to effectively retain their traditional identity (Hawes and Perez, 1996). In the opinion of some observers, poverty has for this sub-group led to a sense of exhaustion, loss of self-respect. As with those sections of non-Gypsy society who suffer the same deprivation, there has been an increase in crime, alcohol and drug abuse (Adams et al., 1975, 277; MacLaughlin, 1995, 51; Liégeois, 1998, 70; Power, 2004).

This thesis discusses the implications of these responses amongst the Gypsies and Travellers. It seeks to assess whether formal schooling can be utilised to strengthen coping strategies and what impact this may have on identity. The thesis also attempts to determine whether formal schooling is in itself an agent of exclusion and explores the nature of resistance amongst Gypsies and Travellers to the school system.

Evidence cited at the start of the chapter suggests that Gypsies and Travellers are at a significant disadvantage in the formal education system. This has major implications for the social inclusion and well-being of school-aged Gypsies and Travellers. Ivatts, an expert in this area and adviser to the DCSF, comments on the consequences of educational exclusion for Gypsies and Travellers:

"At a societal level, however, their vulnerability will be considerable. They are more likely to be a burden on the state in terms of health care and social security payments. Some may be involved in petty, or more serious, criminal activity. Drug abuse and car theft are already reported to be on the increase. At another level, children are frequently involved in dangerous occupations, work long hours, drive heavy vehicles well before age, and use potentially harmful tools and materials. Their parents may also be guilty of breaches in child labour, child protection and health and safety legislation." (Ivatts, 2005, 13).

This statement highlights the human cost of educational exclusion but also the importance of attempts to identify causes of, and remedies for, this minority's educational marginalisation. The statement also reveals the degree of conflict that now exists between Traveller and mainstream socialisation practices. In this search for insights into the causes of educational exclusion for Gypsies and Travellers, many of the themes that have been prominent in the past debates on Gypsies and Travellers and formal schooling are still of considerable importance. Hence the following chapters chronicle and assess perceptions of formal schooling by Gypsies and Travellers, and seek to determine whether it is viewed as a useful tool that can even enable their distinct way of life to continue and flourish or it is still deemed by some as a tool to absorb and assimilate their culture acting as an agent of discrimination, reflecting the prejudices of wider society. In the past these divergent views of formal education caused tensions as to what precise format the curriculum should take, and where and for how long schooling should be delivered. This thesis explores this debate and its present significance.

Overview of Thesis

Chapter Two – 'Gypsies and Travellers: Exclusion, Racism and Identity' provides a theoretical framework to the thesis and explores concepts such as social inclusion, racism, identity and counter-cultures and poses a series of questions on these themes which are explored further in the thesis.

Chapter Three - 'Education and Inclusion' - gives an historical overview of educational policies and Gypsies and Travellers, and argues that over a long period of time education has been viewed as a tool that can change and adapt Gypsies and Travellers, either to overcome exclusion or as an instrument of assimilation designed to foster conformity.

Chapter Four – 'Methodology' - discusses the research methods employed and as part of a process of reflexivity the various roles and 'selves' brought into the research field

Chapter Five – 'Economic, Social, Emotional, Cultural and Symbolic Capital' – uses the

definitions of the forms of material and abstract capital as framed by Bourdieu to give a social and economic overview of the research field and the divergent strategies that Gypsies and Travellers have adopted.

Chapter Six– 'Life Stories' – uses biography to map out the 'life stories' of two Gypsies and Travellers in the research field. The two symbolise the divergent life strategies adopted by Gypsies and Travellers in South Forest. As part of a process of auto-biography and reflexivity I assess the impact of my own life story on my relations with these three participants and possible influence on interpretation.

Chapter Seven - 'School Organisation and Curriculum' – evaluates whether the schools observed possess the flexibility, resources or understanding of the Gypsies and Travellers to create inclusive learning environments. Special Educational Needs and provision is also considered and explores how such provision and classifications may reflect dominant cultural interests and marginalise excluded groups like Gypsies and Travellers.

Chapter Eight - 'Gypsies and Travellers: Rejection, Resistance and Accommodation with School' - explores the Gypsies' and Travellers' interaction with school. Two principal groups are identified. Interaction for one group termed the 'resisters' was frequently characterised by conflict and resentment towards school. For the 'mainstreamers' participation and attainment in school was more highly valued by these Gypsy and Traveller pupils who had reached a form of accommodation with school. The chapter explores why these positions were adopted and what their ramifications were for participation in formal schooling.

Chapter Nine – 'Changes, Boundaries and Exclusion' - considers the implications for Gypsies and Travellers of cultural conservatism and adaptation, and how Gypsies and Travellers had adopted a range of responses to change primarily focusing on resistance and counterculture theory.

Chapter Ten – Conclusion – summarises the findings of this thesis and seeks to identify the

implications for thinking about exclusion and identity. Policy implications are also discussed.

Chapter Two

Social Exclusion and Gypsies and Travellers

Madanipour *et al.* describe social exclusión as:

> ".....a multi-dimensional process in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes. When combined they create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhoods". (Mandipour et al., cited in Byrne, 2005, 2)

Social exclusion, in this view, is therefore a complex phenomenon incorporating a range of processes which prevent individuals and groups from participating in the rights that members of a social and political community would normally expect to enjoy (Kofman and Sales, 1998). As the definition cited above suggests, it also has a strong spatial dimension, an issue particularly important for Gypsies and Travellers. Social exclusion is also strongly linked to gender and ethnicity (Samers, 1998). Social exclusion thus provides a useful framework for analysing the experience of Gypsies and Travellers.

This chapter begins by discussing the concept in general and the different ways in which it has been used and interpreted and then goes on to discuss in more detail some specific dimensions that are particularly relevant to Gypsies and Travellers: the spatial dimension which has interacted with economic factors to produce particularly sharp forms of exclusion; and the ways in which racism has compounded this exclusion. It then goes on to explore the ways in which Gypsy and Traveller identity has been sustained and transformed in response to racism and exclusion. The final sections link these debates directly to the experience of schooling and the different responses to this exclusion.

Different Meanings of Social Exclusion

The term social exclusion gained widespread currency following its use in the European Union's Second Poverty Report in 1988. Poverty was seen as too narrowly associated with

distributional issues and not sufficiently concerned with processes of exclusion or detachment from society (Room 1995) on the one hand, and processes of inclusion through political participation on the other. This conceptualisation of exclusion owes much to French thinking on society as a moral order bound together by mutual rights and obligations (Spicker, 1997). Social inclusion came to dominate New Labour's political programme and one of its first policy developments was the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit.

Initially, critical social policy theorists were wary of the term, arguing that the concept of social inclusion drew attention away from the focus on inequality which was central to the concept of poverty. Levitas (1996), for example, has criticised the Durkheimian roots of the notion in which incorporation into society becomes the dominant theme rather than the analysis of the inequalities inherent within capitalist society. The notion has however, been increasingly adopted as a means of comprehending the complexity of processes which shape groups or individuals relations with society. As Samers (1998) suggests, there are many `social exclusions' and the concept is best understood as a set of multidimensional and dynamic processes.

Social exclusion is a term that has thus proved to be highly elastic (MacGregor, 2003, 71). Levitas (1998) identified three 'discourses' of exclusion which were evident in academic and policy debate concerning exclusion and which represented very different approaches to the causes and remedies for exclusion. She termed these RED (redistributive discourse); SID (social integration discourse) and MUD (moral underclass discourse). In brief the causes of exclusion are attributed respectively to lack of money, lack of work and lack of morals (Levitas, 1998). These discourses or ways of thinking are not, however, mutually exclusive. Official policy towards Gypsies and Travellers has, for example incorporated aspects from all three of these perspectives.

The redistributive discourse' (Levitas, 1998, 13) sees social exclusion as primarily a consequence of poverty and lack of power. In this view concern with poverty is broadened to acknowledgement of a more complex set of processes which exclude individuals from full participation. The solution proposed would involve a radical shift in resources and

power. Gough and Eisenschitz (2006) for example point to growing income inequalities associated with economic restructuring and de-industrialisation. This has, they argue, created growing pockets of 'surplus labour' and poverty which are most evident in urban former industrialised areas. The populace of such neighbourhoods have in general a stark choice between low waged and low skilled employment, welfare support or entry into the 'informal economy' (Smith, 2005; Byrne, 2005). Furthermore, neo liberal policies have widened income differentials, primarily through eroding welfare support mechanisms and progressive taxation (Gough *et.al*, 2006). Thus overcoming social exclusion would, in this view, involve radical shifts in the political and economic structures of society.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the 'moral underclass discourse' which has proven to be highly influential (Levitas, 1998, 7). This approach deems exclusion to be a consequence of a lack of responsibility and motivation but also a deficit of skills. Initially such notions were actively championed by 'New Right' theorists such as Charles Murray. Murray argued that the cause of poverty was family break-down but also a lack of a work ethic, combined with a welfare system which fostered dependency and inertia and patterns of behaviour that deviated from those of the mainstream and maintained poverty. This meant that the 'underclass' were more susceptible to criminality, low educational attainment and aspirations, and unemployment (Murray, 1984; 1990). While the redistributive discourse blames social structures for poverty, the moral underclass approach puts the blame on the poor themselves. Their individual characteristics are seen as responsible for poverty rather than structural factors and this implies a pathological model of the poor (Alcock, 1997, 29). Part of the solution to poverty is deemed by these thinkers as lying in reducing the role of the state, in particular the range and level of welfare support available to the poor (Bryne, 2005). This is a radical departure from influential post-war discourses which underpinned the welfare state and held that poverty was a result of the failure of the economy and that government intervention and support could remedy social ills such as poverty (Morris, 1994; Wilson, 1978; 1987).

The 'Social Integration Discourse' has been dominant in official thinking. This emphasises the primary importance of the labour market, and specifically of paid work, as the means of inclusion. Training and education are seen as a means of enabling the individual to

secure inclusion through accessing the labour market. Thus education becomes a predominant means of securing the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. Critics argue that as with the 'moral underclass discourse' the focus of the social integration discourse is on the individual and that it represents a 'deficit model' as opposed to focusing on the reform of the structure and nature of the society we live in (Smith, 2005). Oscar Lewis's 'culture of poverty' theory can be viewed as part of 'deficit model' theorem but also as part of a 'social integration discourse' with its emphasis on educational intervention. According to Lewis, the 'culture of poverty' involved a design for living a different quality of life from that of the middle class. The pressure of coping with everyday survival led to a 'present time' orientation: lack of opportunity led to low aspirations. Exclusion from the political process was reflected in feelings of powerlessness and fatalism. For Lewis this culture was a reaction and adaptation to conditions of poverty but was also something that was transmitted from generation to generation (Lewis, 1965). Lewis's theory had a profound effect on policy in several countries, where an emphasis has been placed on education and training to break the cycle of poverty (Burke and Leacock, 1971, 211).

As Byrne has noted when the term 'cultural exclusion' is often utilised to refer to the alleged cultural deficiencies of the excluded (Byrne, 2005) as in Lewis's model. 'Cultural exclusion' can, however, be used to describe a process where those with a culture that diverges from the mainstream find themselves marginalised as with Gypsies and Travellers. Social inclusion discourses generally give little consideration to notions of 'cultural inclusion' and there is an inherent assumption that the excluded share common cultural and material aspirations with the mainstream. This trend has been most evident in the sphere of education. While many educationalists have argued that increased educational participation could provide Gypsies and Travellers with a lifeline, enabling them to overcome poverty, welfare dependency and political marginalisation and achieve social inclusion (Liégeois, 1998), an important issue to consider in terms of education is the curriculum offered to Gypsy and Traveller pupils and the values and pedagogic traditions that shape the curriculum. There may be a danger that those Gypsies and Travellers who attempt to 'integrate' will be rewarded merely by low paid, low skilled employment and a corresponding loss of identity and inability to return to previous lifestyles (Gmelch, 1986).

These differing interpretations of social exclusion have been prominent in social policy debates but moral underclass and social integration discourses have often been in the ascendency in particular with regards to responses towards Gypsies and Travellers from the state and wider community. A continual theme throughout the history of Gypsies and Travellers has been the depiction of this group as criminally and socially deviant (Caffrey and Mundy, 2001; Kenrick and Clark, 1999) Hence, deficit models which pathologise Gypsies and Travellers have been at the fore of the State's response to the social exclusion of this group both in the UK and on the continent of Europe (Helleiner, 2003, 12; McCarthy, 1994; European Roma Rights Centre Issue 1, 2002). Across Europe policy makers influenced by the culture of poverty theory have advocated compensatory education and training to break the perceived culture of deprivation amongst Gypsies/Roma and Travellers. However, past experience shows that such approaches with their emphasis on integration into mainstream society can be at odds with existing survival mechanisms and a way of life which Gypsies and Travellers have developed at the margins of society. As a consequence of such integration some Gypsies and Travellers have found themselves in a more perilous situation with the fragmentation of traditional support networks and practices leading to isolation, cultural trauma and welfare dependency (Stewart, 1997; 2001; Blasco, 1999; Arnstberg, 1998).

Many of the former communist governments in Central-Eastern Europe implemented a particularly narrow version of this position. It was asserted that inclusion would be achieved once they were able to 'proletarianise' this group, replacing a dysfunctional culture with one of the 'organised worker' committed to and given a stake in the furtherance of a socialist society (Stewart, 1997; 2001). Education was to play a major role in the assimilation and 'cultural rehabilitation' of the Gypsy population. The communist authorities initiated a major programme of compulsory education for Gypsy children. However, once transformed into industrial low skilled workers these Gypsies found themselves more vulnerable to the dangers of long term unemployment when the central command economies of Eastern Europe were transformed into free markets (Guy, 2001). Despite the profound failure of policies influenced by notions of assimilation and cultural superiority the culture of poverty still holds currency in its application to the Gypsy population in Europe. Despite the collapse of Communism, a 'moral underclass' discourse is still highly influential in shaping perceptions of Gypsies and the response of the State

(European Roma Rights Centre, 2002).

In the UK, social integration and moral underclass discourses have been prominent in New Labour's social policy agenda and stance on Gypsies and Travellers. At the forefront of the agenda of New Labour in 1997 was a commitment to tackle social exclusion (Levitas, 1998) and including the exclusion Gypsies and Travellers experience (ODPM Select Committee, 2005, 1).

New Labour has generally avoided a more radical conception of social exclusion. Hence it has focused on issues such as parenting, educational underachievement, crime and anti-social behaviour. It has argued that exclusion can be rectified through education, training and individuals exercising the responsibilities that come with their rights (Levitas, 1998, 7; Colley and Hodgkinson, 2001). New Labour argues that increased educational opportunity increases the prospects of the marginalised achieving success in a meritocratic society. For some critical theorists, this is merely a ploy to legitimise inequality, described by one set of critics as giving everyone an "equal chance to be unequal" (Halsey et al, 1999). Others criticise New Labour's approach as running the risk of developing compensatory strategies based on a deficit model of the excluded (Hayton, 1999, 7). Thus it could be argued that the focus on the individual through the provision of greater opportunity and training fails to challenge the structural and theoretical underpinnings of exclusion which continue to marginalise a number of groups including Gypsies and Travellers.

Recent research has demonstrated the structural problems which Gypsies and Travellers face. The Traveller economy which in essence is highly entrepreneurial and based on in-family training and cooperation and self-employment has been severely affected by post-war changes (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Work restrictions on sites, the shortage of sites and a growing skills gap have all undermined the viability of the Traveller economy (Niner, 2003; Irish Traveller Movement, 2007; Johnson and Willers 2007). There are reports of growing unemployment and welfare dependency. The CRE Gypsy and Traveller Strategy for England and Wales (2004) noted a lack of systematic data on Gypsy and Traveller employment. However, it reported anecdotal evidence which indicated that 'unemployment is high among Gypsies and Travellers (CRE, 2004). Site managers in

Niner's 2003 study reported that 'on seven out of ten sites a minority of households work', with over one third of site managers noting that less than ten per cent of residents were in employment (Niner, 2003).

Official responses have, however, focused on integrating the population into the mainstream through education and training rather than tackling these wider issues. Labour's package of initiatives regarding Gypsies and Travellers has been enveloped under a 'rights and responsibilities' approach:

> "The Government's policies on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and enforcement are set within a framework of rights and responsibilities in which everyone's rights must be equally respected but where, at the same time, equal standards of behaviour are expected from all. Creating and sustaining strong communities is at the heart of the Government's Respect agenda and will have benefits for the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities alike."(ODPM, 2006, 5)

Labour has given a strong focus to the concerns of 'Middle England' preoccupied with notions of Gypsy and Traveller lawlessness and anti-social behaviour, and decreed that Gypsies and Travellers must have due regard to the rights of the wider community and adhere to the laws that govern their way of life. To this end Labour has introduced a number of enforcement initiatives (Richardson and Ryder, 2009).

The 'conservatism' of New Labour towards Gypsies and Travellers is reflected in the fact that Labour did not legislate on Gypsies and Travellers until 2003 and when they did the focus was upon increasing enforcement powers against Gypsies and Travellers occupying unauthorised encampments (Anti Social Behaviour Act, 2003). Actual legislation designed and focused to deliver accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers did not materialise until 2005/6 (The Housing Act 2005; Planning Circular 1/2006). To date no new sites have been delivered in part because of the slow and cumbersome site delivery mechanism designed by the government which shied away from the stronger and more direct powers which campaigners for Travellers' rights pressed for and instead opted for mainstreaming Traveller accommodation needs with that of the wider communities (Richardson and Ryder, 2009). Thus policy remains firmly rooted within an integrationist and moral underclass discourses.

Space and Exclusion

Spatial exclusion or 'ghettoisation' itself is a contributing factor and central feature of exclusion. Spatial exclusion describes the concentration of the excluded into certain geographic areas generally characterised as urban areas in a state of decline, displaying poor accommodation, employment opportunities and services (Gough et al., 2006). These communities acquire reputations as dangerous places, and thus may become ghettoes where 'dangerous classes' are formed (Mee and Dowling 2000; Morris, 1994). This process has also been apparent for Gypsies and Travellers, where their occupation of marginal space has led to the 'othering' of this minority (Kendall, 1997). In such discourses the 'space' itself rather than structural factors is identified as the culprit for exclusion in a form of spatial 'determinism' that links exclusion to a dysfunctional and deviant localised culture (Gough et al., 2006).

Many local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites occupy highly marginalised space often being located in deprived neighbourhoods (Niner, 2003) where the local populace are themselves suffering acute levels of exclusion and urban deprivation which may further impact on Gypsies and Travellers' life chances. A large number of these sites are actually within locations considered marginal by the urban poor themselves, near railway lines, busy roads and industrialised areas, and often a combination of more than one of these (Richardson, 2007). The sense of isolation and division created is profound (Niner, 2003). Thus some Traveller sites are 'ghettoes within ghettoes', and are considered by the wider community as places to be avoided (Richardson, 2007). It has been claimed that spatial exclusion can contribute to the internalisation of negative perceptions, leading to demoralisation and frustration (Handler and Hasenfeld, 1997) and forms of dangerous and escapist behaviour (Taylor, 1999). It may be that these factors are responsible for the high rates of depression and mental ill heath that are have been found amongst Gypsies and Travellers (Clark and Greenfields, 2006; Shelter, 2007) and growing reports of addiction (Power, 2004).

Hooks (1991) argued that being located at the margins of society can provide some advantage for the excluded as 'spaces of radical openness' can be formed, more removed from the gaze of dominant society. Thus excluded communities occupying 'marginal

space' can more readily form an ideology of resistance. The identification of certain spaces as theirs is a prominent element in the construction of Gypsy and Traveller identity. Gypsies who occupy their own land often argue that such occupancy enables them to escape the interference and loss of autonomy that residency on a local authority site brings, likewise nomadism as practised through the occupancy of unauthorised encampments is also cherished as an accommodation and lifestyle choice that can bring freedom and cultural independence (Chapters Five and Six).

On the other hand such lifestyle choices have in recent years increased the chance of conflict with wider society as Gypsies and Travellers have increasingly been compelled to launch retrospective planning applications to live on their own land or occupy prominent public spaces on account of the growing shortage of unused land and greater regulation that land is now subjected to (Chapter One). The use of space by Gypsies and Travellers in such a way can be deemed to present a challenge to 'majoritarian' society which has led to an increase over the last thirty years in draconian measures to curb these lifestyle choices (Richardson, 2006). For others, greater control over lifestyle has been imposed through the regulations attendant with local authority sites or the assimilation that has befallen many Gypsies and Travellers who have entered into housing because of the shortage of sites and curbs on nomadism (Shelter, 2007). Spatial exclusion and the lack of cultural manoeuvrability this incorporates, is one of the most distressing dimensions of exclusion for Gypsies and Travellers, the situation is summed up in the following quote by a Traveller:

(It is as if the Gorgio is saying): "Of course we must cater for your interesting differences, but we must encourage you, to the point of coercion, to stop being different – or at least make it as difficult as possible" (Hawes and Perez, 1996).

Racism, Ethnicity and Identity

The exclusion experienced by the urban poor can be compounded by racism. Thompson argues:

"Racism is a significant part of social exclusion, denying opportunities to people

from ethnic minorities in a wide variety of settings and circumstances. This is not simply a matter of a minor level of unfairness that can be dismissed with comments like: 'Well life can't be totally fair'. It can be a serious source of oppression to people who are denied significant opportunities on spurious grounds of 'race' or 'ethnicity' " (Thompson, 2007, 72).

Official reports have suggested that a high proportion of the socially excluded and residents of poor urban neighbourhoods are often ethnic minority groups and new migrants (Cabinet Office, 2000; SEU, 2001 a & b); unable to secure a strong footing in the waged economy these groups are susceptible to low incomes or welfare dependency (Thompson, 2007, 94; Gough et al 2006). In some cases poverty, discrimination and at times a desire to secure communality and benefit from supportive social networks by living in close proximity to co-ethnics has created neighbourhoods with distinct ethnic identities (Gough et al, 2006). These bonded communities with strong expressions of identity can create tensions with other ethnic groups and in particular the indigenous population who perceive more recent arrivals as securing better and more favourable treatment than them and as the cause of their exclusion (Gough et al, 2006). The exclusion experienced by ethnic groups can be compounded not only low income but unequal access to services and income opportunities as a consequence of discrimination (Gough et al, 2006).

Gypsies and Travellers experience these forms of exclusion in particular acute forms. The group is both highly visible as a racialised or 'pariah' group which often provokes moral panics, but at the same time are largely invisible in the minds of policy makers and service providers (CRE, 2006). The identity of individual Gypsies and Travellers may itself be invisible as they may choose to not identify as Gypsies in some situations and not in others.

The experience of racialised 'white' groups has been inadequately understood within the predominant framework of academic thinking and policy on race relations in Britain which has emphasised skin colour (Solomos and Back, 1996). As Back (2002) argues, generalised accounts of race have created a black white dualism that depicts a range of ethnic groups as a homogeneous, while the term 'black' creates a supposed political unity which hides divisions (Lloyd, 1994 cited in Hewitt, 2005). These forms of generalisation mask the complexity of particular groups' relations with wider society and obscure a

deeper understanding of their exclusion. Such generalisation also hides white ethnic groups' experiences of racism. Irish people, for example, who experience high levels of discrimination and exclusion, have remained largely invisible within the policy agenda (Hickman and Walter, 1997). Anthias and Yuval Davies (1992) argue that there are 'racisms' rather than 'racism', that the experiences of racism are specific to particular groups which are historically grounded. The experiences of these groups need to be probed and understood in order to gain a real understanding of their experiences. Mac An Ghaill has drawn attention to the lack of attention to the concerns of Gypsies and Travellers.

> "Equally significant is the social positioning of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain, who are currently receiving much negative media attention. There is a long history of neglect, both by the state and anti racist movements, of the material and cultural experiences of Gypsies and Travellers" (Mac An Ghaill, 1999, 77).

The concept of ethnicity provides a useful framework for exploring these issues. Rather than relying on skin colour or other physical traits as a marker of identity, it avoids imposing a blanket identity over a diverse range of groups which is often a consequence of using the term 'Black' (Modood, cited in Abbott, 2004, 105). Ethnic groups involve the social construction of an origin as a basis for community which can be historically, territorially, culturally or physiognomically based (De Vos, 1995). The formation of ethnic groups involves the construction of social boundaries that determine who can belong. As the quotation from De Vos implies, these are heterogeneous may include belonging through birth, being born in the right place, conforming to cultural or other symbolic practices or language.

While ethnicity may be seen as primordial and unchanging, others see it as situational, that is manipulable as circumstances demand or allow and acquiring importance in particular circumstances (Jenkins, 1996, 65). Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992) argue that identity is not immutable but changes overtime and in response to concrete economic, political or ideological conditions. Thus ethnic groups are not static or rigid entities. The boundaries that separate them from outsiders and confirm identity for members are constantly being reinterpreted and remade. Interaction with 'others' is an important element in determining who and what group members are. As Barth (1969) observed, ethnic distinctions do not depend on the absence of social interaction and acceptance, but on the contrary are quite often the very foundations on which social systems are built. Interaction in such a social

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system does not lead to its liquidation, but through change and acculturation, cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence. Therefore, the mistrust, fear and rejection of mainstream society, has contributed to the preservation of Gypsy and Traveller cultural identity. This is most graphically illustrated by their full or partial rejection of formal schooling (Chapter One). The external restraints placed upon interaction with a 'pariah group' such as Gypsies and Travellers have helped maintain the strong boundaries between Gypsies and Travellers and wider society (Barth, 1969; 1975).

The boundary of an ethnic group is always gendered and often organised around specifically ascribed gender roles relating to sexuality, marriage and the family. These communal boundaries are often defined by the social expectations of women, including honour, purity and mothering, and often symbolise the role of women as an ethnic identity (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992, 113). It has been observed that many Gypsy and Traveller females are strongly encouraged to leave secondary school, thus protecting them from perceived unwelcome and corrupting influences and take up traditional, domestic roles instead within the community such as helping their mothers care for younger children, and manage the household when they in turn marry (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Critics argue that such conservatism impinges on the freedom of Gypsy and Traveller women, subjecting them to a double form of discrimination: patriarchal control and the discrimination of dominant society (Kendall, 1997).

While women have suffered profoundly because of high exclusion levels, experiencing acute ill health and other pressures (CRE, 2006; Kendall, 1997) in some respects they have been more adept than males at coping with change, being more likely than males to participate and achieve in educational and training programmes and even waged labour (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Dawson, 2000; Kendall, 1997). A growing defensiveness about masculinity (Levinson and Sparkes, 2003) may be attributable to the fragmentation of the Traveller economy and a resulting sense of demoralisation and a perceived loss of masculinity. There have been reports of growing tensions within families where changes have occurred to traditional Gypsy and Traveller gendered roles (Richardson et al, 2007).

The notion of ethnicity may thus imply particular ideas about what it means to belong to a group, or the meaning of identity. Essentialist views contend that an ethnic or cultural

group has an absolute and rigid set of historical characteristics that make up identity and are shared by all members (Woodward, 2000). Hall (1991; 1992) has argued, however, that identity is not fixed but is a fluid and dynamic concept that can change over time, syncretise and fuse with other cultures, in turn creating what have been termed 'new identities'. Identity is both imposed by others and also chosen by individuals as part of a sense of belonging. As Weekes puts it:

> "Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also more about social relationships, your complex involvement with others" (Weekes, 1990, 88).

Identity involves self reflection, self perception and agency. Simmel (1957) argues that individuals are not passive tools of culture but creative agents trying to work out the meaning of their lives, but that social life is a struggle and process of tension between individuality and group identity. Bourdieu (1990; 1993) develops this concept, arguing that identity is formed through both socialisation and interaction; self experience and culture fuse and negotiate responses to events. Thus Bourdieu's position involves acknowledging both the structures in which people negotiate their identity and the notion of autonomy and agency. The negotiation between biography and culture can produce mixed responses: culture can be a more constant and patterned variable than personal biography. It could be argued though that such responses are more predictable in times of tension when an individual might seek greater solace and protection in group identity (Woodward, 2002). Thus an individual's response to events may be shaped by the nature of those events but they may also find comfort and reassurance within a particular identity. Thus care may need to be taken in assuming that all cultures and identities are fluid and freely chosen.

These important points have been at the forefront of a number of recent studies which have sought to assess the experiences of ethnic minorities in the education system. To some extent such fluid notions of identity and culture have been absent in the study of Gypsies and Travellers where more essentialised treatments of the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers have predominated. The Parekh report rightly emphasises that the Gypsy and Traveller community like other minority groups is a community of communities (Richardson, 2000, 34). Within that 'community' not only are there a broad array of traditions but also outlooks and cultural responses and boundaries to interaction to the

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social environment in which they are located.

Racism and Policy - from Multiculturalism to the New Integration Agenda

The development of policies to manage the cultural diversity that arose from the increased post war migration to Britain of migrant labour, especially from former British colonies, has been a major feature of the policy agenda. These have involved a variety of strategies promoted at national level as well as at more local level through local authorities. The latter have been particularly important in relation to schooling.

In the early days, policy makers assumed that racism was caused by the 'strangeness' of an immigrant or ethnic group and that with the acculturation and eventual assimilation of these groups into majority culture, the problem would disappear (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992, 138). Hence, the role of the education system was to instil cultural conformity. From the 1960s it became evident that the 'melting pot' theory of assimilation did not work, and was perhaps not the right way to counter racism. In 1966 the then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, summarised this emerging policy change by defining integration as "....not a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunities accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance," (quoted in Rex, 1996, 55). The official view, for example in the government-commissioned Swann Report of 1985 assumed that once pupils learnt about other cultures, their ignorance, and hence the cause of racist attitudes, would be eradicated. Furthermore, the promotion of ethnic groups' culture in the curriculum would lead to a greater feeling of pride in ethnic pupils' culture and reduce the damage of negative self-image borne out of racist hostility, and would lead to higher levels of attainment (Rex, 1996, 65).

The forms of multiculturalism which have been promoted have, however, tended to be limited rather than involving bolder frameworks (Richardson, 2000, 42). Embodying a version of liberal 'tolerance' (Holmes, 1998) based on the assumption that there was a dominant cultural identity to which incoming ethnic minorities had to adjust, but to whom concessions could be made (Delaney, 2003, 93). This limited notion of multiculturalism is enshrined in the 1988 Education Reform Act, which stipulates that there should be

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'coverage across the school curriculum of gender and multicultural issues' (Klein, 1993, 149). Numerous reports have recommended the implementation of this policy towards Gypsies and Travellers (Ofsted, 1999; 2003).

Some minority groups have themselves been critical of multiculturalism, claiming that it caricatures their culture in a simplistic manner which often reduces the presentation of minority cultures as homogeneous, static and conflict free (Sarup, 1991, 31). This version of multiculturalism is claimed by the proponents of 'anti-racist' education not to deal with the central cause of racism, such as racist attitudes as expressed through teacher hostility and low expectations, bullying and institutional racism (Williams, 1989, 103; Bulmer and Solomos, 1999, 172). Anti-racist education, on the other hand, attempts to directly challenge forms of racism and injustice in the education system and society (Klein, 1993, 13). It thus attempts a more structural approach to the issue, akin to the 'RED' discourse in relation to social exclusion.

Anti-racism has, however, been criticised for relying upon superficial generalisations and over focus on institutional factors to the neglect of gender and class issues (Rattansi, 1992). Furthermore, commentators like Gilroy have argued that anti-racism has been dependent upon rigid conceptions of racial identity which assume that actors are the passive agents of homogeneous cultural identities (cited in Gillborn, 1995, 78). According to Klein, there is confusion about what anti-racist policy may involve, since the term has applied to disparate issues as anti bullying strategies; policies that aim to address power inequalities in schools through employing more teachers from ethnic minorities; and education to help children understand and deal with racism and stereotyping (Klein, 1993, 13). Criticism of the kind of anti-racist strategies promoted by local authorities emerged in the 1980s when it was argued that they did not question the basic structures of the British economy and society and could be essentialised and racist (Gillborn, 1995, 11; Gillborn and Billings, 2004, 39).

It has also been argued that the promotion of policies aimed at supporting particular minority ethnic groups and the celebration of minority cultures led to the exclusion of some white children, especially white working class children who may perceive themselves as having an invisible culture and even being 'cultureless' (Newell, 2004, 111;

see also Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992, 160). In some cases this has triggered a white backlash (Hewitt, 2005). Some on the political right have denounced 'anti-racism' as 'political correctness', a pejorative term that implies some form of left-wing tyranny (Solomos and Back, 1996, 115).

The twenty first century has seen a return to earlier assimilationist policies with the new agenda of 'Britishness' (Sales, 2009). The reasons for this are complex but result not only from the criticisms of previous policies noted above but from economic and political changes which have been seen as undermining social cohesion. Jock Young, writing at the end of the 1990s, noted a growing mood that tolerated superficial difference, yet sought to absorb and sanitise diversity whilst reviling more fundamental cultural differences (Young, 1999, 59). While race relations legislation has prevented the public expression of hatred on grounds of race, asylum seekers have become increasingly racialised and the expression of hostile attitudes towards this group can give a wider legitimacy to racist expressions (Lewis, 2005). The 'riots' of 2001 in Northern English towns gave a major impetus to the integration agenda and calls for the development of new forms of citizenship as expressed in the subsequent White Paper on Immigration and Asylum (Home Office, 2002) while the events of '9/11' raised concerns about the loyalty of Muslims and increased what some have called 'Islamophobia' (Sivanandan, 2007, vii; Kundnani, 2007).

Bourne argues that prevailing philosophies on diversity have come full circle with the 'integration agenda' which is highly critical of multiculturalism and calls for all minorities to adhere to the central values and practices of British society (Bourne, 2006, 1). A leading proponent of this view is Trevor Phillips, chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, who claimed that multiculturalism had created cultural enclaves which nurture racial discontent and challenge society's central values. He suggests that Britain is "sleep walking to segregation" (Phillips {speech}, 2005)

Phillips's argument has been widely criticised for failing to recognise that economic factors and racism have caused segregation or to note the different meanings attached to multiculturalism and the benefit derived from policies founded and influenced by it

(Ousely, 2007; Ryder and Solly, 2007). It reflects a return to the old liberal concept that racism will end when minorities assimilate and conform. The Labour MP Diane Abbott has accused Phillips of being too close to the Government as he has ".....concentrated on attacking multiculturalism and a sub-Blunkett agenda of "citizenship" and "integration". These themes avoid conflict with government, and lay the blame with black and Asian people for their own plight." (The Independent, 2 December 2006). The Parekh Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain commented that the notion of Integration is misleading; as it implies "a one-way process in which minorities are to be absorbed into the non-existent homogeneous cultural structure of the 'majority'" (Richardson, 2000, Preface x).

This growing intolerance of those who are different – and who are seen as being legitimate targets not covered by anti-racist legislation - may explain the increase in hostility towards Gypsies and Travellers. From 2004 the press appeared to launch a sustained media campaign on Gypsies and Travellers, which some Gypsy and Traveller campaigners felt was sensationalist and incited racial hatred (Clark and Greenfields, 2006; Richardson, 2006). By 2005 so firmly had Gypsies and Travellers become installed in the pantheon of popular hate groups for the British public, that they formed a key part of the Conservative's general election campaign, which pilloried them alongside asylum seekers (Richardson and Ryder, 2009). The Conservatives castigated Gypsies and Travellers under their 'proud to be British' campaign in a key note speech and series of advertisements for 'breaking the rules' through retrospective planning applications this played upon a popular stereotype of deviant and lawless Travellers. Margaret Thatcher during her premiership had imitated 'Powellism' and utilised anti-black racism to unite Conservatives by portraying themselves as defenders of national identity (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992, 56). It could be that Gypsies and Travellers, together with asylum seekers, now perform a similar function and may continue to do so.

'Moral panics' and a fear of 'folk devils' help to normalise mainstream institutions and values (Jenkins, 1996, 166; Cohen, 1972). Dominant forces in society attempt to promote hegemony by looking for supposed opposites; this helps to define 'who' and 'what' they are. In contrast to democracy and freedom that is portrayed at their essence as being 'Western' and 'British', 'Islam' and the 'East' are depicted as spawning terror. In contrast to 'law and order', Gypsies and Travellers are deemed to be lawless and anti-social (Richardson, 2006).

Thus for Gypsies and Travellers a growing mood of intolerance, and a debate that is veering ever closer to advocating assimilation, could influence policy agendas and pose serious difficulties. Gypsies and Travellers have in part retained their strong identity by a system of cultural border guards that has, at its essence, maintained distance between them and the wider society. This distance has preserved a set of life strategies and values different from those maintained by wider society. The space for maintaining that distance has become much reduced and this has major implications for the future of Gypsy and Traveller identity.

Schools, Racism and Counter Culture

Schools are institutions in which racial conflict is brought into focus and can be particularly acute (Gilroy, 1992, 55). They have, as suggested above, been crucial in the development and implementation of varying policies aimed at integrating different groups. Schools also play a key role in the maintenance and transmission of culture and are one of the arenas where Gypsies and Travellers have more direct interaction with mainstream society. Gellner argues that modernizing societies require the development of a common culture since complex and fragmentary societies require shared ideas and meanings. Thus the state creates a mass education system which imposes a single culture. Minority cultures are effectively squeezed out of the system or quashed to create a single culture from above (Gellner, 1983 cited in Woodward, 2000, 126). Thus minorities such as Gypsies and Travellers may fare poorly in school because they have been socialised outside of the dominant culture.

As Gramsci suggested, capitalist society maintains control (or hegemony) not just through physical control but also through the ability to impose their ideas on the masses, even though this vision of society may not actually be in the interests of the majority (Gramsci, 1971; 1978). Maintaining hegemony may involve flexibility. As suggested above, there is a tension between permitting diversity and promoting common values and though the level of tolerance of diversity has generally been limited, the space given to other cultures through multicultural activities may be seen as promoting inclusion and common values.

In the 1970s studies dealing with gender, race or class in the education system were

frequently based on social or cultural reproduction theories in which those affected by exclusion and discrimination were seen as passive victims (For example, Althuser, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Such views have been challenged by others who assert that schools do not mechanically reproduce society by instilling mainstream norms and values to passive recipients (Riddell, 1992, 10).). School for many minorities is a cultural battleground, where dominant cultures maintain their superior power and suppressed cultures build their resistance (Fenton, 1999, 14) and resist the dominant culture (Cohen 1972). The existence of pupil subcultures and resistance undermines notions of cultural and social determinism by giving subjects a form of agency (Wright, Weekes, McGaughlin, 2000, 38).

Becker in his influential study on 'labelling' stated that 'deviance' is the infraction of rules set by social groups. Those who infringe these rules are labelled as outsiders. Becker argued that it is society rather than individuals that creates deviance, as the negative reaction of society pushes them out to the margins and sets them in opposition to it (Becker, 1973). Becker's theory is useful in relation to Gypsies and Travellers. Persecution and marginalisation by society has in some cases led to self-exclusion and distancing from wider society (Okely, 1983) including schooling. As a consequence of generations of marginalisation, in which their culture and way of life is deemed to be at odds with that of the mainstream, some Gypsies and Travellers have developed an outlook which discourages significant social contact and interaction with the wider community and fosters resentment towards authority. Agents of authority, be they council or school officials, are seen as embodying these general prejudices and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers. Self-exclusion has also been founded on a moral fear of the wider community, as is reflected in the perception that secondary school attendance can subject Gypsy and Traveller adolescents to promiscuity and drug use (Derrington and Kendall, 2004, 4; Cemlyn and Clark, 2005, 156).

From the 1970s a series of ethnographic studies appeared which claimed to have captured a more complex picture of school experiences in which pupil subcultures were able to articulate opposition and resistance. Pupil subcultures can be characterised as involving intensive interaction between the group, a common situation taking the form of a role or

problem and finally shared goals and values (a group perspective). Probably the most influential pupil subculture study was Willis's study of working class youth. He argued that, disillusioned with an academic curriculum and contemptuous of schools' claims to be a meritocracy, they developed coping mechanisms to manage their educational alienation which involved ascribing status to work avoidance strategies and which sought means to relieve the monotony of school life by seeking opportunities to have a 'laugh' (Willis, 1977).

A number of studies into pupil subcultures have focused on race (Majors and Billson, 1992; Gillborn, 1990; Sewell, 1997). Studies of Black male pupils by Mac an Ghaill and Majors and Billson claimed that they responded to the racism they endured in society and school by developing a 'Cool Pose', a strategy of opposition to school which enabled them to regain status and self esteem eroded by low teacher expectations and racism and show they were strong and proud and capable of survival despite the low status they were accorded by society. These researchers depicted their subjects as displaying accentuated forms of masculinity, suggesting that gender identity is socially constructed. This 'hyper masculinity' emphasised 'toughness' and reflected itself in ridiculing the masculinity of those who conformed, associating school work with femininity and in aggressive behaviour and conflict with staff.

Subculture resistance theories suggest that such masculinity is atavistically regenerating traditional cultural traits e.g. reactive white working class notions of manhood and African traditions of displaying masculinity through dance, initiation rituals and warrior cults (Majors, et al, 1994, 247). Mac An Ghaill has noted the connection between formation of pupil group and subcultures and the 'parent culture' suggesting a commonality of experience (Mac An Ghaill in Woods and Hammersley, 1993, 75). Thus subculture formation is a response to racism or economic exploitation and, in an educational context, to other forms of oppression such as 'labelling' where pupils are marked out as 'deviants' and 'outsiders' and 'streaming' (Gillborn, 1990, 33 and 64). Such theories are in marked contrast to the tendency to view subculture pupils through a deficit model which pathologises such pupils. This 'culturalist' perspective suggests that social behaviour is to be understood in terms of culture (Majors and Billson, 1993, 106) and that ethnicity and

not society is perceived as the problem.

Observers such as Mac An Ghaill view the actions of pupil subcultures as logical responses and coping strategies to deal with oppression (Woods and Hammersley, 1993, 147). However, the resistance of these groups is not always very productive and ideologically directed at 'hegemony', and can be described as 'magical solutions' (Cohen, 1972). It often contributes further to the problems of the group by not being logically or actually connected to the source of the problem and hence fails to confront the material base of subordination or offer an organised challenge. The sexism, strong machismo and racism of the 'lads' (Willis, 1977) and the 'cool pose' of alienated Black youth, which in some extremes can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, crime and disenchantment and cynicism (Majors and Billson, 1993, 5). These responses can be viewed at best as distractions from the real cause of oppression and at worst as self-harming and destructive tendencies that can help maintain the status quo by failing to pose effective challenge.

Studies of school counter-culture have tended to portray such activities as the preserve of male pupils. These studies tend to reaffirm the perception of female pupils as more passive or constructing less overt resistance such as 'accommodation within resistance', where Black female pupils reject the racist school but accept education and work on a strategic level to secure academic success (Mirza, 1992). There has in fact been an androcentric tendency in some accounts of Gypsy and Traveller pupils' experiences which has not paid sufficient attention to gender issues and, where it has, it has recorded rigid gender roles and patriarchy and failed to consider if these have undergone change and adaptation. Gillborn argues that another failing of subculture studies is to present a crude and polarised perception of alienation, what he terms a 'bipolar approach which lumps pupil actions into pro or anti school groupings. Instead he argues that a continuum ranging from relative commitment to alienation from the school value system will allow for the continuum and complexity of pupil adaptations (Gillborn, 1990, 99).

This approach has informed the empirical work described below. In the research field I was able to locate a clear and identifiable Gypsy pupil 'counter-culture' in one school. The causes of this form of resistance and the implications of pursing this strategy are discussed

below. The work, however, illustrates the variety of responses demonstrated by pupils within the study and the different forms of agency which different pupils used to pursue their goals.

These comments throw into further relief the importance of grounded research into the educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers and accounts for my adoption of an 'action sociology' perspective where I sought to look at the meanings and motives of action and interaction through the eyes of individuals, for it is this motivation which makes people act (Weber, 1985) but influenced by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Cohen, 1972) Both structure and action need to be studied in the analysis of subculture.

Social Exclusion and Social Capital

Social exclusion provides an important way of understanding the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers. Its multi dimensional nature allows a consideration of the specific characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers and in particular the spatial issue and race. The review of the concept has shown the contested nature of social exclusion and the tensions between integration and a more structural approach which emerge within all these dimensions. However, there is a tendency for the term to lead to a focus on economic factors to the neglect of the more subjective and cultural factors.

Bourdieu's work on different forms of capital provides a useful framework for drawing together these various aspects. He argued that positions of individuals within society are determined by the relationship of domination, subordination or equivalence as a consequence of the access provided to capital. This defines their position in a multidimensional social space, (fields), such as the family, peer groups, educational settings and work, where social actors are involved in a struggle where they seek to improve or maintain their position in the field (Jenkins, 2007). A key concept in Bourdieu's notion of capital is 'habitus'. Bourdieu defines habitus as part of a metaphor comparing the struggle in the field to a game "..a system of dispositions attuned to that game, the 'feel' for the game and the stakes, which implies both the inclination and the capacity to play the game, to take an interest in the game, to be taken up, taken in by the game" (Bourdieu, 1995, 18). The habitus of actors, their dispositions and classifications,

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are developed in response to experiences in the actors' environment and shape decision making by disposing the actor to do certain things and once acquired they underlie and condition subsequent learning and social experience and shape interaction in the field (Jenkins, 2007). So Bourdieu likens the struggle in the field to a game offering certain prizes or stakes (Bourdieu, 1995). The stakes in the social fields have been classified by Bourdieu into four different forms of capital: economic capital (the structure of work relations, material assets and access to profit), social capital (social networks of support), cultural capital (symbolic assets such as knowledge and education) and finally symbolic capital (prestige and social honour) (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Social exclusion focuses largely on the first of these, economic capital and has been discussed above. Social capital has been one of the most debated facets of Bourdieu's conception of capital. Bourdieu and Wacquant offer some elaboration of this concept:

> "Social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Acknowledging that capital can take a variety of forms is indispensable to explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies" Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 119).

Social capital may be one factor that maintains the economic position of the dominant and may diminish some of the negative features of exclusion for the marginalised (Halpern, 2007). Social capital has become popular with many social policy theorists, often building on the work of Putnam who propounded the importance of the concept in promoting the social fabric of society (Putnam, 2000). Those who subscribe to a 'communitarian' discourse suggest that strong forms of social capital centred on families can create social cohesion and increase social inclusion (Etzioni, 1993). Critics argue though that such coping mechanisms cannot overcome the exclusion caused by an unequal distribution of resources, at best social capital through self help networks can only mitigate the negative effect of exclusion for the marginalised but in themselves do not pose a major challenge to cycles of poverty (Smith, 2005).

Barth has noted the strong social capital that exists amongst Gypsies and Travellers and is one factor that has contributed to the continuance of this form of ethnic identity but also may have accentuated some aspects of exclusion as the particular form of 'bonding social'

capital that is predominant amongst Gypsies and Travellers has discouraged interaction with those outside the group and has in effect promoted distance and self exclusion (See Barth above).

For Bourdieu cultural capital rewards certain kinds of knowledge and penalises others. In the society that we live in one form of 'cultural capital' predominates, that rewards the 'dominant'. Those well versed in the behaviour and the language of the ruling class are well equipped to accrue 'symbolic mastery' (exam success) (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1990). Cultural capital therefore helps in the hereditary transmission of power and prestige but does so under the false guise of meritocracy and equality of opportunity (Jenkins, 2007).

Symbolic capital has also been a much debated concept in discussions centred on exclusion. Theorists have argued that 'honour' and 'prestige' have acted as a compensatory mechanism for the excluded and a central building block for subcultures (See the above section on counterculture). The typology devised by Bourdieu of capital will underpin chapter four where economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital are discussed in more detail.

This thesis explores how the multifaceted dimensions of exclusion, which is played out in economic positions, space, race, ethnicity and gender, impact on the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers at the very margins but also how successfully the various forms of capital (primarily economic, social, cultural and symbolic) enable Gypsies and Travellers to respond to exclusion and to what degree these variables influence interaction and relationships with the wider community and institutions like school.

Chapter Three

Education and Inclusion

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter examines the principles behind educational reforms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regarding Gypsies and Travellers and the debate waged in the post-war period over separate provision and integration into mainstream education. At the core of this debate are concerns about the preservation of Gypsy and Traveller identity. In the 1970s the integrationists triumphed, leading to the greater mainstreaming of education for Gypsies and Travellers (Ivatts, 1998; Waterson, 1997). However, a summary of educational reports, suggests serious failings in the educational outcomes of this agenda, as reflected in high levels of bullying, low achievement and attendance (Ureche and Franks, 2007; DfES, 2005). A recent letter from the then Education Minister Lord Andrew Adonis to directors of Children's Services lists a number of statistics that highlighted the level of exclusion suffered by Gypsies and Travellers. The letter states that in 2005, 22.5 per cent of pupils of Irish Traveller heritage and 14.7 per cent Gypsy/Roma heritage gained 5+ A-C GCSEs, against the average for all pupils of 54.9 per cent. Furthermore, 46 per cent of Travellers of Irish heritage and 42 per cent of Roma/Gypsy students were identified as Special Education Needs (SEN) without a statement in 2006 and were over four times more likely to be excluded than other pupils. Adonis described these statistics as "bleak" (Adonis letter, 16th November, 2006).

The literature suggests that education policies are failing Gypsies and Travellers. The most recent estimate of the number of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller pupils attending school is in the region of between 70,000 and 80,000 (Ivatts, 2005, 7). Evidence suggests that a high percentage of Gypsy and Traveller pupils are still excluded within the education system. In 2003 the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) report: 'Provision and Support for Traveller Pupils, 2003' repeated its view that Gypsies and Travellers are the group most at risk in the education system and stated: "The vast majority of Traveller pupils linger on the periphery of the education system. The situation has persisted for too long and the alarm bells rung in earlier reports have yet to be heeded" (DfES, 2003, 3). On the core issues of

access, attendance and attainment the report estimates that the overall secondary enrolment rate in areas that were visited averaged just over 60 percent and at Key Stage Four was 47 per cent. Furthermore, the numbers not enrolled had probably increased from 10,000 in 1996, to 12,000 in 2003 (DfES, 2003, 8). Average attendance rates were between 75 per cent and 73 per cent at secondary (DfES, 2003, 2, 9). The report concludes: "Traveller pupils are still the group most at risk in the education system. They are often the only minority group that is 'out of sight' and 'out of mind'" (DfES, 2003, 20).

Recent data on exclusion levels for Gypsies and Travellers (0.87 per cent) is much higher than the national average of 0.13 per cent. Such punishment is often interpreted by Gypsy and Traveller parents and pupils as an illustration of the fact that school unfairly discriminates against them (DfES, 2005; Derrington and Kendall, 2004, 56). Another important trend is the rise in Elective Home Education (home tuition), which has increased substantially, particularly with nomadic families. Some families, opting for such education, are largely sedentary; this preference may be a reflection of dissatisfaction with mainstream schooling. Concerns exist over the quality and monitoring of such provision (Ivatts, 2005, 24). The magnitude of the alienation of Gypsy and Traveller pupils can be measured by the large number who have been expelled or play truant (DfES, 2005).

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has given a detailed definition of what an 'educationally inclusive' school is. The guidance Ofsted inspectors are expected to use to judge whether schools are providing educationally inclusive learning environments states:

> "An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Effective schools are educationally inclusive schools. This shows, not only in their performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way. Rather it involves taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. The most effective schools do not take educational inclusion for granted. They constantly monitor and evaluate the progress each pupil makes. They identify any pupils who may be missing out, difficult to engage, or feeling in some way to be apart from what the school seeks to provide. They take practical steps – in the classroom and beyond – to meet pupils' needs effectively and they promote tolerance and understanding in a diverse society." (Ofsted, 7, 2000)

A review of the indicators for achievement, attendance and the exclusion of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in school suggests that educational policy concerning Gypsies and Travellers has failed to achieve social and educational inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers. Formal education has been viewed with mistrust by some Gypsies and Travellers and as counter-productive to the preservation of their way of life (Bhopal, 2004). Others have been alienated by alleged racist incidents inflicted by fellow pupils and teachers (Clark, 2001). Yet others have striven to gain access into mainstream education, participated actively in the curriculum and valued its benefits (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). At times mainstream society has viewed the formal education of Gypsies and Travellers as a 'civilising agent', a mechanism to assimilate Gypsies and Travellers. Others, though, have contended that formal education is a means by which Gypsies and Travellers can achieve equality, greater self-reliance and hence greater cultural autonomy and representation. In the following analysis it will become evident that these competing themes and positions are central in the discussion of education policy and inclusion and Gypsies and Travellers. It is a debate that has its origins in the nineteenth century, when the zeal of the moralistic Christians of the period, combined with the emergence of a strong state apparatus, first seriously brought Gypsies and Travellers to the attention of educators and policy makers in Britain (Mayall, 1988).

Education Policy 1870 – 1970

For some nineteenth-century social reformers, education was a tool by which Gypsies and Travellers could be redeemed and 'civilised' (Mayall, 1988). In this sense education was a more benign continuum of the policy of assimilation that had existed prior to this time, when Gypsies and Travellers were subjected to violent policies of 'ethnic cleansing' across Europe (Acton, 1994 see also Chapter One). The Church gave its support to the early anti-Gypsy laws of the sixteenth century, which violently sought to outlaw the Gypsy way of life (Acton, 1994). However from the early nineteenth century there was a change of tack more in tune with the principles of the Enlightenment, which saw the founding of several mission schools for Gypsies and Travellers (Mayall, 1988). The Quakers, for example were interested in settling Gypsies and Travellers in houses as a means of converting them to Christianity and educating their children (Adams et al., 1975, 5). One such advocate was John Hoyland whose 'Historical Survey of the Customs and Habits and Present State of the

Gypsies' (1816) was influential in church circles. Hoyland condemned Gypsies as 'idle' and possessing 'thieving habits', but believed that their moral reform could be achieved through basic education in charity schools from the age of six to fourteen (Willems, 1997, 144). Hoyland stated:

> "Their being placed among a much greater number of children, and those of settled, and in some degree of civilised habits, would greatly facilitate the training of Gypsies to salutary discipline and subordination." (Hoyland, 1816, 251)

The most militant advocate for education to facilitate the assimilation and moral reform of Gypsies and Travellers was George Smith of Coalville, a social reformer. He tried to persuade parliament in 1883 and 1887 to introduce Bills to bring education to Gypsy children by requiring Gypsies to register mobile dwellings, which would have enabled school inspectors to bring their powers to bear, regarding school attendance (Acton, 1974, 81). In the following quote Smith reveals his motivation: "The two main influences I want to bring upon the little travellers and their homes are the universally acknowledged social laws for educating those living in the gutter, viz...., education and sanitation.....I want the road to school made easier than the road to jail," (Adams et al., 1975, 8). However, because of the laissez-faire nature of politics at the time, Smith's Bills were blocked in parliament as they were deemed to be contrary to then popular notions of minimal state interference.

The Elementary Education Acts issued from 1870 including the Education Act of 1902, which extended compulsory schooling to the whole population, were ineffective in extending education to Gypsies and Travellers (Mayall, 1988, 148). However, in the Children's Act of 1908, the children of nomadic parents were required to attend school but for only 200 half-days instead of the normal 400 (Okely, 1983). The official reason given was that the state did not wish to interfere with the economic necessity of continued travelling for some Gypsy families. This exception may have been more attributable to a reluctance to see the admission of large numbers of Gypsy pupils into schools. One of the reasons for the failure of Smith's Bills to attract sufficient parliamentary support had been the animosity to such a development not only from sections of the Gypsy and Traveller community but also a range of parliamentarians concerned about the impact or reforms on

their constituents (Mayall, 1988, p.141). In fact, this exception was also due to the intervention of Dora Yates, a prominent member of the Gipsy Lore Society, an ethnographic study group. Yates used well-placed political connections to intercede, in order to minimise what she believed would be a disturbance to travelling traditions (Okely, 1983, 22). The authorities rarely enforced the partial stipulation for attendance and few Gypsy children attended school (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995, 66). The 1944 Education Act declared that all local authorities had a duty to make education available for all school-aged children in their area. Despite this, section 39 (3) of the Act maintained the practice of allowing Gypsy and Traveller pupils to only attend school for approximately fifty percent of the time. This continued to allow local authorities to escape their responsibility to provide education for this group (Johnson and Willers, 2007).

Post-war economic developments and growing urbanisation led to more Gypsies and Travellers relocating to urban centres (Chapter One). In theory it was now easier for Gypsy and Traveller families living a more sedentary lifestyle to attend school. In spite of this, many still chose not to and the authorities at both local and national level made little effort to create equal access for this group or to counter the racism and hostility that Gypsy and Traveller pupils met in mainstream schools, as is attested by recollections of abuse from those who did attend (Adams et al., 1975, 100-102; Clark, 2001). For some Gypsies and Travellers, school attendance was said by Waterson to have become more difficult as families were forced to live on roadside encampments, as the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act impeded Gypsies and Travellers from securing better stopping places (Waterson, 1997, 128).

In the post-war period, calls for the educational inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers began to grow on the part of policy makers. One of the most vocal was the Labour MP Norman Dodds, who came across Gypsies and Travellers as a consequence of their increasing encroachment into his South London constituency as a result of a growing shortage of sites. Dodds was involved in drawing up a nine-point charter, which included demands for communal centres on camps for recreational and educational purposes, and for a suitable scheme to be devised which would establish an appropriate system of education that incorporated special programmes and training for Gypsies and Travellers (Acton, 1974).

Dodds believed that education could enable Gypsies and Travellers to adapt and integrate with the wider society:

> "The realisation is that with few exceptions, Romanies recognise that some reorientation of their way of life may be justified but that this should be carried out in a humane way." (Dodds cited in Acton, 1974, 38)

As a result of Dodd's lobbying, Richard Crossman, then Minister of Housing, commissioned a survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population in 1965 which found that many were highly nomadic because of a lack of official sites and few, as a result, received any form of education (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995, 37). The educational situation of Gypsy and Traveller children was investigated more thoroughly in the 1967 Plowden Report 'Children and their Primary Schools'. Lady Plowden, who chaired the investigation, stated:

> "They (Gypsy and Traveller pupils) are probably the most severely deprived children in the country. Most of them do not even go to school, and the potential abilities of those who do are stunted.......Improved education alone cannot solve the problems of those children. Simultaneous action is needed by the authorities responsible for employment, industrial training, housing and planning." (Plowden, 1967, 59)

Commenting on this Okely argues: "Thus education was closely linked to a programme of assimilation into industrial waged labour and housing sedentarisation" (Okely, 1983, 76). Okely has claimed that the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, which created a legal obligation for local authorities to provide permanent sites for Gypsies and Travellers, rested on the assumption that Gypsies and Travellers wanted conventional employment and education (Okely, 1983, 38). These sites were not always popular, being located in marginal spaces and governed by a plethora of rules and regulations (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995, 44). In contrast, Adams et al. contends that these sites did increase school attendance, as some Gypsies and Travellers saw living on such sites as a contract with the wider community that involved sending their children to school (Adams et al., 1975, 261). An increase in sedentarisation amongst Gypsies and Travellers meant that it was harder for the state to ignore the anomaly of large numbers of Gypsy and Traveller pupils not attending

mainstream education, despite laws that stated that such education should be universal and compulsory (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995). Access into schools was also increased for Gypsies and Travellers following the case of Croydon Council, which in 1977 denied access to school to a Traveller child from an unauthorised site. The resulting protest led to the issuing of a government circular 1/81 calling for local authorities to provide education for all children. The circular declared: "The duty embraces in particular travelling children including Gypsies." (Department of Education Circular, 1/81).

From the late 1960s Britain began to acknowledge its status as a multicultural society (See Chapter Two). This recognition of diversity was reflected in various educational reports such as the Swann Report, which not only highlighted the problems of Britain's newly-arrived ethnic minorities from its former empire, but also drew attention to the plight of Gypsies and Travellers (Swann, 'Education for All', 1985, paragraph 2; see also 'The Education of Traveller Children', HMI, 1983). Thus policy-makers resolved that Gypsies and Travellers alongside other ethnic groups were to benefit from a new, multicultural education system that would offer integration and an end to discrimination. One of the most significant developments resulting from this mood was the creation and expansion of Traveller Education Services in most local authorities. They provide support and assistance for schools and Gypsy and Traveller pupils, and assist in home school liaison usually through specialist staff (Clark, 2001, .227).

Reflecting this acknowledgement of diversity in the UK, the principles of racial equality were enshrined in UK law. Under the 1975 Race Relations Act it became unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race. This law applies to Gypsies and Travellers, as a result of case law that established that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic groups (Clements and Morris, 1999, 1). In 2000, the law was amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, which stipulates that equal access to services, including school, must be provided to all, regardless of racial background, and that unlawful discrimination should be eradicated and good community relations promoted (CRE, 2006). However, the reports and statistics already cited regarding Gypsy and Traveller educational achievement and participation indicate that the goal of educational inclusion for this minority is far from being achieved and indeed presents many huge and

complex hurdles.

It is evident that it was not until the last forty years that policy makers actively considered the educational inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. A reluctance and delay on the part of the state reveals the animosity and outright exclusion advocated by society towards this minority (Stonewall, 2003). The debate over early educational policies aimed at increasing Gypsy and Traveller attainment was centred on the issue of whether provision should be made in the mainstream or by meshing it with traditional Traveller socialisation practices (Kenrick and Puxon, 1972). This debate proved to be bitter (Acton and Kenrick, 1986).

Separation versus Integration

From the 1960s there was an upsurge in campaigning for Gypsy and Traveller rights (Acton, 1974). Campaigners, aside from campaigning for more sites, called for greater educational opportunities. The Gypsy Council established caravan schools that provided on-site education (Acton, 2000, 107). Early attempts by the authorities to offer Gypsies and Travellers education in the 1960s and 1970s often involved on-site provision or separate classes in mainstream schooling (Waterson, 1997). The growing consensus amongst policy makers and educationalists was that educational provision for Gypsy and Traveller pupils should be provided in mainstream classes (Reiss, 1975, 99; Liégeois, 1998, 126). This process met with some opposition and at times failure.

A product of the growing campaign to raise awareness of the plight of Gypsies and Travellers was the formation of the Gypsy Council in 1966, and in 1970 its 'offshoot' the National Gypsy Education Council (NGEC), which consisted of members of the Gypsy Council and educationalists such as Lady Plowden, who became its chairperson (Acton, 1974). These campaigners were not always in agreement as to how education should assist Gypsies and Travellers. Sandford, a writer and film director, sympathetic to Gypsy and Traveller causes, describes the mood of those involved in a summer school in Wisbech:

"For the teachers there emerged a feeling of immense satisfaction mingled with

frustration; frustration at the restrictions of time-scale, satisfaction from involvement with extraordinarily appealing, affectionate, intelligent and responsive children, unharmed by conventional ideas and methods, whose initial reaction made us suspect that they would have felt unhappy in more formal educational contexts; and a realisation of the success of methods based on family units and mutual involvement of teacher and child." (Sandford, 1973, 7)

Thus some campaigners believed that formal schooling would interfere with traditional Gypsy and Traveller cultural identity and that education should be provided in a flexible way to complement and support traditional socialisation practices. Therefore some supported the permanence of on-site provision rather than it being merely a stepping stone to integration in the formal school system. Educationalists like Waterson took a contrary view:

"Gypsies and Travellers need mainstream education for the same reasons as all children do – so that they have access to the opportunities on offer at school and so that they can get to know and be known by their peers." (Waterson, 1997, 127)

Similar sentiments were echoed in an influential publication: 'The Shadow on the Cheese, 1972' by Wallbridge, an educationalist. This publication called for greater provision to be made for Gypsies and Travellers in mainstream education. These sentiments were reflected in the 1970s in the works of two other influential educationalists employed by the Department of Education, namely Reiss and Ivatts (1975). These studies recognised the racism that existed in mainstream schooling but also the influence of cultural factors in deterring Gypsies and Travellers from full participation. For these writers, though, participation in mainstream education represented the best approach to assisting this minority group and reflected the then ascendant approach of seeking to bring Gypsies and Travellers into mainstream education.

It was a strong desire to maintain the separate identity and traditions of Gypsies and Travellers by one faction that led to a split in 1973 within the National Gypsy Education Council. The integrationists, composed largely of professional educationalists and headed by Lady Plowden, broke away from the National Gypsy Education Council and established ACERT (The Advisory Council for the Education of Romanies and Travellers). Adams et

al. describe the split:

> "One group emphasised the uniqueness of the Travellers' life, stressing the basic integrity of the Travellers' culture, which should not be interfered with by education, and demanded that the education of Travellers must be by Travellers. A second group emphasised the need to use existing forms of the state system of education to achieve an integrated pattern of Traveller education." (Adams, et al., 1975, 107; see also Acton, 1974, 227)

Acton, who was part of the opposing faction to Dame Plowden and her supporters, claimed that ACERT was established with the intention of preserving a more moderate face to the Department of Education, and indeed funding from this department was diverted from the NGEC to ACERT (Acton and Kenrick, 1986, 44). Nearly fifteen years later these tensions were to be played out again as members of ACERT protested at the fact that Acton and Kenrick were commissioned by the European Parliament to participate in a study led by the educationalist Jean-Pierre Liégeois. The report was a synthesis of reports written within the (then) nine European Union member states entitled: 'School Provision for Ethnic Minorities: The Gypsy Paradigm, 1988'. ACERT boycotted this investigation and refused to participate on the grounds that Acton and Kenrick were not teachers of Travellers. Concerns were also raised over the commitment of Acton and Kenrick to mainstream education in raising educational inclusion as at the time both favoured the end of compulsory education for Travellers at thirteen; a proposal that the supporters of mainstream education for Travellers believed to be counter-productive (Waterson, 1997, 143; Acton 1988). This episode demonstrated the ire that could be provoked by supporting proposals that advocated alternatives located outside of mainstream provision.

The divisions that led to the formation of ACERT are indicative of a common strain of thought in some of the literature, namely the debate as to whether it is possible to achieve inclusion in mainstream education whilst preserving cultural identity for Gypsies and Travellers. There are some who still tenaciously oppose integration in the mainstream education sector. For example, the anthropologist and non-Traveller, Okely, has asserted that entry into mainstream education represents assimilation and such participation is, and should be, resisted by Gypsies and Travellers (Okely, 2001). In spite of such opposition, the policy debate has been dominated by those propounding views similar to ACERT,

hence the guiding principle behind much educational policy has been that Gypsies and Travellers should access education through mainstream schooling and be encouraged to, at least, remain until the official leaving age of sixteen (Naylor and Smith, 1998, 46). A key question to consider is whether this approach has been the most effective and inclusive.

A number of important indicators cited in this chapter suggest that some Gypsies and Travellers are far from content with mainstream education. For example, a significant number of Gypsy and Traveller adolescents also appear to be continuing to conform to traditional gender and socialisation roles by leaving school early and working with their families in domestic and economic roles (Levinson and Sparkes, 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Furthermore, a growing number of Gypsies and Travellers are opting for elective home education as an alternative to school (DfES, 2006). The research outlined in this thesis was carried out during a period of intense government activity as numerous educational initiatives were introduced with the avowed aim of raising educational inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers. Some of these are discussed in the next section.

Recent Educational Reforms

One of the most important post-war educational reforms to assist Gypsies and Travellers has been the establishment of Traveller Education Services. Traveller Education Services are a section of the local authority that is charged with assisting to raise the achievement and participation of Gypsy and Traveller children in school. The creation of Traveller Education Services proceeded rapidly in the 1990s with the replacement of the 'no area pool', a fund designed for pupils who did not fall into a territorial area, with new funding opportunities that enabled local education authorities to bid for specific grants that enabled the number of Traveller Education Services and staff deployed to increase (Derrington and Kendall, 2004, 3). In recent years Traveller Education Services have steadily moved from being the providers, points of liaison and organisers of education for Gypsies and Travellers, to a role of strategic advice where they support mainstream school in providing these roles (DfES, 2005). Recent reports acknowledge the important role they play:

> "Several of the secondary schools with Gypsy and Traveller parents have worked hard to build up good relationships. The help of the Traveller Education Service

team has usually been a crucial factor in gaining the confidence of the families."
(Ofsted, 1999, 36)

A report by the Commission for Racial Equality has noted that Traveller Education Services were widely trusted by Gypsies and Travellers, in part, because they are not engaged in enforcement but rather the education of their children and also had better practical understanding of the duty to promote race equality and good race relations (CRE, 2006). This was demonstrated in the Traveller Education Service collection of ethnic monitoring information from Gypsies and Travellers and their ability to overcome the reluctance to participate in such ethnic monitoring processes (CRE, 2006, 46). Funding limitations have at times in the past hindered this good work, as was noted by Ofsted: "The apparently intractable problem of increasing enrolment and attendance at secondary level stretched to the limit the resources of each Traveller Education Service" (DfES, 2003, 10; see also Clark and Greenfields, 2006, 217). Concerns have also emerged about the relationship between schools and Traveller Education Services and the role each should take in raising the educational inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers (Clark and Greenfields, 2006, 219). Ivatts highlights this dilemma:

"The dysfunction of the former is that resources are never really sufficient to allow a fully supportive service to the pupils within the schools. A further weakness is that schools are said to have attempted to 'off load' their responsibilities to Gypsies and Travellers onto Traveller Education Services and thus prevented or hindered the process of inclusion and mainstreaming." (Ivatts, 2005, 24)

Ofsted in 1999 made a number of key recommendations regarding Gypsies and Travellers, namely that improved data gathering and monitoring procedures should be established and used to set targets to improve attendance, attainment and behaviour and to review curricular and pastoral strategies and counter harassment by clearly stating in policy documents that this is unacceptable (Ofsted, 1999, 9). These intentions with regards to Gypsies and Travellers were more clearly articulated in the 2003 DfES report: 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils'.

"Raising the profile of race equality within the school will lead to more effective practice for all Gypsy Travellers. Ethnic monitoring and data collection at school level is fundamental in providing the means for schools to analyse the impact of their policies and procedures on Gypsy Traveller pupils. This analysis enables

resources to be targeted most effectively, raises expectations and ensures accountability. Successful implementation and monitoring of the schools Race Equality Policy will ensure that schools fulfil their duty to promote good race relations" (DfES, 2003, 6)

As is indicated at the end of this quote, the requirement to gather and monitor data is bolstered by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which stipulates that public bodies, including schools, must actively plan for equality of provision and eliminate unlawful discrimination. Furthermore, they are obliged to monitor equality variables and carry out impact assessments on the effect of proposed policies and decisions. Schools are also expected to produce a written statement on a school's duty to promote race equality (CRE, 2006, 68).

The Government contends that the action points contained within the Amended Race Relations Act with regard to the treatment of ethnic minorities will combat what the Macpherson report categorised as 'institutional racism', the collective failure of an organisation to deliver appropriate services to everyone, including ethnic minorities, which persists because of the failure of the organisation to fully recognise and address its existence and causes by policy and leadership (Macpherson Report, 1999, 6.34). In some cases, Macpherson concluded, racism was unwitting, as it arose from ignorance or a lack of understanding (Macpherson Report, 1999, 6.17). The Government argues that data collection enables detailed profiles on the educational achievement and experiences of minorities like Gypsies and Travellers to be drawn, leading to schools reflecting upon overt and unwitting racism and developing strategies to raise educational inclusion.

The problem with the use of data to build profiles of educational exclusion, and targets to close attainment gaps, is that they are dependent upon Gypsies and Travellers being prepared to reveal their identity in school ethic-monitoring processes. Fear of harassment or a lack of trust and confidence in the school are probably the principal factors explaining the apprehension and reluctance of many Gypsies and Travellers to declare their ethnicity (Power, 2004, 58). This impediment to building accurate profiles is also noted by the Department for Education and Skills. Ivatts found that the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data for January 2004 suggested that there were 7, 560 Gypsy and Traveller primary school pupils and 2,770 Gypsy and Traveller secondary school pupils. If

Ivatts's estimate of a total school aged Gypsy and Traveller population of between 70,000 and 80,000 pupils is accepted, then only 12 to 14 per cent are self-ascribing as Gypsies and Travellers (Ivatts, 2005).

Not only will this hesitance to self-ascribe hinder schools in developing appropriate strategies to assist Gypsies and Travellers, but school inspections that rely heavily on PLASC data (Ofsted Inspection Guidance, 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion', 2000) is impeded in determining the levels of educational exclusion of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Thus the inspection process, a major tool for activating schools to rectify failure to address exclusion for Gypsies and Travellers, is weakened. The regime of analysis and targets, though, may not always be sufficient to enable a school management team to identify the precise cause of Gypsy and Traveller pupils' alienation and by what means it should be remedied. The causes of such disengagement may in fact raise serious questions about the very suitability of a school's curriculum and its ethos; fundamental questions which some schools may be loath to explore and indeed be impeded from taking radical measures by the lack of manoeuvrability created by the complex and rigid bureaucracy of regulations that govern their work.

Critics argue that grant-maintained schools, now renamed foundation schools, which have new types of governance and admission procedures, weaken the strategic ability of local authorities to tackle racism (Brehony and Deem, 2003, 186). There are fears that further government educational reforms could actually be counter-productive to raising the inclusion of marginalised groups like Gypsies and Travellers. The Government, in its 2005 White Paper 'Higher Standards for Schools' continued to advocate and encourage the development of academy schools to tackle inner-city educational exclusion (HMSO Government, 2005). Academy schools are state-funded schools run outside of local authority control by private sponsors. These private sponsors can exert a large amount of control through their role on the governing body. Academies are allowed a degree of selection by aptitude and critics claim they could try and increase their success by ensuring the maximum number of pupils are admitted who are able and motivated to the ethos of the school. Research has already indicated a possible reluctance by some schools to admit Gypsy and Traveller pupils because of a perceived fear of their admission having a negative impact on attainment and exam results and their standing in school league tables

(Bhopal, 2000). This would be in contravention of the Race Relations Act (Johnson and Willers, 2007).

A government commissioned report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers suggests that the academies' school programme could lead to a two-tier education system and result in an "increase in stratification in social class" (The Guardian, February 2006).The National Union of Teachers has also argued that academies can undermine democratic accountability, curriculum entitlement and the effectiveness of local authority support (NUT, 2007).

New Labour's implementation of target setting and performance management as a means of managing the public sector on the same basis as private sector enterprises has been referred to as 'managerialism'(Clarke and Newman, 1997). Schools have become like other public sector organisations affected by this audit culture. This management regime has been criticised as: "...a crude calculus of inputs and outputs may exacerbate school inequalities and at best leave them undisturbed." (Brehony and Deem, 2003, 182)

There is a risk therefore that the specific and targeted measures to raise educational inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers could be offset and undermined by wider government education measures that will further marginalise already vulnerable groups in the education system, like Gypsies and Travellers. The research for this thesis was conducted in three boroughs with established Traveller Educational Services and local authority commitment to current government policies on education, as was demonstrated by the fact that these authorities were dominated by New Labour ruling regimes. Two of the three schools in my study were also candidates for academy status; this thesis gives some consideration to the impact of this process and wider policies for Gypsies and Travellers (See Chapter Seven).

Education and Exclusion

Evidence cited at the start of this chapter indicated that Gypsies and Travellers are highly excluded in the school system. Clearly there is some trepidation on the part of Gypsy and Traveller pupils about the degree of trust they are prepared to invest in secondary schools,

as is evidenced by the poor participation rates and a marked reluctance to self-ascribe in school ethnic-monitoring processes. The 2003 report: 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils' tries to address these fears and concerns by calling for greater engagement and dialogue with Gypsy and Traveller parents. The report argues this is vital to raising expectations and aspirations and should involve work to increase the number of Gypsies and Travellers who are School Governors, mentors and teaching assistants. Such engagement with Gypsy and Traveller parents is impeded by the fact that for many, formal meetings, and educational reports and the other paraphernalia of being a school governor or on the school council are something that could be strange; a factor aggravated by the poor literacy levels of many Gypsy and Traveller parents. Low teacher expectations, a lack of awareness of Gypsies and Travellers, and outright hostility from staff and the school management are also factors that are alienating Gypsy and Traveller pupils (Ofsted, 1999, 16).

Evidence suggests that Gypsies and Travellers are also disillusioned with the curriculum and that this may be reflected in poor educational attainment and achievement (Bhopal, 2004). Within the Gypsy and Traveller community traditional skills are said to be learned through observation, listening to discussions and participation in hands-on experiences in real life tasks (Jordan, 2001, 66). Such educational traditions have led a number of educationalists and campaigners to conclude that Gypsy and Traveller pupils prefer more child-centred learning approaches (Naylor and Wild-Smith, 1995, 20). Child centred approaches are said to involve curricula based on the needs and interests of pupils with a strong focus on participation as opposed to more formal academic educational programmes (Evetts, 1973, 10). Recent reports suggest a high degree of boredom and dissatisfaction by Gypsy and Traveller pupils with the school curriculum that could be a consequence of teaching approaches. Restraints on the utilisation of innovative teaching strategies for Gypsies and Travellers are said by some educationalists to have been imposed by the demands of the national curriculum, which, despite paying 'lip service' to the concepts of skills development, continue to place an emphasis on knowledge acquisition (Gaine and George, 1999, 67, 80; Heighway and Moxham, 1998, 29; Clark, 2001, 244, 271).

A number of studies have concluded that Gypsies and Travellers prefer learning programmes, which have a 'hands on' approach and are relevant to the needs of everyday

life (Heighway and Moxham, 1998, 21, 26; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2007). Such provision, as exists, has been criticised for being substandard in quality and for failing to reflect the economic needs and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers (Heighway and Moxham, 1998, 7). Consequently many Gypsy and Traveller adolescents continue to participate in family work practices rather than attend school. This strategy offers training/socialisation in the 'Gypsy and Traveller way' and contributes to the family economy but economic pressures are said to be reducing such opportunities (Clarke and Greenfields, 2006). Correspondingly it has been reported that few in the UK take up post-school vocational courses (DCSF, 2008). The government has allowed special non application from Key Stage Four to allow teenagers to take up some vocational training (IFP Increased Flexibility Programme). This has the potential to benefit Gypsy and Traveller pupils (DfES, 2003, 10). Despite this, some critics would argue that many Gypsy and Traveller pupils drop out and play truant in Key Stage Three, therefore this special non- application comes too late for many (Irish Traveller Movement, 2008).

A child with special educational needs (SEN) is a child who has learning difficulties which call for special provision to be made, which is in addition to, or different from, the education generally made available to children (The Learning Trust 2007). Many Gypsy and Traveller pupils have found themselves being classified as having Special Educational Needs. Irish Traveller pupils are 2.7 times more likely than other white British pupils to have SEN, and Gypsy / Roma pupils are 2.6 times more likely to have SEN (Lindsay et al, 2006). Pupils classified as SEN receive specially targeted and tailored tuition and support. Such provision may not differentiate between bright Gypsies and Travellers who have had little schooling and non-Gypsy and Traveller pupils who have failed to learn, despite having had a full education (Acton, 1986, 74). The learning impairment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils has in some cases been deemed to be the consequence of coming from a home background where the parents are illiterate or semi-literate (Heighway and Moxham, 1998, 21).

Wallbridge argues that it is wrong to apply labels such as 'Special Educational Needs' to Gypsies and Travellers as they have good oral skills and that their abilities, whilst not fitting middle class notions of knowledge, are important and valuable tools (Wallbridge,

1972, 17; Okely, 1983, 33). These arguments reflect what Bourdieu termed 'cultural capital'. Cognition is claimed to be related to the cultural context and appreciation of the fact that people are good at doing what is important to them (Sarup, 1978; for a fuller discussion of cultural capital see Chapter Five). Reports have suggested that in the past formal schooling has been rejected by Gypsies and Travellers as too often pupils have been classified as special educational needs. Reiss states:

> "In many cases the Traveller superiority complex is a defence mechanism. They know that there is little likelihood that their children will shine in school, and that actually there is a real danger that they will be classified as ignorant, illiterate, even ineducable. They may even fear that their children will be categorised ESN (Educational Special Needs) or mental." (Reiss, 1975, 166)

The fears that Reiss outlined mirror those to be found amongst other ethnic minorities who have claimed that the SEN (special educational needs) process can lead to low self esteem and negative labelling that becomes a direct causal factor for low achievement. Bernard Coard was one of the first to argue that Black pupils may accept unquestioningly unfounded classifications that they are of low intelligence or give up on striving to succeed academically because they feel the education system has excluded them. Likewise Coard argued that teachers will expect the child to be SEN and will hold lower expectations which can in effect stunt a child's educational development but also attribute certain stereotypical traits concerning educational performance and behaviour to certain groups as a whole (Coard, 1971, 10; 25; Guardian, 5th February 2005). Claims that other ethnic groups and working class and male pupils have similarly suffered from unfair assessments and labels have been made by other observers (Barton and Tomlinson, 1981, 61; 154; Galloway et al., 1994, 114; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Lindsay et al., 2006, 58. A number of critics have argued that by placing the blame for low educational achievement on ethnic minorities, masculinity and weak socio- economic groups a deficit model has been forwarded which pathologises learning difficulties and diverts attention from a proper consideration of more fundamental structural changes (Graham in Majors, 2003, 61). Thus school is absolved of the blame for failure and disaffection. The relationship between social disadvantage and some forms of SEN is well established (Lindsey, Pather and Strand, 2006, 64). Much SEN literature stresses social causation but some pays particular reference to deficient child-rearing practices and cultural differences (Barton and

Tomlinson, 1981, 200; Welsh and Williams, 2005, 63). This assumption has been challenged: a consideration of structural factors such as streaming, school behavioural management policies, curriculum content and class size has offered revealing insights into educational failure (Galloway et al, 1994, 39; Westwood, 2002, 48).

One of the most significant factors behind the poor record of achievement and participation for Gypsy and Traveller pupils is the accommodation problems suffered by this minority. These accommodation problems have been exacerbated by recent state policies that have further marginalised traditional Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles (Chapter One). The provision of Traveller sites has not grown and a growing number of Gypsy and Traveller families have found themselves on unauthorised developments and encampments, in turn subjecting some families to a constant cycle of eviction, which has a detrimental effect on the regular school attendance of the children of these families (Bhopal, 2000; Derrington, and Kendall, 2007).

Cultural Alienation

"It is particularly important for children and young people from Gypsy Traveller backgrounds to see their culture, history, language and values reflected in their school experience. All schools, whether or not Gypsy Travellers are on roll, should have resources in classrooms and libraries which give a positive view of their culture and lifestyle." (DfES, 2003,5)

Few Gypsies and Travellers have enjoyed such a culturally diverse and inclusive learning environment. School with its alien values and rules, has been likened to Gypsy and Traveller pupils entering a strange and different country (Clark, 2001; Naylor and Wild-Smith, 1998, appendix 3). The regimented school regime with timetables, a plethora of rules and formalised, largely abstract, teaching exercises is far removed from the informalism and 'present time orientation' of life on a Traveller site, where things do not happen according to a timetable and learning takes place through interaction in work and domestic activities. The ethos and aims of school, where 5 GCSE grades A-C is the 'gold standard' of success and foundation for academic progression, and the world of waged labour in offices and factories, is not one all Gypsy and Traveller pupils are willing to

subscribe to. For some Gypsies and Travellers, school in effect poses a cultural and moral threat (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Frequent mention is made in reports of parents withdrawing their children from school because of a perceived danger of exposure to promiscuity or drug abuse (Power, 2004, DfES, 2003). Ivatts describes this as a sixth sense, which holds that if the Gypsy and Traveller child gets too close to the wider society they are located in, then their identity could be threatened (Ivatts, 1998, appendix). A prerequisite for greater participation and achievement in school may lie in something as simple as greater interaction between home and school, and flexibility. Schools that enjoy successful relations with Gypsies and Travellers are said to be sensitive to the cultural differences of this group and, where possible, flexible. One Ofsted report notes:

> "Staff in these schools are sensitive to the fact that Travellers' lives are not always ruled by the clock, earrings can be symbols of ethnic origin, and parents may not be able to provide notes to explain absence if no one at home can write." (Ofsted, 1999, 27)

As I have indicated, schools are restricted in their flexibility by the demands and limitations of the national curriculum. Furthermore, government policies of decentralisation, and encouraging schools to opt out of local authority control, have hampered local authorities' ability to promote policies that tackle institutional racism. The strength of a school's policies to tackle exclusion and inclusiveness for minorities like Gypsies and Travellers is also dependent on the motivation of a school's management team. Some supporters of mainstream education would argue that too much flexibility could dilute Gypsy and Traveller pupils' experiences of mainstream culture and opportunities to develop the necessary skills to integrate and develop, and instead run the risk of being afforded an inferior education that leaves them stranded and limited in their life chances and opportunities.

To some degree these concepts pre-date theories and policies of multiculturalism and anti-racism when the role of a mono-cultural education system was to instil cultural conformity to the pattern prescribed by the mainstream (Rex, 1996, 65). The integration agenda forwarded by Trevor Phillips could herald a return to such notions (See Chapter Two). Over the years some proponents of Travellers' rights have championed on-site educational

provision and have remained sceptical about the value of secondary education for adolescent Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The integrationists would argue that non-intervention in some cases can be tantamount to allowing, and even condoning, practices that limit and restrict the rights of minority group members. Thus some commentators would deride flexible learning programmes that allow a greater degree of educational experience to take place outside of the mainstream and exam culture and based on traditional Traveller training and socialisation practices, as running the danger of possibly providing third-rate learning opportunities which limit and restrict the life chances and choices of children who take them.

Conclusion

It is evident therefore from this review of educational policy that differing views and expectations have been directed at formal schooling and Gypsies and Travellers. For example, institutions like the church saw formal education as a tool to 'civilise' (Hoyland, 1816), whilst others saw it as a means to increase the autonomy and integration of Gypsies and Travellers (Plowden, 1967) and for some campaigners greater participation in formal education has been perceived as a route via which Gypsies and Travellers can increase their ability to withstand oppression (Liégeois, 1998). The State has generally been less enthusiastic to intervene and it has only been within the last thirty years that more serious attempts have been made to increase levels of educational participation by Gypsies and Travellers. Although no legal impediments remain to Gypsy and Traveller entry into mainstream education, a number of policy failings, combined with cultural alienation, are acting as a bar to educational inclusion, as is evidenced by the statistics cited at the start of this chapter recording high levels of alienation. This chapter also notes how policies which could assist inclusion are undermined through a lack of resources and curricular inflexibility. Educational inclusion, it appears, is at further risk from a 'creeping' process of selection and market reforms. Combined, these factors are likely to lead to a low attendance and achievement on the part of vulnerable pupils.

Perceived flaws with the mainstream education system have led to some Gypsies and Travellers viewing it as a threat and thus distance and separation has been a strategy

adopted by Gypsies and Travellers (Chapter Two). Given the failings within mainstream education it could be argued that educational inclusion, if narrowly interpreted as greater entry and attendance at school, can in fact constitute greater exposure to exclusion.

Previous research has focused on results and outcomes to the neglect of deeper understanding of the relationships and issues behind this. There has also been an undue separation in terms of the scope of research between the home and school. An ethnographic approach provides the breadth and depth of insights to create a more human portrayal of the educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers and a greater understanding of the causes of exclusion. The following chapter sets out the rationale for such an approach and the way it was implemented in this study.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

Blaikie, in considering the relationship between the researcher and the researched states: "Social researchers can do research on people, for people or with people," (Blaikie, 1995, 5). These choices were prominent in my considerations as to what methodological approach to adopt and feature strongly in the following discussion.

Participant observation, role taking and interaction played a prominent role in my research and I can thus be termed an ethnographic researcher. Much previous educational research has been normative; that is, there has been a focus on input variables such as intelligence measurement and social class and a comparison of them with attainment. What happens between input and output has tended to be ignored (Cohen and Manion, 1981, 165). Alldred reflects these concerns by claiming that in many studies of children, they have been treated as passive objects of study, scrutinised, tested and measured. "The focus has been on what happens to them (and processes they undergo), rather than what they do or say" (Alldred, 1998, 150). This is especially true for Gypsies and Travellers and explains why I adopted an ethnographic approach. After reading various reports on Gypsies and Travellers' educational, participation and achievement, I sensed that the subjects of these reports appeared remote. A focus on outcomes sometimes failed to explain the more human story behind the low level of educational achievement and participation recorded by other observers. By adopting an ethnographic approach I strove to create a greater understanding of the narrative that existed between the point of entry for some Gypsy and Traveller pupils into secondary schooling and their point of departure. Furthermore, as an ethnographer, I attempted to understand the entirety of the Gypsies' and Travellers' lives by carrying out observations not only in the school environment but in the home as well. Thus some observations were carried out on Traveller sites.

This holistic approach to the investigation was based on the view that I could not

understand the educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers by looking at just one dimension of their existence, namely life in school, and is typical of an ethnographical approach (Sarantakos, 1993, 55). Ethnographers seek to immerse themselves in the culture of everyday life of the groups they study. The gulf between the world that I occupied and those of the Gypsies and Travellers that I observed was revealed to me by the fact that for several nights prior to my arrival at one Traveller site, (where I stayed for an extended period) I could not sleep and felt deeply anxious about the experiences that awaited me. These feelings were probably a consequence of the general lack of insight and understanding by non-Travellers of Traveller culture. My anxieties were not realised, but I did discover at this site and many others a sense of community and values that were different from the society I knew and lived in, and which clearly had to be understood if I was to understand the views Gypsies and Travellers held of school. This also involved a process of reflexivity in which I had to determine the views and values that I held as a researcher, non-Traveller and campaigner, and the impact these had on the research process. These are discussed in the course of this chapter.

There are parts of this thesis which could be described as highly descriptive of the research field; this narrative style is influenced by my role as an ethnographer. Such descriptive accounts in my research data enabled me to devise typologies and dramaturgies of the research field. The inclusion of some of these descriptive accounts in the form of life stories (Chapter Six) and a detailed case study of a conflict (Chapter Seven) will enable the reader to understand the research field but also decide whether the analysis and theories that I generate from such data are sound. The ethnographer Malinowski set a validity rule that readers should have access to a range of materials including descriptive accounts and statements so that they can make a fair assessment of the validity of the ethnographer's interpretations (cited in Alasuutari, 1998, 63). This I have sought to do. As well as making great use of descriptive narrative, the thesis contains much direct testimony from research participants in the form of quotes, again allowing the reader to verify some of my conclusions but also gives a voice and platform to a highly excluded minority. In this sense the thesis and its narrative style reflect feminist concern to give voice to those whose opinions are rarely heard (Alldred, 1998, 150). The detail provided also creates what Delgado has termed the 'call to context'; "..an insistence on the importance of context and the detail of the lived experience of minoritized people as a defence against the colour-

blind and sanitized analyses generated by universalistic discourses" (Cited in Gillborn, 2008, 30). Okely also defends the informative and valuable role of anecdote and narrative in her 'graphic theory' (Okely, 1997).

A central task in the ethnographic quest I embarked upon was to capture the views and perceptions of Gypsies and Travellers in response to their exclusion and I have sought to evaluate their justification for various coping strategies adopted in response to this. Ethnography was also a useful research tool as it provided intense insights into the Gypsies' and Travellers' aspirations and enabled me to understand whether these were compatible with mainstream society's notions of what could and should constitute social inclusion for this group. An ethnographic research approach seemed apt as ethnography seeks to lay bare, from within, the logic that informs and organises the collectivity's life and thought and a central interest has been related to the difference 'otherness' of the group (Alasuutari, 1998, 61). By focusing on this dialogue in the context of school and disaffected Gypsy and Traveller pupils, I was able to explore how and why a pupil subculture offered resistance to dominant culture in the shape and form of secondary school. In this sense my methodology was influenced by Cohen and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies which have unified interactionism and Neo Marxism and assume that subcultures are meaningful attempts to resist the hegemony of dominant culture (Cohen, 1972).

Interpretation and Interaction

The interpretative perspective which suggests that the world is not only objective, but involves subjective meanings and experiences that are constructed and understood by participants in social situations, was central to my investigation. Individuals are involved in the active interpretation of their social world, making decisions about how to act from alternate positions, options and possibilities. Behaviour is not determined only by social conditioning or psychological drives but is the result of construction and choice. It is therefore the task of the researcher to interpret the meanings and experiences of their subjects. I believed that this could only be achieved, with regard to the aims of my research, through qualitative research, including participant observation (Lewis and

Ritchie, 2003, 23). Cohen and Manion, commenting on the interpretative approach, stress the importance of role-taking:

> "The central endeavour in the context of the interpretative paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and understand from within." (Cohen and Manion, 1981, 36)

An interpretative approach can penetrate the complexities of reality and cultural identity and not be misled by essentialist notions of culture (Gillborn, 1995, 85). Such essentialist notions, with rigid and static interpretations of cultural identity, have in the past tended to obscure interpretations of Gypsies and Travellers. Some have fallen into the trap of perceiving some Gypsies and Travellers as 'true Gypsies', the pure embodiment of this minority, whilst those who depart from this stereotype, which is often founded on antiquated and fanciful notions of Gypsy and Traveller identity, are denounced as symbolic of the decline and fragmentation of this minority (See Chapter One). These interpretations fail to take account of the fact that the essence of Gypsy and Traveller culture involves change, adaptation and cultural borrowing.

Within the school environment, I made use of observational and interview data to explore the daily character of life in schools; focused on interactions between Gypsy and Traveller pupils with their peers and teachers, their motivation, achievement, participation in classes and school events and resistance and alienation in the form of misbehaviour and non-participation. In this sense I followed the approach adopted by other ethnographers who have looked at schooling and race (Gillborn, 1995, 46). However, other studies have tended to focus on events in school; by observing the home environment I attempted to gain insights into the impact of parents' views on their children's educational participation but also gain an understanding of the broader norms and values and life patterns of the Gypsy and Traveller community and how this influenced interaction with outsiders (See Chapter Five for the relevance of links between school and the home).

Interaction in the school, and between home and the outside world, was a key feature of the research. Interaction and how, when and where it is conducted is a key determiner of

ethnic boundary maintenance and also ethnic identity (Barth, 1969, 14). Thus an examination of the nature of the interaction between Gypsies and Travellers and school revealed important facets of how each group viewed each other and what perceptions and aspirations they hold as to the role of formal schooling. Previous reports suggest that this interaction has been polarised and therefore analysis of this may reveal important barriers to educational inclusion.

I have striven to gain insights into the impact of age, identity and the curriculum upon these variables. I have had previous experience in schools as a result of my former career as a school teacher and have read many reports and had numerous conversations with those involved or affected in the formal education of Gypsies and Travellers. These experiences obviously meant that I had formed a number of viewpoints prior to the research and therefore I cannot say with confidence that the investigation was purely inductive. However, neither was it deductive. Deductive researchers often construct their surveys to identify and test certain assumptions. They assume that they know the field already whereas the inductive researcher enters the field with an open mind. Theory emerges from interaction and observation (May, 1993). For me the truth was that my pre-knowledge represented a number of jumbled, and at times incoherent, insights which observation built upon, expanded or saw in a new light. As part of a long process of acquiring greater understanding through observation and analysis, I was able to thread these into a form of narrative which for me represents the totality of my experiences.

Critical theorists, such as Habermas, have criticised the interpretative approach for its focus upon the micro to the detriment of the macro. They claim that by adopting such a narrow approach interpretative research is conservative, as it fails to note structural causes or call for structural change (cited in Hall, 1996, 46). Some interpretative researchers have responded by trying to develop links between micro and macro analysis (Ball, 1986, 12). Hence part of this investigation attempts to evaluate the success of macro policy in raising the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in school and society and therefore has a critical research dimension. Furthermore, my aim of combining macro- and micro-analysis also benefited as a result of my involvement in Gypsy and Traveller campaign organisations like the Gypsy Council and the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition.

<u>Roles and Reflexivity</u>

I thus adopted an ethnographic and participant observer approach to the research and took on a series of roles within the research field. My primary roles were those of a classroom assistant in the three schools where the research was conducted and in my third and final school in addition to taking on the role of a classroom assistant I worked as a community worker. My research was overt, thus the research participants were aware of my role. Many of the participants were also aware that I was a campaigner for Gypsy and Traveller rights. It should be noted though that campaign activities were not conducted in the research field as this could have conflicted with the neutrality expected of me in my school role as a classroom assistant. These different roles and the perceptions the research participants had towards me no doubt impacted on interaction and observations and hypotheses that were made. As part of a process of reflexivity, therefore, it is important to evaluate the role these factors had in shaping the research, but there is also a need to attempt to reflect upon what part my own background and beliefs had to play in shaping my interpretations (Lewis and Ritchie,2003, 20). I need to first sketch out in more detail the roles and 'selves' that were evident in the study and assess the implications they held for the research.

I adopted the role of a classroom assistant (an assistant teacher who generally gives one to one support to pupils identified as special educational needs) as I believed that if I had taken the role of a teacher then I would have been perceived as being even more a part of the school organisation, which in the case of some participants would have generated mistrust. Corrigan rightly draws attention to the negative impact that taking the role of a teacher can have (cited in Burgess, 1984, 39). Teachers are expected to uphold the school disciplinary regime and its ethos. An act of punishment therefore by the teacher/researcher can cause irreparable harm in the relationship between the researcher and researched in the context of a school. A classroom assistant has little involvement in school disciplinary processes and is able to adopt more informal relationships with pupils. Thus I felt this was the most appropriate role to take as it would allow me to gain more intimate insights into the learning experiences of the pupils but also create a more natural role for me in the classroom environment and other locations for observation such as the staffroom and

playground (See diagram 3.1). The role adopted would help teachers and pupils relax and behave more naturally than would have been the case if I had sat at the back of the class like a school inspector taking notes.

The disadvantage of this role was that it could have meant I was still considered part of the school and therefore viewed with suspicion given the poor relations that existed between school and some Gypsy and Traveller pupils. I believe this risk was diminished as my 'gatekeeper' to the research field were Traveller Education Services and, though working in schools, I was classified as a Traveller Education Service staff member. Reinharz rightly argues that the researcher will be judged by research participants by their gatekeepers. The researcher will thus have to carry the 'baggage', positive or negative, associated with the gatekeeper (Reinharz in Hertz, 1997, 8). The Traveller Education Services I worked with, by virtue of their specialist knowledge and the long periods in post of their coordinators, had generally more positive relations with the Gypsies' and Travellers than did the schools. My gatekeepers accompanied me at the outset of the research in visiting the Gypsy and Traveller families that were to form part of my study. These visits to the Gypsies and Travellers' homes, where I met parents and pupils, also assisted me in developing positive relationships with the research participants. In my third school, where the bulk of the research was conducted, I believe that I was able to develop especially positive relations as I took on the role of a community worker in addition to that of a classroom assistant. This role involved me organising trips and activities for the Gypsy pupils on the South Forest Site and therefore involved high levels of interaction with both parents and pupils outside of the school environment. The South Forest Traveller Site was notorious in the eyes of the school for the level of hostility and suspicion extended to outsiders and many were surprised at the success I enjoyed in apparently being accepted. This apparent success may have been a reflection of the success of the youth project activities I was able to organise. Greater acceptance in the South Forest Traveller Site may also have been nurtured by the fact that they were aware that I was an advocate for Gypsy and Traveller rights.

My involvement as an activist coincided with a key moment in policy formation on Gypsies and Travellers as well as the organisational development of the Gypsy and Traveller population through the establishment of the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition, an organisation which I helped found and gain funding for and of which I eventually became full time worker. The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition was

an alliance of groups and individuals representing Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers who came together to maximise the input of Gypsies and Travellers into policy formulation and decision- making processes. Acton described the coalition as follows.

"A rather amazing consolidation of the fragmented Roma/Gypsy/Traveller organisations and progressive pro-Gypsy political lobbies...........This gathered together a momentum for change similar to the last time a popular front of the great and good had pressured a new Labour Government into enabling pro-Traveller legislation, the 1968 Caravan Sites Act" (Acton, 2003).

In 2004 the coalition won the Liberty Human rights award. The citation read.

"For exceptional achievement in uniting Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers and providing a powerful voice to lobby for positive change and recognition of their human rights and for effective engagement of cross party support for some of the most socially excluded groups in the UK".

The Gypsies at the South Forest Site took an interest in my activism and spoke to me of their discontents, and some referred to me when visitors entered their homes when I was present as "someone who helps Travellers". I also stayed with Gypsies and Travellers on a number of unauthorised encampments, many of whom I met through my activism. The Travellers were made aware that I was a researcher who hoped also to gain further insights into the community. When interviewed for the post of full-time worker for the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition, it was also made clear that I was working towards a PhD and that the analysis of collected data would assist indirectly in my policy development role.

It should be noted that with the onset of my role as a full-time campaigner, my ethnographic observations and data collection ceased, and in my free time I attempted to start the process of data analysis and write up. I was to learn in fact to my cost the danger of taking on such roles, for such was the intensity of campaigning that my PhD work plan, which had prior to my full time employment for the coalition been satisfactory (as witnessed by my PhD transfer after two years of study), was completely derailed. For two and a half years I barely touched the task of starting the PhD write up and serious doubts

began to emerge as to whether the work would be completed. Only with my departure from the coalition was I able to find the time and critical distance to fully reflect upon and evaluate these experiences and observations. Some researchers would criticise this role: they argue that the researcher needs to be neutral and value-free (Dockery, 2000, 96). Barany, who has written extensively on the subject of East European Rom/Gypsies, states:

> "Given the truly pitiful conditions in which the majority of Roma live, those who study them can easily lose their objectivity and become de facto Gypsy activists.....I do find purportedly unbiased studies that overlook the fundamental principles of scholarly research and presentation quite disturbing, however those 'activist authors' may be motivated by a twisted sense of political correctness in so far as they over-emphasise the injuries the Roma have indisputably suffered at the hands of the prejudiced majorities while simultaneously ignoring the Gypsies' responsibility for their predicament and belittling the efforts of states and organisations to assist them. My approach is that of a social scientist and not of a Romanologist or a Gypsy activist" (Barany, 2002, 18).

A drawback, then, according to Barany, is that my research may not be considered neutral but instead partisan (such is the common fate of academic observers who take on campaign roles). It is important, however, to consider whether such detachment is to be welcome. I believe that my activism helped gain me acceptance amongst research participants in the field. It also enriched my understanding of the wider issues affecting this minority. Such was my empathy with this minority's predicament that I would have found the distancing Barany advocates unacceptable. Bohannan provides useful insights into the dilemma facing the ethnographer through her discussion of her reaction to the death of a research participant in childbirth.

> "One can, perhaps be cool when dealing with questionnaires or when interviewing strangers. But what is one to do when one can only collect one's data by forming personal friendships? It is hard enough to think of a friend as a case study. Was I to stand aloof, observing the course of events? (Bowen,{pseudonym} 1954, 163).

I would also argue that the notion that one can be neutral is a fallacy. The qualitative researcher cannot assume they can observe with detachment and certainty like a scientist working in a laboratory (Kellner cited in Robson, 1993, 65). Honest and reliable research is more likely to be forged by actually acknowledging the impact and influence of the personal views and life history that the observer brings into the research field. Reflexive ethnography leads to the observer rejecting notions of the researcher being an impersonal

machine and defies a scientism by not sanitising the 'I' from the narrative (Okely, 1992, 22). Instead the researcher should acknowledge the impact of the different perspectives and life experiences they hold and determine how these have shaped the research by 'situating' the perspective of the researcher through reflexivity. In this process it is important to reflect on the variety of 'selves' the researcher brings into the research process e.g. 'researched based selves' {a researcher, a temporary visitor, sponsored by a gatekeeper} and 'brought selves {who we are, our background and what we believe} (Reinharz in Hertz, 1997, 14; Woods, 1991, 34). Having already considered my researched based self I need to consider my brought self and the influence this had upon my research.

My connection with Gypsies and Travellers has been a long one but it is one that has changed and evolved with time. My first contact was far from being a positive one. I started my working life as a school teacher in 1991 and taught in a school operating in 'challenging circumstances'. A large number of the pupils were Gypsies who were disaffected from school. As an inexperienced teacher whose understanding of this group was negligible I chose to blame such disaffection on anti social behaviour or poor parenting rather than my failings as a teacher or the institution I worked for. I had been a member of the Labour Party since my teens but it took some time for these egalitarian principles, together with experience and maturity as a teacher, to help me develop a more sympathetic understanding of the causes of alienation.

In 1998 I was working in Budapest for the British Council and decided to embark on an MA in education by distance learning and centred my research on the educational experiences of Hungarian Roma and later Portuguese Gypsies. This research was rather formalised. I observed pupils in class but did not take upon any roles and at this stage I was not involved in campaigning: as a member of the diplomatic service I was precluded from such activity in countries where I was posted. In 2001 I embarked upon full time PhD studies and in this research took on a participant observer approach but I also resolved to become involved in campaigning and thus sought to fuse ethnography with critical research. This approach provided me with a more in-depth understanding of research participants and enabled me to link these observations with wider trends and processes at work in society and governmental policy. This has led me to conclude that Gypsies and Travellers experience spatial, racial and social exclusion because of their inability to conform to what is becoming an ever narrower and more intolerant 'mainstream society'

(see conclusion).

My observations have not been uncritical, but my egalitarian principles have remained unchanged and at the centre of my reflection. This led me to observe that those who are excluded do not always react in positive or beneficial ways and, exclusion can lead to 'dual closure' where other vulnerable minorities inside or outside the group can be marginalised by the excluded (Parkin, 1979). As a coping mechanism, excluded ethnic minorities can evolve atavistically and adopt reactionary positions. Such observations do not sit comfortably with my role as a campaigner for Gypsy and Traveller rights; enemies of this minority may distort my observations and use them to support their own prejudices, fellow campaigners may misunderstand my observations and not follow them to the conclusion I attempt to draw. I believe, however, that these dimensions cannot be hidden, as such positions hold the danger of leading some members of this community into cultural and social enclaves and political 'dead ends'. I am clear though that these features are symptoms of exclusion and marginalisation and are not something inherent in Gypsy and Traveller culture. It is this kaleidoscope of life experiences and standpoints that has moulded the nature of the enquiry I undertook and its conclusions. I believe that the level of reflection demonstrated shows that the research is not a partisan piece of work and retains validity and critical objectivity. I have reached a position of 'emphatic neutrality' by making my assumptions transparent and the influence they had on my research and subscribing to the view that research cannot be value- free (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, 13).

It has been claimed that research is conducted on a rape model. The researcher takes in a 'hit and run approach', intruding into their subjects' privacy, manipulating relationships and giving little back (Humphries et al, 2000, 73). Although my research was overt and dependent on informed consent I felt at times uncomfortable and even opportunistic in the role of an ethnographic researcher but hope that through a fusion with critical research my study gives something back to the community I observed.

Sample and Setting

My research was mainly conducted in secondary schools and focused on the educational experiences of a selection of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The selection of some of these

pupils involved purposive sampling which allows the researcher to choose a case because it illustrates some feature of a process that the researcher is interested in, and selects a sample which can allow wider generalisations to be made about the population as a whole (Silverman, 2000, 104). In this sense, purposive sampling would appear to be superior to random sampling, as the latter may lead to overlooking certain types of groups. Purposive sampling establishes criteria for research and finds subjects that conform to those criteria. The criteria adopted included attendance, age, gender and educational achievement and reflected the range of educational participation for pupils in general as well as Gypsies and Travellers. The criteria were broad enough so as not to disturb my research aim of carrying out inductive research.

Overall I analysed data relating to fifty Gypsy and Traveller pupils/young people but through observation and interview focused more intensely on twenty pupils/young people. The Gypsies and Travellers observed also reflected a range of accommodation types, living either on Traveller sites or in housing. However, my research and its focus has been subject to continual adaptation, for selection should be a continuous process whereby the researcher constantly decides when, where, what and whom to observe and interview (Burgess, 1984, 53).

The names of the schools, boroughs and other locations such as Traveller sites, as well as the names of individuals, have been changed. In some cases other circumstantial information has been changed to protect the anonymity of research participants The promise of anonymity, I believe, helped me secure access to the schools but also helped the participants feel more relaxed about being observed and avoid any embarrassment or anger that this study may inadvertently cause them. The research was conducted in a group of three local authorities in Carwich City (North Hill, West Lake and South Forest). All three schools observed in each of the three boroughs had ethnically diverse student populations and many of the pupils in general within these schools were located in low-income families and neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of exclusion.

The Gypsies and Travellers also lived in different types of accommodation. Many of the Gypsies occupied a local authority site in South Forest borough. A large number though,

occupied conventional housing, especially in North Hill and West Lake Boroughs. Others occupied unauthorised developments (private land where Gypsies and Travellers developed sites without planning permission) and were facing eviction from the local authorities where the sites were located. In these marginalised environments I could observe the ability, manner and rationale of the Gypsies and Travellers in adapting and responding to challenges to their traditions and way of life. The three boroughs in Carwich City, where the schools were located, were controlled by Labour local authorities, generally sympathetic to New Labour policies. Hence, these three local authorities seemed to adhere strongly to New Labour Government policies on education, as was reflected for example in their enthusiasm to promote academy schools. Hence, the chosen settings provided some insights into the impact of government policy within this area.

I believe my sample for the investigation reflected the broad range of educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers and accommodation types. Attitudes in the sample ranged from active educational participation to outright rejection. The sample also contained Gypsies and Travellers living at the margins, namely those suffering from extreme disadvantages, e.g. poverty, living on estates with a gang and drugs culture, living under strict site management regimes, failing in retrospective planning applications and also experiencing cultural dislocation e.g. moving into a house. My observations allowed me to gain insights as to how educational participation was used instrumentally by some to assist in overcoming marginalisation or change and how for some it was viewed as part of a wider hostile environment.

Within the schools I observed a range of environments. This range of environments enabled me to observe research participants in their more personal domains (pupils – playground and coming to/leaving school) and (staff – staffroom and staff meetings) giving me insights into their typical behaviour and perceptions of school and other groups. Observation in the classroom, tutor time and assembly hall also enabled me to observe interaction between the staff and pupils.

Table (3.4) - Some Aspects of Observation – Themes and Places of Observation

	Pupil Motivation	Behaviour and Relations with other Pupils	Academic Teaching	Teacher Expectations and Relations with Pupils	School Policies
The playground		+			
Going to / leaving school	+	+			
Assemblies					+
The classroom	+	+	+	+	+
The staffroom				+	+
Tutorial Time	+	+			
Staff Meetings				+	+

Considerations contained within the themes for observations:

- Pupil motivation – enthusiasm/participation in class work re output/quality/effort.

- Behaviour and relations with other pupils – attitudes around school/ disruption punctuality/ use of territorial space/friendship networks/gender.

- Teaching styles/academic – motivation/relations with pupils/lesso planning/stimulating activities/academically challenging and meaningful/fulfilment o the national curriculum/classroom management/special education needs – responses o Gypsy and Traveller pupils to these factors.

- Teacher expectations and relations with pupils – spatial placement of Gypsies an Travellers in the classroom by teachers/oral praise/reprimands/advice an counselling/comments in staffroom.

- Values promoted in events and strategies such as assemblies, school policies.

- School policies – comments in staffroom/impact of school ethos on school playgroun etc.

<u>Interviews</u>

Aside from participant observation an important component of the data gathering process were interviews. The interviews I conducted can be classified as formal and informal. Formal interviews were semi structured, followed a series of prepared questions/themes and were recorded. Formal interviews were carried out with a small number of school staff and Gypsy and Traveller adults but the bulk of interviews involved Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Interviews were conducted on a one to one basis. Other researchers have used group interviews with children believing that this can help increase participants' confidence (Woods and Hammersley, 1993, 51). I felt that because I had a relationship with the participants through my role as a classroom assistant/community worker I would be able to yield rich data from one to one interviews. I was aware that for many of the young people I interviewed that it was probably the first time that they had been the subject of a formal interview and thus strove to make the process a relaxed and positive one.

Parental consent was sought as was the consent of the young person being interviewed so as to avoid any sense of coercion. I also chose familiar locations to conduct the interviews such as school canteens or pupil common areas which were empty during lesson time. I adopted a non hierarchical approach and used semi structured questions; this not only gave flexibility to the interviews but gave the interviewee the chance to ask questions and input more freely into the interview process. In contrast, the alternative option of structured questions would not have been conducive to the development of empathy, a crucial factor in encouraging subjects to reveal intimate thoughts and feelings. Such an interview method could even legitimately be described as hierarchical and domineering (May, 1993). At the end of the interview I gave the pupils some feedback on how they had performed, emphasising the positive aspects of their performance. Possibly a testament to the satisfactory results of the methods employed is evidenced by the fact that the pupils did not 'dry up' and have little to say.

The formal interviews yielded useful results, but despite the methods employed to involve and relax the participants, the formal interviews could not escape the charge of artificiality and lack of naturalness, which may have impeded some of the participant's thoughts and expressions. This problem was overcome by conducting a large number of informal interviews. Informal or what have been termed 'creative interviews' lead the researcher to

move away from the established conventions of interviewing with lengthy or repeated interviews taking place in people's everyday situations (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, 140). The informal interviews were spontaneous and unplanned. The majority of them took place on the South Forest Traveller Site or on the unauthorised encampments that I visited. Generally they involved small groups and took place in the open or inside caravans. During a discussion a comment might be made that had pertinence to my research. I would then ask the group if I could make a note of their comments for my research and make notes on the spot. I felt this was important as it reminded the participants that I was a researcher. I feel that if I had merely mentally stored the comments and made notes in private I would have been involved in some act of deception. Woods notes with humour how some ethnographers take an uncommon number of sojourns in the lavatory throughout the day (Woods, 1991, 44). By resisting such an approach and taking notes openly and holding discussions in such a manner I was able to capture more natural and richer data but it also provided me with a chance to analyse the meaning of the statements with the participants as I would ask them to comment on the significance of a statement or verify if my interpretation was correct. Thus interviewing became more of a collaborative process.

Table (3.1) - Pupil Interviews and Themes

(The following imply general themes not specific questions)

Motivation	*Likes/dislikes at school e.g. teaching styles/subjects*
Relationships	Discuss friendship networks/bullying/relations with staff
Teaching	In general what they like/dislike
Ambition	Aims for the future/consideration of whether school can help
Parents/culture	Explore pupils' perception of parental expectations and whether they want to maintain a traditional Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle

Analysis and Theory Development

The analytic hierarchy is the process of building up a framework of theory generation starting with the raw data and building the conceptual scaffolding, within which the structure of analysis is formed; constant movement between the two is required (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, 217).

Analysis started at an early point in my research and was a constant feature. Formal interviews also assisted in this process by providing an important means of assessing the validity of initial assumptions based on observation (Merman, 1988, 72). Interviews combined with data analysis allowed me to ask questions about the past experiences of pupils and situations that I observed or noted from data analysis. In this sense, therefore, interviews had a focused element, in which the researcher, by use of the techniques of content analysis of a given situation or event, arrives at a hypothesis, of which they subsequently wish to test the validity through interview (Cohen and Manion, 1981, 289). The use of interview notes from a range of research participants such as school staff and pupils, who often held conflicting viewpoints, combined with the analysis of various types of documentary data and my own observations, meant that I was not solely dependent on the accounts obtained from my central research participants, the Gypsies and Travellers. This triangulation, I hope has strengthened the validity of my research findings.

Observation notes were also written into fieldwork reports which chronicled my research and observations. In these reports I tried to place recorded data into a form of descriptive narrative which was discussed with my supervisor. This clearly assisted reflection and theory generation. Immediately after the fieldwork had ended in the autumn of 2003 I took on a full time campaign role and undertook the transcription of recorded interviews at weekends. The transcription was a time-consuming process which took about six months but allowed me to become familiar with the statements and language of participants. Then there was a lapse in my research of about two years from 2004 as my campaign work reached a period of intense activity as Gypsies and Travellers became a major topic of interest with the tabloid press and in turn a campaign theme for the Conservatives in the 2005 election. Added to this, the government were in the process of developing new policies on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. In April 2006 I resolved to resume my

research and left the UK to live in Budapest and start the process in earnest of data analysis and theory development. This distance of time between data gathering and theory development helped the research process by providing me with greater critical objectivity and distance to the research field. It was during this stage of the research that many of the main themes and conclusions were reached.

My field reports were coded and indexed according to a series of themes as with my interview transcripts. Sometimes certain incidents or statements had multiple codes as they had relevance to more than one theme. I then entered into a process of data reduction summarising the data and abstracting data to facilitate retrieval (Silverman, 2000, 143). I placed data in thematic grids/indexes which contained a reference to where they could be located. I then drafted what Ying calls the case study data base which contained a great deal of raw data (Merman, 1988, 126). The case study data base facilitated further the retrieval of information, the development of themes and construction of patterns and theories. A key means of generating theory was by noting the frequency of certain incidents and statements and forming typologies and clusters. In theory development I was guided by Howard Becker's proposed sequence of actions (May, 1993, 144):

Table (3.2) – Becker's Proposed Sequence of Action in the Research Process

1/ Select and define problems, concepts and indices. Try to seek problems and concepts in the field which enable the researcher to develop their understanding of the social setting to determine the types of data which may be available by these methods and to what extent social phenomena are related.
2/ Check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena. This means focussing the inquiry in order to see what events are typical and widespread and how these events are distributed among categories of people and organisational sub units. The researcher needs to enter into the world of probability and determine how likely/frequent it is that a given phenomenon occurs in the social setting and for what reason.
3/ The construction of social systems models that incorporate individual findings into a general model.

Table (3.3) - Stages and Processes in Theory Analysis

Stages	Actions
Stage 1 – school data	Analysed some school data on attendance, achievement etc. – identified some key themes.
Stage 2 - observation	Classroom and staffroom observation and wider interaction with minority through campaigning – identified further key themes and fed into notebooks and fieldwork reports.
Stage 3 – formal and informal interviews	Probed identified themes and initial analysis
Stage 4 – transcription	Wrote transcripts, led to further analysis and theme identification
Stage 5 – coding	Coded and thematised transcripts and field reports (themes = identity, relations, aspirations, gender, exclusion). Led to further theory development
Stage 6 – development of clusters and typologies	Noted frequency of occurrences and statements and grouped data that had similarities into clusters and noted range, dimension and diversity. Developed typologies and explanations.
Stage 7 - writing	Wrote nine chapters of rough analysis using data – contained great deal of raw data, in effect ordering data into a data base (see Ying above)
Stage 8 - planning	Following analysis of data bank thesis wrote a detailed plan
Stage 9 – final thesis	Used plan to write final PhD thesis

The researcher's quest for repeatable regularity has been described as the bedrock of enquiry (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 67). This was a primary goal for me in observation, data gathering and analysis. The phenomena observed were grouped into clusters and frequencies were noted. The process of sifting and grouping data was carried out manually rather than through employing computer assisted research methods. This in part was attributable to my rudimentary computer skills but also a fear that such a mechanical process could interfere with the intellectual work of analysis. One of the clusters I drew

together involved the frequency and nature of clashes between the Gypsy and Somali pupils on the South Forest estate. I was able to note that these incidents presented a running series of conflicts in which both sides were retaliating for previous attacks.

When considering the motivation it became apparent from an analysis of statements that the Gypsies resented the Somalis and felt they were gaining preferential treatment. However, analysis of the incidents revealed that both sides were frightened of a loss of masculine status if they did not retaliate and meet violence with violence. This led me to conclude that both groups subscribed to a strong sense of symbolic capital that valued masculinity and strength and had entered into a feud to maintain symbolic capital. Through multiple case study theory development (Robson, 1993, 148) I was able to test the development of a theory located in one case study and assess whether it occurred in another and whether there were similarities. For example, a cluster summarising relations between South Forest Site Gypsies and school revealed a strong tendency to retaliate from certain pupils to challenges from the school authorities. This led me to conclude that notions of symbolic capital impacted on relations with institutions like school and could also lead to feud-like situations where the prospects of mediation or compromise were limited.

The analytic role of the researcher also needs to be considered as part of a process of reflexivity. Mason states: "A reflexive reading will locate you as part of the data you have generated.....you will probably see yourself as inevitably and inextricably implicated in the data generation process and you will therefore seek a reading of data which captures or expresses these relationships" (Mason, 2002, 149). As demonstrated in the section 'roles and reflexivity' I have attempted to question how and why my interpretations came about through a process of internal dialogue and scrutiny about what I believe I know and how. Given the non-hierarchical manner in which I sought to conduct my research and my role as a campaigner I could be open to the charge that my thesis is biased and gives a distorted picture of events. As outlined already, critical objectivity was assisted by the two year delay in theory generation and in-depth data analysis. It should be noted that other actors were also interviewed and observed, such as school staff, which provided me with differing and alternative interpretations of phenomena. I have sought to guarantee the

validity of my findings through a process of triangulation whereby I have used multiple forms of data collection (i.e. observation, interviews and documentary analysis) to confirm and corroborate findings (Hammersley, 1993, 67). Furthermore, my 'brought selves' in the research field, ranging from a unsympathetic teacher to that of an active campaigner and ethnographer who lived on Traveller sites, gave me a breadth of experiences and insights that helped ensure my understanding and interpretation was not one-dimensional or partisan. Moreover, a set of critical principles based on egalitarianism has acted as the figure of measurement by which I have measured my different selves but also the actions of research participants and therefore hope that I have been honest in my interpretations.

Documentary Data

Ethnographic and case study focused research does not preclude the use of documentary analysis (Robson, 1993, 33). Thus documentary analysis was also a feature of my investigation. Schools have to produce enormous amounts of documentation; a trend that has increased in the last decade due to increased governmental demand for written policies and bureaucracy. Though such documentation is at times considered to be a bane by the staff that has to produce it and conform to such data, for the researcher it provides important insights into the views and actions of the school staff and hierarchy. Such data allows the researcher to compare their interpretation of events with what has been recorded. Furthermore, documentary analysis combined with interviews allowed me to carry out an element of retrospective research, which has been important in establishing why changes have taken place in the attitudes held by Gypsy and Traveller pupils towards schools over time. The table below indicates the documents that I have had access to and the themes that they are relevant to.

Table (3.5) – Documentary Data

School Documents	Motivation	Behaviour Relations With Other Pupils	Academic	School Policies
Attendance Register	+	+	+	+
Reports	+	+	+	+
Individual Educational Plan	+		+	
Individual Behaviour Plan		+		
Statement of Educational Need		+	+	+
Pastoral Records	+	+	+	
Anti-Bullying Policy		+		+
Ofsted Reports	+	+	+	+
School Development Plans				
Pupil's text books	+	+	+	

I approached such documentation with great caution bearing in mind that most is produced by the school hierarchy and presents their views and even bias. Woods has rightfully pointed out that reports are seen by the headteacher and other staff, a fact which might have a restraining effect on teachers' comments (Woods, 1979, 183). Indeed some of the documents may even be falsified. I know from my own experience as a school teacher, that the management of schools sometimes implore staff to record fully the misdemeanours of certain pupils in order to facilitate their expulsion or other disciplinary action, a fact which can lead to the exaggeration of recorded misbehaviour in some written reports on behaviour. Furthermore, caution has to be expressed over policy documents, since there may be a great difference between the rhetoric of a policy statement and the reality of the situation (Gillborn, 1995, 119).

In order to safeguard against the adverse influence of biased documentation, it is important for the researcher to constantly ask the following questions: What is the bias of the author? What is the document trying to achieve? Who is the audience? To what extent is the writer likely to want to tell the truth? Are there other documents or means of data collection, which might provide an alternative insight into a decision or event? (Burgess,1984, 137).

Recording Data

An important tool for the recording of data was a research diary. Following observations extended memos were written up. These were extended into more detailed field notes for my research diary. In drafting these memos the following questions were at the forefront of my mind. What people, events and situations were involved? What were the main themes and issues in the contact? Where should the researcher place the most energy during the next contact and what sort of information should be sought? (Silverman, 2000, 142). During the observations themselves brief notes were made. If I had adopted, for example, the Flanders model of coding behaviour every thirty seconds then it would have disturbed the research field in the classroom by clearly drawing attention to the fact that every movement and utterance was being recorded by me (Flanders, 1970). Such a disturbance would have been counterproductive to my investigation and would have created a tense and unnatural atmosphere, interfering in my role as a classroom assistant. Interviews were tape recorded, providing me with transcripts for coding and deeper analysis, and allowed me to focus on the interview and merely record the physical responses of the interviewee.

Access and Consent

Local Education Authority Traveller Education Services were my principal gatekeepers to the schools in my survey. On account of the fact that children were involved in my study, the process of gaining access involved a long process of relationship and trust building with my gatekeepers, which involved supplying them with a research brief, summarising the aims of the research, then after an initial interview followed by more interviews in the school with senior staff and a tour of the school, I submitted a research plan that mapped

out how I proposed to gather my data. This included details of who, what and where observation would take place and what written data I would need to have access to.

Access was facilitated by the prospect of the Traveller Education Service receiving additional classroom support free of charge but also by the prospect of feedback on broad and general analysis of the pupils' participation, which they rarely had the time to undertake. Access to the field of study was gained through informed consent. The Traveller Education Service, school, staff and Gypsy and Traveller pupils and adults were informed of the broad aims of my investigation. Consent was obtained from parents to interview their children and consent was sought from the children

Ethics

If the validity of a study is an important hallmark for the acknowledgement and influence a research report receives and generates, then the ethics of an investigation carry equal weight. My research sought to conform to the ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association. Research with children/adolescents is a sensitive area of investigation; thus I entered into a long and protracted process of gaining informed consent for my observation in schools and other locations. Informed consent also meant that my research was overt as opposed to covert; this reduced the danger of my status as a researcher leading to a sense of betrayal, which could be a result of my research subjects discovering that I was something that I initially appeared not to be. Furthermore, I promised the subjects, be they Gypsy and Traveller pupils, adults or schools, anonymity and confidentiality. Hence the names of the schools, locations and the individuals observed have been changed and pseudonyms adopted. I received no objections to my observation but if I had received any objections I would have ceased observation in the various roles that I carried out and continued in the delivery of what I considered to be my primary role as a classroom assistant. The research had a positive dimension for the Gypsy and Traveller participants in the sense that the research highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of policies that impacted on their educational experience.

<u>Reflection</u>

Commenting on participant observation, May has concluded: "Participant observation is the most personally demanding and analytically difficult method of social research to undertake." (May, 1993, 143). Given the prominence that such a method has played in my investigation there have clearly been many challenges to overcome in my fieldwork and investigation. In the course of this chapter I have tried to detail some of those challenges and the means I developed to overcome them. It should be noted that even though solutions can be presented for various problems, they in turn give rise to further difficulties. It is clear therefore that there is no perfect approach to research. Despite this, the researcher must be vigilant at all times to adopt means which maximise the relevance, validity and moral integrity of the research project. This I have sought to do. I have also argued in this chapter that the formation of objective and value-free research is a fallacy. I have sought to be open about my own background and perceptions that have no doubt shaped analysis, but by acknowledging them and questioning them I hope to have strengthened the validity of the research. As Alldred states "We can be critical of a researcher's (political) judgement, and hopefully, such critical scrutiny is invited by a reflexive style that acknowledges that the analysis is an artefact, produced in a particular moment by a person occupying particular subject positions, and within the particular power relations described" (Alldred, 1998, 158).

Chapter Five

Economic, Social, Emotional, Cultural and Symbolic Capital in the Social Field

This chapter gives an overview of the economic, social and cultural position and structure of the Gypsies and Travellers located in the 'social field' where the research was conducted. The analysis draws heavily upon the work of Bourdieu. Bourdieu described a field as a structured system of social positions which is occupied by individuals or institutions. Its nature defines the situation of its occupants. Moreover, Bourdieu said the field is an arena where struggles and contests occur over the distribution of resources (Jenkins, 2007, p 84). Positions within the social field are determined by the relationship of domination, subordination or equivalence as a consequence of the access they provide to capital. Bourdieu classified 'capital' as having four categories: economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and finally symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; See Chapter Two). To this I have added a fifth category 'emotional capital'. Such an overview will assist in understanding the nature and extent of the Gypsies and Travellers' social exclusion and the impact this had on educational inclusion.

One of the key forms of capital for Bourdieu was 'cultural capital' which enables the privileged versed in the behaviour and the language of the ruling class to accrue 'symbolic mastery' (e.g. exam success) which translates into wealth and status. Thus minorities such as Gypsies and Travellers and the economically disadvantaged fare poorly in school because they have been socialised outside of the dominant culture and thus have little prospect of securing success in this system. It is for this reason therefore that 'cultural capital' forms an important part of the discussion in this chapter.

Economic Capital

The Gypsies and Travellers who feature in this study were located in deprived urban environments. The Office for Standards in Education inspection reports for the three schools where the research was conducted all noted that the schools operated in 'challenging circumstances', which translates as being located in neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of exclusion. In 2003 in an article that appeared in a national

newspaper a description was given of the problems that one of the schools had to counter, which in fact characterised the catchment area of all three schools in the study.

"{The West Lake school}is a comprehensive school in {West Lake, Carwich City}, where one in four kids have or have had social workers and half have special needs. It's in one of the most economically deprived areas of Britain and the teenage pregnancy rate on the {West Lake} estate where it sprawls is the worst in Europe. Unemployment is rife, so are alcohol and drug abuse and an underground economy based on crack cocaine makes some of the streets dangerous".

The pupils observed at North Hill and West Lake schools were mainly Irish Travellers. Most of the Traveller pupils in these schools resided in housing and had done so for a long period of time. These Travellers were not home owners: they lived in various forms of social housing which the local authority had offered them when living on unauthorised encampments and were technically homeless. Exhausted by the restrictions on nomadism and unable to access basic services on unauthorised encampments most felt they had no choice but to accept the offer of social housing. A small number alternated between housing and occupying unauthorised encampments, spending a period of time in a house before 'taking to the road' again and vice versa. With regards to those in employment the women, as was the case with all the Gypsies and Travellers located in the three areas of study, did not go out to work but remained at home and in the main had sole responsibility for the domestic labour of the household. The male Irish Travellers who were in employment tended to be involved in casual manual labour especially in the construction industry.

At South Forest the pupils observed were English Gypsies. Approximately half lived on a local authority site (South Forest Traveller Site) the other half lived in housing. The residents on the local authority site paid rent to the council for their pitch but owned the caravans and mobile homes that were placed on the pitches. The majority of Gypsies in housing in South Forest Borough occupied social housing. As with the wider estate there were few home owners. A high number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils were recorded as having free school dinners, an indicator of low income. For example, at South Forest the number who had free school meals was 13 out of a total of 32 but this figure may have been higher as the school computer data base was unable to provide me with information on the meal status of another 10 Gypsy and Traveller pupils amongst the total of 32. Given that 17% of pupils in England are entitled to free school meals (Strand, 2007, 27), the

figures collected at South Forest indicate a percentage significantly above the national average.

The Gypsies who lived on the Traveller site were involved in a range of traditional Traveller trades such as landscape gardening, vehicle repair and construction, but in many cases they worked on a casual basis and alternated between the three, being self employed or working for other Gypsies. The extensive social networks they enjoyed with other Gypsies on the site and within the region often acted as informal labour and commodity exchanges and were an important component of the Traveller economy where work could be derived, deals struck and components and machinery secured. Halpern has noted the economic value of such social networks (social capital), which reduce transaction costs and time and increase profitability (Halpern, 2007, 44).

For many of the Gypsies on the site the Traveller economy was highly prized as a system that maximised the material assets which people of their social position and education levels could expect. Many felt contempt for the waged economy. One adult on the South Forest site stated:

> "*I know a man, he's 'skint' all the time, he works in a factory and lives on the estate, after paying his bills he's got nothing. He works all hours but what's the point if you've got nothing to show for it. You're better off on the dole*".

Many of the Gypsies living in housing and in waged employment were indeed in low skilled and waged employment and a growing number on the site was dependant on benefits or using them to supplement income gained in the informal economy. In the past divorce and separation had been rare in the Gypsy community but amongst the Gypsies at South Forest there was a growing number of one parent (female-headed) families. Just over one third of the Gypsy pupils registered at South Forest School had just one parent at home. This was having a negative impact on traditional family socialisation practices. Where the father was no longer at home it was harder for the boys to go and work with their fathers. Some parents were also increasingly nervous about restrictions on child labour and were hesitant to take their boys to work with them until they could pass in appearance for a sixteen year old. Some of the non-attenders, instead of going out working or helping their mothers, laid in bed for long periods of the day. Some appeared to be suffering from lethargy and depression. A number of families were dependent on welfare,

some due to health issues, often depression: others, it was said, had sham separations from their partners in order to secure welfare benefits, because the income they could draw from their self-employment was becoming harder to secure and the rents on the site were, in the view of the Gypsies, becoming exorbitant.

On the site there were claims of growing criminality. One long-standing non-Traveller campaigner for Gypsy and Traveller rights who had established links with the site informed me he had heard stories that some wanted to flee the culture of crime, such as drugs-dealing, and were tired of the continual police raids. One housed Gypsy pupil whose family left the site to escape the problems informed me *"I prefer living in a house. When there was trouble* (a shooting*) on the site I had to stay in and was frightened for my friends and family on the site"*. In recent years there had in fact been a drug-related killing on the site.

The Traveller economy was fragmenting due to external pressures such as high rents and site restrictions which barred economic activities taking place on pitches as had occurred in the past. Alternative work spaces were difficult and expensive to find. These factors, combined with greater restrictions on the informal economy, reduced the profitability and feasibility of traditional Traveller economic practices. A growing number of Travellers faced a stark choice between casual labour and benefits or low-waged employment. A lack of formal education (cultural capital) greatly reduced their room for manoeuvre. Some of the younger Gypsies and Travellers in the social field appeared to be in a dangerous vacuum, benefiting neither from formal education nor the socialisation practices of their family, leaving them unskilled but also susceptible to low self-esteem and confidence and the corresponding dangers that can accompany long-term unemployment; welfare dependency, addiction and even criminality (Chapter Two). Thus the economic position of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field studied can be typified as one of decline and stagnation.

Social Capital

Putnam describes social capital as "Features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives ...Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust."

(Putnam, 1995, 664-5). Halpern elaborates further on the components that form social capital: "Most forms, be they kinship, work-based or interest-based, can be seen to have three components. They consist of a network; a cluster of norms, values and expectancies that are shared by group members; and sanctions – punishments and rewards – that help to maintain norms and networks." (Halpern, 2007, 10). The following section describes the nature of social capital for the Gypsies and Travellers in the social field studied but also the sanctions and rewards that helped bind the Gypsies and Travellers, exploring the impact of these variables upon educational participation.

Putnam has broken the notion of social capital into two sub-types, namely 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital is inward-looking and reinforces exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Other networks are outward-looking and incorporate people from diverse backgrounds, and can therefore be described as 'bridging' (Putnam, 2000, 22-3). Both terms are useful in understanding the nature of social capital amongst Gypsies and Travellers.

Amongst the Gypsies and Travellers, especially those living on the South Forest Traveller Site, social networks were highly 'bonding'. Fellow residents were referred to as cousins and aunts and uncles even where there was not even a tenuous family connection; the residents acted and behaved as if they were one large extended family. These strong social networks within the Gypsy and Traveller community were cemented by frequent social events such as weddings, baptisms and funerals. The high frequency of these was attributable to the fact that some of those attending would only have a distant connection with those being christened, wed or buried, and thus accounted for what could be viewed as the abnormal attendance rate at these events. Attendance strengthened ties within the social network and were a means of collectively asserting identity and group membership.

Traditional conceptions of Gypsy and Traveller identity involved attendance at fairs, the use of group languages like Romany English (for Gypsies) or Gammon/Shelta (for Irish Travellers), self employment and nomadism (Kenrick and Clark, 1999; Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Gypsies on the site still went to fairs. A number of these fairs were under threat of closure by hostile local councils. The most important local annual fair to the South Forest Gypsies was called Wickburn Common fair but this had been banned by the village parish council, because of concerns with alleged anti social behaviour. One

Traveller exclaimed indignantly *"How many get robbed at the Notting Hill festival? How many get knifed? Would they consider closing that festival? No way! But they can go ahead and ban ours."* Some of the older Gypsies still spoke the Romany language but amongst the young it was in decline. Some still had an avid interest in horses and even kept them at nearby fields, but this was a practice under pressure. Site rules meant that horses could no longer be kept on the pitches and development proposals threatened the possibility of keeping horses in the nearby fields. As has already been outlined, for a growing number of families the Traveller economy was under severe pressure. Furthermore, though occupying caravans, many on the site were now largely static as the options and feasibility of nomadism were greatly impeded by a lack of stopping places and government restrictions on unauthorised encampments.

A number of the Gypsies, in particular the older ones, felt things were changing on the South Forest site and the younger generations were losing their Gypsy and Traveller identity. One day three Gypsy pensioners reminisced about life in the Fordway forest, where many families had lived prior to moving to South Forest, and how they had had unlimited freedom to travel and live their life unfettered by bureaucracy. One sighed and exclaimed, *"They have listed buildings but soon they will need to have us listed. We're a dying breed."* The differences between the young and the old were quite dramatic. Some of the older Gypsies clung to conservative moral values. However, unlike their elders young girls on the site were no longer covering their legs in long skirts as Gypsy women had been expected to in the past but were wearing short mini skirts and tight, low cut tops like their peers on the estate. This was a visible indicator of the growing influence of the outside world but also evidence of the growing freedom that some women were accruing within the Gypsy community. In part, the site itself and the way they were made to live were blamed for what some considered as negative change. Some of the older Gypsies despaired about the South Forest Site: they referred to it as a 'reservation' and complained that it was something that held them in stasis, and in effect spelt the end of many traditional lifestyle practices. One female pensioner bemoaned the changes.

> *"These young ones on the site, they're not real Gypsies any more; they don't know any of the old ways. The girls, for example, they wouldn't know how to knock on doors and make a living. The truth is they're all 'Gorgio' (non Gypsies): they mix with kids on the estate and even marry them"*.

Cultural customs and practices, although important, were not the central features of group identity nor the force that maintained it, and adaptations by the young were not a real threat to group cohesion. A fear of the wider community and an elaborate series of rewards and sanctions were the foundations upon which strong bonded identity was built. Identity is increasingly fragmented and fractured (Hall and Du Gay, 1997, 4). No cultural or ethnic group is static: each generation is subjected to new experiences and even environments which the previous generation did not experience, leaving in their train an imprint reflected in new tastes, views, aspirations and even outward appearance. Barth noted how individuals could participate in what he termed different 'streams of tradition' or 'universes of discourse', with varying depth and intensity (Jenkins, 1996, 96). Dramatic changes had taken place for many Gypsies and Travellers across the country. In the case of the South Forest Gypsies, they had moved within a fifty year time span from a state where they lived a truly nomadic lifestyle on the forest of Fordway to one where they occupied houses on a large modern housing estate or pitches on the highly regulated local authority site. These major changes were bound to impact greatly on traditional lifestyles but create new environmental and cultural influences. A sense of difference is the core of many people's culture and this perception it at its clearest when standing at the boundary of that culture. As Jenkins has noted this leads to an awareness that things are done differently 'there' [across the boundary] and the sense of threat that poses for how things are done 'here' [within the group] (Jenkins, 1996, 106. See Chapter Two for a discussion of cultural boundaries). The Gypsies and Travellers on the South Forest site had sought to diminish the influences of these external factors by maintaining as far as possible a cultural distance between their lives and those of the wider community.

Distance was maintained through a sense of fear and of mistrust of the wider community. It has been noted that this contempt can be equal in its intensity to that held by house-dwellers for Gypsies (Adams et al., 1975, 51; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Putnam has argued that positive and negative interventions in the lives of groups and individuals can have a corresponding effect on trust formation, civic engagement and reciprocity in the wider community (Putnam, 2000). Given the culturally traumatic experiences of Gypsies and Travellers it was not surprising that their trust in the wider community was low and that they looked to themselves and their own kind for strength and security.

In the 1980s a youth arts project took place on the site. Sara Tomkins, who now headed an

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established arts community project in South Forest Borough, had led this project. Sara informed me that she noted in the 1980s how many on the site felt as suspicious and defensive about the outside world as outsiders often do about Travellers, some rarely left the site and knew few if any people in the surrounding estate; mothers wanted to send their children to play schemes and nurseries but were scared to leave them in the care of outsiders, away from the site. Sara felt the community on the site was under pressure and pushed too close together.

Such suspicions of outsiders and the wider estate had increased in recent years and were reflected in the fear that the Gypsies had of the world beyond the South Forest Traveller Site. One of the Gypsy boys had recently been violently assaulted and one group were said to have been shot at by a Vietnamese 'hood', an act which intensified the Gypsies' fear of the estate. The following quote from a Gypsy called Tommy Burrage, who lived on the site, betrays this fear and suspicion.

> *"When my boy got attacked, that was attempted murder. All along this road were crime notices asking people if they saw any crime, but did they come forward for my boy? No, of course not! They didn't because he's a Gypsy. They hate Gypsies, that's what it comes down to. You can be a Hindu or asylum seeker and they will happily live next door to them and they won't give them any grief. They love that, but if you're a Gypsy they'll slam the door in your face."*

For its part most people on the estate kept their distance from the site and resisted using the short cut the site provided from one part of the housing estate to another. They also perceived the site as being a dangerous and unwelcome place. The Squire, a community elder and called the 'Squire' as a mark of respect, lived at the South Forest Site. He noted the fears of the wider community and expressed an argument commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers which explained the fear but also low opinion of the non-Gypsy 'Gorgio' community that many on the site held.

> *"You won't get more villains than what are on that estate. When a Traveller has a 'punch-up' that's it it's all over and they are friends again, but I see in the Sun that there was a shootout on the M4. I bet they weren't Travellers. These football matches, who does the shooting and stabbing there? Who killed Blakelock on Broadwater Farm? Was it a Traveller? How many times do you read in the paper Gypsy people leaving their children? Or treat them bad and neglect them? We are a race of people that think the world of our children!"*

Many of the Gypsies and Travellers observed were especially concerned by the racial diversity of their neighbourhoods which had in recent years become more diverse through the new migrations of refugee groups such as the Vietnamese, Albanians and Somalis (Chapter Eight). Putnam has noted the power of 'constrict theory' which argues that increased diversity appears to reduce levels of trust and community participation. Diversity, according to Putnam, appears to lead people to withdraw from collective life (Putnam, 2007 cited in Ryan, et al. 2008). Thus a number of fears combined with mistrust led to low levels of bridging social capital with the wider community which translated itself into civic disengagement but which was balanced with close social bonding amongst their co-ethnics.

One Traveller parent stated *"I'm all for our kids mixing with non-Travellers, but those kids from the estate are coming onto the site and getting them into bad ways"*. The reality was though, whether or not these children were getting into 'bad ways' their interaction in school and in the wider community with non-Travellers was minimal: not only did they keep their distance but they shared the fears and suspicions of their elders towards outsiders. This was reflected, for example, in the reluctance of many pupils on South Forest Traveller Site to both participate in secondary school and socialise with other groups, within and outside school. Despite generational differences, the Gypsies on the South Forest Site were a cohesive and bonded group who maintained distance between themselves and outsiders and shared the profound suspicions of their elders to newer arrivals on the estate such as the Kosovans and Somalis. Halpern could indeed be right in claiming that being told not to trust others by your parents and elders can have a profound and lasting effect (Halpern, 2007, 249)

Being part of a strongly bonding community could hold a number of incentives. Durkheim and other social theorists have argued that communities typified by strong social bonds enjoy high levels of mutual support, which impacts positively on physical and mental health indicators (Durkheim, 1997; Halpern, 2007, 109). Correspondingly, a decrease in bonding social capital could be counter-productive to the happiness and well-being of a Traveller. The Nobles were a South Forest Gypsy family, who had not wanted to leave the South Forest Site but had been forced to by the refurbishment of the site in the early 1990s, which reduced the number of pitches on the site. This led to some families willingly or unwillingly moving into social housing on the estate. The Nobles felt strange and isolated

in housing. For a number of years Mr Noble had slept in a small trailer caravan parked in the drive of their council house because he was unable to sleep in a house. The Nobles were desperate to return to the site. They were on the waiting list and were frequent visitors to friends and family on the site. Their sense of frustration was as profound as that of those who lived on the South Forest Site and may in part have explained the animosity they and their daughter Bridget felt towards the school, as they were of the opinion that the school was highly discriminatory towards Gypsies (Chapter Eight).

Sanctions can play a powerful role in the maintenance of group norms (Posner and Rasmusen, 1999). The Gypsies on the South Forest Site were said by Sandra James (South Forest Traveller Education Service) to have resented those who had moved into housing and believed the housed families had turned their backs on their culture. Thus a move from the close knit community on the site could lead to a loss of status (symbolic capital) and sense of being a Gypsy in the eyes of their peers (See Chapter Nine). Though rich in the density of their bonding social capital, the deterioration of economic capital and diminishing cultural and symbolic capital in their eyes and those of the wider community influenced some Gypsies and Travellers to deviate from prescribed norms and embrace change. Living in housing or working in the waged economy led to the development of new coping strategies which included greater participation in formal schooling and bridging social capital where networks and ties were developed with people outside their ethnic group. Such ties, though, were not intense, for the estates on which they resided were typical of those located in neighbourhoods with high levels of social exclusion and were characterised by low levels of community engagement and interaction (Bryne, 2005). Where interaction did take place it involved those Gypsies and Travellers living in housing often hiding their ethnicity from their neighbours and work colleagues and thus opened the door to possible erosive doubts and uncertainties about their culture and identity, a psychological consequence of internalising such negative perceptions (De Vos, 1995).

Emotional Capital

Helga Nowotny drew on Bourdieu's conceptual framework of capital and framed the term 'emotional capital', a variant of 'social capital' which was characteristic of the private sphere as opposed to the public and confined within the bounds of affective relationships of family and friends. For Nowotny this capital is heavily gendered: it is a resource women

have in greater abundance (Nowotny, 1981). Gendron (2004) defines emotional capital as ".. the set of resources (emotional competencies) that inhere to the person useful for their cognitive, personal, social and economical development". On the South Forest Traveller Site in particular, where strong bonding relations existed, emotional capital was characterised by strong feelings of concern and protection for their young and concern and empathy at the unfair treatment they felt was meted out by school. These emotional expressions did not, though, seem to be stronger amongst females; such was the collective nature of the community and the emphasis placed on the welfare of children that these emotions were equally strong amongst men and women. Reay (2004) comments on emotional capital and the impact it can have on interaction with school and states:

> "My research data indicated a very thin dividing line between empathy and over-identification when children were experiencing difficulties in school. Many mothers talked poignantly of their concern at children's distress. However, while it was natural for mothers to share in children's feelings of anxiety and unhappiness, if they became too enmeshed in children's distressed feelings they were often left both unable to provide appropriate support and having to deal with a welter of negative feelings of their own" (Reay, 2004, 62).

These comments, when applied to the relations between Gypsy and Traveller parents and school, are revealing. A strong sense of emotional capital often led them to side with and support their children in disputes with school with an intensity which led the school to classify them as non-objective and even anti-school. Such parental anger in the Black community has led to support by Black mothers for supplementary schooling (Reay and Mirza, 1998) or other strategies to overcome exclusion and maximise the benefits of mainstream education (Reay, 2004, 64). For the Gypsy and Traveller parents, anger, bolstered by emotional capital, often led to a continuation of their support for traditional and gendered socialisation practices above the formal education provided by school. Here children, unlike at school, would be safe, treated with respect and prepared for adulthood. This emphasis is in contrast to the emotional and cultural capital of the middle classes, who encourage their children to conform to the ethos of school and who see symbolic capital in this system as the primary route to emotional and material happiness, despite the emotional stress this can bring to their children. For the Gypsies and Travellers the emotional well-being appeared to be of paramount importance. This should not be dismissed as part of a deficit pathology but as a reasoned evaluation of the cultural and emotional costs if their children were to stay in the secondary school. Support of non-participation in school was

therefore perceived as a mechanism to avoid low self-esteem and anxiety and symbolic violence.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the competencies, skills and qualifications of a group that can be transmitted to younger group members via institutions such as the family and school (Bourdieu, 1990). As is the case with economic capital there is not an even distribution of cultural capital. Bourdieu has argued that the family socialisation process, language and cultural customs of the group can favour some groups over others. For Bourdieu the education system, which prizes academic theory (symbolic mastery) and competition through the exam system, favours the dominant classes in society who are more culturally equipped to succeed within these parameters as they possess the language and cultural insights and outlooks (dispositions) to navigate their way successfully through the formal education system. Through symbolic mastery and the exam system the class system reproduces itself and political and economic capital is transferred from one generation to another through an academic process that fosters notions of meritocracy and fairness (Bourdieu, 1990). However, because the competitors in the school system begin with different handicaps based on cultural endowment the process is deceptive and indeed fosters and maintains privilege. Thus, many are at a considerable disadvantage in the education system (Jenkins, 2007, 110). Not everyone is endowed with what the system considers to be the 'right' cultural capital to compete successfully in the academic school system. This invariably leads to low-income and disadvantaged groups often faring poorly in school, and other types of knowledge not being classified as legitimate and accorded status and reward, a process that results in the dominant culture favouring symbolic mastery over practical mastery/physical capital (Jenkins, 2007, 108).

Many of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field, in particular those on the South Forest Traveller Site, prized interactive skills learning. A primary socialisation tool was in-family training, where young Gypsies and Travellers learnt skills by working with their families. Boys would help their fathers or extended family members in the family business from a young age, in some cases dropping out off school before the school leaving age to undertake such work, whilst girls worked within the family unit undertaking child care and domestic duties. This heavily gendered and practical socialisation process was considered

by many of the Gypsies and Travellers to be a more effective tool of preparation for adulthood than school. One Gypsy of pensioner age called the Squire commented with regards to training in the past:

"If a bloke's son left school at fourteen he was in the blacksmith shop with his father and the father would show the boy the trade and in three months he would know the trade like his father, but now boys have to go to college to learn the trade. Whatever can a boy learn about shoeing by looking at a piece of paper? Daft!"

Another Gypsy adult, Mrs Wood, who, like the Squire, lived on the South Forest Site, declared:

"All they are interested in like with my boy John is just being a tree surgeon. Now and then he will go with his father for the day; he won't get no better experience than that rather than sitting around at that school. When he gets into that lorry he learns what a man should do."

Tommy Burrage, the Squire's middle-aged son, clearly rejected the school curriculum and the prospects of waged labour.

"None of the kids on this site have got GCSEs because none of them are going to be policemen, nurses or doctors, so they don't need it!"

Many Gypsy and Traveller adults still prized the value of traditional in-family training. For one Gypsy adult called Percy Wood, such a process of socialisation into the world of work was almost instinctive.

"It's like a dog that has been tied up all his life and is suddenly let off the lead and sees a rabbit. He will instinctively know what to do. It's the same with a Traveller and work."

As well as rejecting the value of formal education, many of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field were unable to foster the cultural dispositions and academic foundations that would enable their children to achieve academic success. Many of the parents had low levels of education, disrupted educational histories and were in some cases illiterate. Levels of parental education are major determiners for educational attainment (Halpern, 2007, 143). Furthermore, few of the families, especially those on the South Forest Site, had access to computers and the internet, thus the children were denied full access to a

technological form of cultural capital that is playing an ever greater role in the acquisition of symbolic mastery (Emmerson and Frow, 1998). The schools where research was conducted reflected the deprivation of the neighbourhoods in which they were located. All three schools had attainment rates below the national average and a high turnover of staff. The schools were classified by Ofsted as working in 'challenging circumstances' and had in the past received critical inspection reports. Thus the economic capital of the Gypsy and Traveller parents impacted on where they lived and therefore the quality of the education that they could access. Deprived areas are generally educationally below the national average for attainment (Gillborn and Gipps, 1995, 17; Sparkes, 1999, 9). Deprivation has similarly affected Gypsy and Traveller pupils' attainment (Foster and Horton, 2005, 19).

Lacking the dispositions of dominant cultural capital and prizing interactive skills learning over symbolic mastery meant that the Gypsies and Travellers observed in the research field were at considerable disadvantage and likely to be alienated from the educational process. Amongst the Gypsy and Travellers pupils in the research field there was low educational achievement. At South Forest School in 2003, of the Gypsy pupils of year 11 age, four had dropped out before GCSE exams, four took the exams and one gained 5 GCSEs from grade A-C. The others scored grades in the range of D to G or were un-graded. Therefore 12.5 per cent of the Gypsy pupils achieved 5 A-C GCSEs as opposed to 25 per cent of the pupils for the year group as a whole. In the other two schools none of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils attained 5 GCSEs grades A-C during the year in which the investigation took place, although in previous years they had secured success similar to that at South Forest, with one or two Gypsy and Traveller pupils securing exam success at GCSE level.

The Ofsted reports for the three schools reveal that a large proportion of pupils were classified as having 'special educational needs'; standing at approximately one-third. The proportion with special educational needs and low attainment amongst Gypsy and Traveller pupils in the three schools was even higher. At South Forest School 24 Gypsy and Traveller pupils out of a total of 32 achieved grades in some or all their subjects below the national average. Six of these pupils at primary school achieved average scores or above in their English Key Stage Two results. The remainder achieved scores below the national average. In recorded data for other ethnic groups in South Forest Borough, the minority with the lowest recorded score for English at Key Stage Two were the Bangladeshis with 57 per cent achieving average scores or above. Gypsies were recorded

under the 'any other minority' ethnic category and were therefore merged with other groups, meaning they did not have a clear achievement profile. When analysing the performance of Gypsy pupils at this level it appeared that at South Forest only about one-fifth achieved average or above average scores. At Key Stage Three, out of a group of 10 pupils, 4 achieved grades 5/6 - the expected level. One pupil achieved level four and two were not present for the exams. Three were recorded as working below the assessed level. A factor which contributed to the high SEN (special educational needs) levels amongst Gypsies and Travellers in the three boroughs where the research was conducted is that cognition is related to cultural context and that people are good at what is important to them (Sarup, 1991, 78). As has already been indicated there was considerable opposition to the curriculum amongst Gypsy and Traveller pupils and adults and this may have impacted on attainment *(See Chapter Seven for further discussion)*.

A lack of support for the school curriculum reflected itself in poor behaviour or non-attendance on the part of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils. At South Forest School, 16 (10 boys and 6 girls) out of the Gypsy cohort of 32 pupils had been excluded for a fixed term period; the vast majority on more than one occasion (Table 5 The Number of Exclusions Amongst Gypsy Pupils and Reasons). Such incidents were usually of a serious nature. A fixed term exclusion (suspension) is one of the strongest disciplinary tools at a school's disposal. Most of the incidents involved insolence, swearing and aggressive behaviour towards other pupils and staff. 27 exclusions were made on account of aggressive behaviour and two-thirds of these were boys. There were 72 recorded incidents of unacceptable behaviour, 51 by boys. Six boys and two girls were classified as having particular difficulties in managing their behaviour (Table 6 The Number of Recorded Incidents in the Conduct Log for Poor Behaviour and Types of Misbehaviour Allegedly Demonstrated). These trends were also evident in North Hill and West Lake. 16 out of the 32-strong cohort of Gypsy pupils at South Forest School did not attend school at all or only on a highly sporadic basis, and 13 of these lived on the South Forest site (Table 3 Attendance Amongst Gypsy Pupils – in Housing and the Traveller Site). There were other reasons for some pupils not attending, but there appeared to be a pattern from an analysis of the data on Gypsy pupils who had particularly poor relations with school. The pattern indicated that from an early point in the secondary school, strained relations occurred with staff and there was an increasing incidence of disciplinary incidents, often reaching a peak in years 9 and 10 (when pupils are aged 13 to 15). This eventually led to a majority of

Gypsy and Traveller pupils 'dropping out' of school before the official leaving age. These trends were also evident in North Hill and West Lake. In South Forest, attendance amongst housed Travellers also appeared to be greater than for those living on the local authority site. The most alarming fact, though, was that approximately half of the Gypsy and Traveller intake had stopped coming to school in any meaningful sense. It should be noted that these figures represent school attendance for the academic year 2003. The non-attenders had attended no part of this academic session, or had attended on a temporary basis for one or two terms of the academic year. Some were attending special classes, held three times a week, but their attendance at these broke down and was negligible (Table 1 Attendance by Gypsy Pupils At South Forest School).

Gender and Cultural Capital

A greater number of female Gypsies were more prepared to reach a form of accommodation with school. Amongst the cohort of Gypsy pupils at South Forest school, attendance and attainment was higher amongst female Gypsy pupils than males. For example, the majority of those with 50 per cent attendance or below were boys (Table 2 Breakdown by Gender). Male Gypsy pupils were also much more likely to come into conflict with the school for poor and aggressive behaviour, according to the number of incidents recorded in the incident log of the school, which chronicled the more serious incidents of trouble that took place in the school. There were 51 incidents of Gypsy male pupils being involved in unacceptable behaviour as opposed to 21 for female pupils (Table 6 The Number of Recorded Incidents in the Conduct Log for Poor Behaviour and Types of Misbehaviour Allegedly Demonstrated). At South Forest School, male Gypsies were twice as likely to be disciplined for poor behaviour as female Gypsy pupils. There were exclusions issued to 24 male pupils in the Gypsy cohort of pupils as opposed to 12 for female Gypsies.

These gender differences regarding perceptions of school may have been inspired by changes in the perception of women's roles and capabilities within Gypsy and Traveller culture. In the past Gypsy and Traveller culture had been quite conservative in its vision of the role that women and men played in communities, with heavily gendered roles where many women were restricted to domestic roles, as was indeed the case with society as a whole (Griffin, 2008). The fact that Gypsy and Traveller girls were staying at school

longer and expressing, in the interviews that I conducted, that they aspired to further education and marriage at a later date than previous generations of Gypsies and Travellers could be taken to indicate that there was a change in the expectations attached with gender roles. Traditionally Gypsy and Traveller women have married relatively young, but there seemed to be evidence in my contact with the community for marriage to take place later. These broader changes in expectations on the part of the Gypsy and Traveller female pupils observed were evident amongst both the more accommodated pupils I termed the 'mainstreamers' and the 'resisters' - those who were disaffected from school. The relatively poorer performance and relations with school of male Gypsy and Traveller pupils may have some connection to symbolic capital. Pronounced masculinity within Gypsy and Traveller culture brought status and therefore 'toughness' and prowess in fighting were prized. These traits heightened the possibility of aggressive confrontations from male Gypsy and Traveller pupils with their peers and the school authorities in response to symbolic violence and racism (See Chapter Nine).

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is prestige and honour and in communities this can be translated into power. In his study of the Kabyle in Algeria Bourdieu reflects on the significance of a sense of honour.

> "..struggles for recognition are a fundamental dimension of social life and that what is at stake in them is an accumulation of a particular form of capital, honour in the sense of reputation and prestige, and there is therefore a specific logic behind the accumulation of symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1990, 22).

Symbolic capital was an important feature of the cultural framework of many of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field. Symbolic capital could be maximised by conforming to the 'Gypsy and Traveller way'. Conformity to this 'habitus', a set of dispositions and classifications, impacted on thoughts and actions, and a successful navigation of these could increase status and reputation but also the maintenance of group goals and identity, those who deviated from these suffered a corresponding loss of status. Thus the division between the Gypsies and Travellers who conformed to the norms of

school and those that resisted was at times acute and polarising. According to Bourdieu, when a holder of symbolic capital uses the power this confers against an agent who holds less, and seeks to change their actions, then they inflict symbolic violence. (Jenkins, 2007). It could be argued that in the wider field the Gypsies and Travellers suffered from profound symbolic violence from a hostile society which viewed their life patterns with extreme hostility and suspicion. Furthermore, in the view of a significant number of the Gypsies and Travellers a range of institutions including schools were seeking to impose alien and unwelcome influences on their collective habitus (cultural dispositions) and therefore imposing symbolic violence. It was this perception that in many cases inspired resistance to school and suspicion of the wider community.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a broad overview of the Gypsies and Travellers profiled in the research field by chronicling their economic, social, cultural, emotional and symbolic capital and the 'social facts' of the research field. The chapter indicates that many were experiencing acute dislocation and challenge, which the strong social capital of the Gypsies and Travellers was not equipped to counter: in fact the bonding social capital of the Gypsies and Travellers and lack of bridging social capital accentuated exclusion. The plight of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field may therefore undermine claims that strong social capital and networks can bolster a community in times of challenge and economic and social crisis, an argument which the advocates of the importance of social capital have used to diminish the need for greater economic support and intervention to challenge social exclusion (Ryan et al, 2008).

As has been noted in this chapter, not all the Gypsies and Travellers rejected the school curriculum or were alienated from school. Some conformed to the ethos of school and a smaller number were even able to acquire levels of symbolic mastery that could be translated into medium levels of academic success. Many of these Gypsy and Traveller pupils lived in housing, one or more of their parents were part of the wage economy and had had some secondary school education. It could be argued that these pupils had a greater dimension of forms of cultural capital that could engender support for school and a

moderate form of success in school. This thesis analyses the educational outlook and strategies of these groups as outlined in the typology below:

The Resisters - Reject what school has to offer – usually low opinion of curriculum, teachers. High frequency of low achievement, expulsion and dropping out. Some were passive in their resistance and did not get into serious trouble at school but failed to attend and participate in learning processes at school. In some cases the 'resisters' valued more traditional Traveller training practices or languished at home.
Semi Accommodated - Strategic and occasional misbehaviour on a generally minor scale. Non-conformity of such a degree they cannot be labelled highly accommodated yet on the other hand they generally subscribe to the ethos of the school e.g. desire to stay on until 16.
The Mainstreamers - Very good attendance and a high level of conformity to the ethos of the school. Desire to stay until 16 and for some intention to study in further or higher education. Few recorded incidents of misbehaviour. This group still perceived themselves to be Gypsies and Travellers.
The Assimilated - No longer subscribe to Gypsy and Traveller identity and often hold negative views of them or have no interest in them. Generally they lived in housing and aspired to waged labour employment.

In devising such a typology I hope to avoid the bipolar characterisations of some studies that have depicted pupil responses in polarised and narrow categories. I also recognise that, whilst typologies may be useful in depicting a broad picture, they can fail to capture the complexity of life in school and the fact that there are times and occasions when actors will not conform to the expectations assigned them by categorisations and labels (See Chapter Two). In the next chapter the subject of human agency is prominent.

The quantitative data described in this chapter has an existence in and of itself and is not bound to the actions of individuals. Such collective data can be more objective in providing insights into a minority than monographs detailing the actions of a number of individuals. Nevertheless analysis of individuals can complement the 'social facts' by providing insights into the strategies adopted by group members and how and why these

can shape and alter collective trends. This is what the next chapter seeks to do.

Chapter Six

Life Stories and Auto/Biography

Cultural Trauma

Giddens (1996) terms the present age as one of 'reflexive modernity' in which ordinary social actors feel that society has changed rapidly and that the future is uncertain. This is an age unlike 'modernity' that was based on absolute truths and certainties. This mood of anxiety and uncertainty caused by fundamental change was prevalent amongst the adult Gypsies and Travellers in the research field. My survey of the economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital of the Gypsies and Travellers in the research field revealed a high level of dislocation. For them it could be argued that change had been markedly more profound than it had been for the wider community. In the post-war period the interventions by the state and mainstream society upon the lives of Gypsies and Travellers had been acute, leading to a movement from unfettered nomadism to a state of stasis in housing or local authority sites and from self-employment to waged labour or welfare dependency (Chapter One). This change could be seen as a form of cultural trauma. "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander et al., 2004, 1). Erikson indicates that such trauma does not always come from sudden change: dramatic change can happen over an extended timescale and sometimes only in the wake of that change does trauma appear. Erikson states:

> "A blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with "trauma". But is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared" (Erikson, 1995).

The Gypsies and Travellers featured in the 'Life Stories' in this chapter were marked by fundamental change. Participants' lives spanned the post-war period and were drawing towards the final stages of their 'life course' namely, old age. All three had experienced

profound and dramatic change. Such has been the scale and impact of social change for Gypsies and Travellers, including those featured in this chapter, that it can be described as 'traumagenic'. According to Sztompka (2004) 'traumagenic change' is rapid-occurring within a relatively short period of time, wide and comprehensive, touching many aspects of life, and fundamental, touching core aspects of social life or personal fate. The Gypsies and Travellers featured in this chapter are what can be described as 'carriers of cultural legacy': these are the generations that were socialised, indoctrinated and habituated in a particular cultural milieu (Sztompka, 2004, 193). The chapter demonstrates how powerful legacies from earlier history which were internalised by the Gypsies and Travellers in their formative years are brought into a clear and polarised dichotomy with new influences and ways. What is most evident in one of these 'Life Stories' is that the actor feels that a sense of stability and order has been taken away from them and that change has been unwelcome and imposed.

Another advantage of investigating personal life histories is that they provide an antidote to what Goodison describes as the "depersonalised and ahistorical educational accounts" to which we have become accustomed but allows links to be made with macro theories which are grounded in personal biography (Goodison cited in Woods, 1991, 164). In this analysis I also use auto/biography, a process where biographical writing is mediated through the biography of the writer (Okely, 1992). Auto/biography deals in the stories of lives in order to further understanding of the social world. However, such 'life stories' and accounts of life lived are not objective: the research participants will have a set of motives for revealing certain information or encouraging a certain interpretation. Mayall states that research participants can interweave fact and fiction, both consciously and unconsciously (Mayall, 1996, 13). But, as Okely (1992) has argued, embellishments, concealment and selectivity reveal the values of the participant's culture. Thus the actor's voice cannot be viewed as independent of the culture they come from (Alldred, 1998, 155). Despite the use of triangulation to verify an actor's reminiscences, such accounts will never be objective, as they are mediated through the subjectivities and theoretical preferences of the researcher. As Hastrup notes, the author selects the quotations and edits statements for any scientific discourse needs to make claims to speak over and above acts observed (Hastrup, 1992, 122).

Validity in depiction and interpretation can be strengthened through reflexivity where the

sanitisation of subjectivity, identification and emotion in research is resisted (Alldred, 1998, 157). In the process of "reflexivity" the researcher considers the impact of their own 'life story' in the research process and how this can impact on relations in the research field. As Scholte notes "Fieldwork and subsequent analyses constitute a unified praxis......the ethnographic situation is defined not only by the native society in question, but also by the ethnological tradition in the head of the ethnographer. Once he is actually in the field, the native's (research participant's) presuppositions also become operative, and the entire situation turns into complex intercultural mediation and a dynamic and interpersonal experience (Scholte, 1974, 438).

In the following 'life stories' the influence of culture is revealed. Cultural background and history are important dynamics in determining life strategies and the biographies they produce, in other words 'who they have become' and 'how they have become'. In this sense the analysis is indebted to Weber, who argued that in order to understand the reality of what society is, and how it functions, we must look at how social actors make sense of what they do and how culture socialises a collective set of symbols, which guide what they do (Weber, 1985). The actors profiled in this chapter, though, are not puppets: they have the ability to interpret and navigate situations according to their personal agency and identity. Social life is a struggle between group identity and individuality, creating a tension between our own wishes and desire to be accepted by others (Chapter Two).

The portrayal of the Gypsies and Travellers featured in this thesis are what are termed as 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973). Much detail is provided on the social and cultural lives observed, so that the reader can decide for themselves whether the conclusions drawn are legitimate. As Geertz states, "A good interpretation of anything, a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation" (Geertz, 2006, 242). This detail and narrative approach also stems from my belief that research should be accessible and interesting but also that the researcher should diminish the use of an authoritative voice and instead provide an account of lives lived that can facilitate the possibility of multiple realities but also alternative interpretations. It is an approach that Delgado terms the 'call to context'; described by Gillborn as "...an insistence on the importance of context and the detail of the lived experience of minoritized people as a defence against the colour-blind and sanitized analyses generated by universalistic discourses" (Gillborn, 2008, 30; Okely and Callaway, 1992, XI)). Such a narrative form

can also invoke empathy with the researched and has transformative potential.

Tommy Burrage

The Gypsy Tommy Burrage lived with his wife Chantelle and three teenage children on the South Forest Traveller site, a local authority site. On the same site and nearby pitches lived Tommy's two grown up daughters and elderly father, called the Squire by other Gypsies on account of his authoritative manner. There had been a Gypsy community in this area, which now forms part of Carwich City, for centuries. For much of their history in this locale, Gypsies had lived on the Fordway Forest and had practised a traditional nomadic lifestyle using the forest as a base from where they could travel to seasonal employment and fairs. Following the felling of the Fordway forest in the 1950s and development of prefab housing estates, a large number of Gypsies had been forced to seek refuge on the land the South Forest site occupied. Then it had been open space on the edge of the (then) borders of Carwich City. As some of the families purchased the land on which the South Forest site was located, the site became more established. The rapid expansion and urbanisation programmes of Carwich City grew apace and by the late 1960s the Gypsies at South Forest found themselves surrounded by a wall of grey-concreted housing estates, and sandwiched between a factory and a busy rail line. The site had come to occupy 'marginalised space' and the Gypsies found themselves living in closer proximity to larger numbers of the 'Gorgio' community than they were previously accustomed to. In recent years, conditions on the estate had deteriorated. The Ofsted report, written in 2001, noted that objective indicators identified the area as having high levels of social deprivation. The area was also included in the neighbourhood renewal fund that prioritises areas of deprivation for regeneration projects.

The South Forest Traveller site, now spatially confined by the surrounding estate, became overcrowded and sprawling, and in the opinion of some of the residents and local authority officials became something of a 'shanty town'. Following petitions by the residents for the council to assist in improving the living conditions on the site, South Forest Council compulsorily purchased the site in the 1970s, renovated it and transformed it into a local authority site. These changes caused resentment from the residents, in part because the land was now worth a large amount of money. Some felt that they had been defrauded in the compulsory purchase process. The Squire, who had witnessed the transition, exclaimed

"........they took this land away from the people that owned it for nothing and now it's worth millions!" Many of the Gypsies on the site now resented the change that had come about as a consequence of the compulsory purchase and were angry at the local authority management regime on the site, which in their opinion was harsh and unfair.

A common theme that I found amongst many of the South Forest site residents was a sense that they had been and were ill-treated by the authorities and the wider community. Tommy Burrage typified these perceptions. Tommy was aged about fifty, and immensely proud of being one of the last Romany Gypsies on the site who had been born in a wagon on the Fordway forest. Within the school, rumours of drug dealing hung over Tommy. Such rumours regarding the site were rife. Within the school, some recounted that when Tommy was initially given the pitch in the late 1990s he was extremely poor. He had in fact been living around the country on different unauthorised encampments or in conventional social housing and was, on his return to the South Forest site, living on the roadside and homeless. Tommy was so poor that his extended family had had to offer assistance to him to buy a new trailer for his children to sleep in. After the council eventually offered him a vacant pitch on the site, the school noted that Tommy was now 'flush' with money and the family had a top-range mobile home instead of just living in trailers. The mobile home was full of the 'gaudy' baroque-style furniture much favoured by Gypsies and Travellers. However, questions from staff at the school centred on where the wealth came from, given the fact that he did not work. The popular explanation seemed to be that Tommy, like a number of other residents, was benefiting from the burgeoning drugs trade that allegedly took place on the site. Despite these suspicions, those who promoted them could not offer any direct evidence. In fact Tommy may have been left money, as his relatively wealthy father-in-law had died two years before. Alternatively, given that he did not work he may have been involved in other types of 'wheeler dealing' of which there was again rumoured to be a long tradition of on the site or other informal forms of income generation.

Tommy had two married daughters and three sons, Tim (aged 15), Fred (aged 13) and Arthur (aged 11), all of whom had stopped attending South Forest School. An inspection of the boy's pastoral files at South Forest School revealed that Tim had received a number of good reports and was academically of middle ability; Fred, though, had been frequently reprimanded for poor behaviour and had been classified as having Special Educational

Needs, being basically illiterate. Arthur's time at the secondary school had been so brief there had been little time for him to make any impact hence there were few comments in his file. However, a report from the primary school noted that the failure of home tuition and negligible school attendance that occurred after returning to school had had a negative impact on his attainment. For a time the boys had been educated through home tuition (elective education), which allows parents to teach their children at home without the fear of prosecution, subject to the tuition being monitored by the local authority. For the Burrages this educational initiative was deemed to have failed. Tommy and Chantelle, it was argued by the Traveller Education Service, did not have the ability or expertise to carry out the tuition, and it quickly broke down. The boys were re-registered at South Forest School but their attendance soon petered out to nothing.

What had caused this loss of faith in the school? According to the Traveller Education Service the family had been traumatised by a gun attack on the estate against their eldest child Tim, by local black teenagers. This incident made the parents fearful for the security of their children outside the confines of the site. Tommy was also extremely scornful of the security that the school could provide for his children, and believed that the school authorities were powerless, or turned a 'blind eye' to the transgressions of pupils from other ethnic minorities. He felt they were over-zealous to the point of being prejudiced in punishing Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The following comment from Tommy was typical in revealing the low opinion that he had of South Forest School:

> *"Those asylum seekers from Kosovo, they can do what they want in school. One day one of them brought in a six inch knife and the teachers pretended nothing had happened but my boy went in with a penknife and was excluded. Those asylum seekers get everything and we get nothing."*

Comments such as these led the school to label Tommy a racist. Tommy, like many Gypsies on the South Forest site, also had little regard for the formal curriculum of school. His contempt for the school was demonstrated in a story that the headteacher recounted to me:

> *"Tommy brought Fred into school one day. They were actually going out for the day as a family and had gone to the pie shop and something wasn't right and Fred had to share with Arthur (his brother) and Fred threw a 'wobbler' and Tommy said 'right, that's it, you're going to school', so he brought Fred screaming the place*

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down shouting 'I don't want to stay here'. Tommy was shouting, 'That's your punishment, you're not coming home with us because you've been bad'. It's all quite amusing but clearly it says something about the way in which they see school."

Tommy had himself attended South Forest School until the age of fifteen. He once commented that he had learnt nothing of any use at the school. Some of the older staff informed me that he was often to be seen in his final years at school helping the school caretaker do odd jobs around the school rather than attend classes. This attendance at school, though, was founded upon an element of compulsion rather than support for the curriculum. Tommy's father the Squire exclaimed:

> *"They were more stricter on the school in those days, even when we was in the yards (Traveller sites), if that school man came round and saw a boy that shouldn't be there he got hold of him and took him to school. Oh yes, they were more stricter in them days."*

It was such a threat of prosecution that had partly prompted the Burrages to enter into dialogue with the Traveller Education Service about the re-entry of the boys into school. It was agreed that Fred and Arthur, along with other Gypsy non-attenders, would attend the special literacy classes as a stepping stone towards full integration. Tim, who was aged fifteen and near the school leaving age, was adamant that he would not return and there was talk of trying to find a training course (by the Traveller Education Service).

The attack on Tim had caused a certain amount of trauma and anxiety for the family. This had been exacerbated by the death of Chantelle's father. It was felt by the Traveller Education Service, with the agreement of Tommy and Chantelle, that the re-entry of the boys into school might relieve the pressure on the family. The site caretaker asserted that the Burrage boys were sleeping until late in the day and were not even going out to work with adults. The caretaker was pessimistic about the prospects of these boys again attending school because Tommy he believed had little influence over the boys.

Fred's and Arthur's attendance soon faltered and attendance at the special classes came to a standstill. At the start of the following academic year, Tommy and Chantelle appeared to be enthusiastic for the youngest child Arthur to enter into Year 8 at South Forest School but he failed to attend. Apparently he refused because his older brother Fred, who would have been in Year 10, was not being compelled to return to mainstream classes but instead

just attend the literacy classes. This was because Fred's illiteracy and misbehaviour had been problematic in the past when he had been placed in mainstream classes. The school also claimed he had lost his school place through non attendance and the year group had reached its limit for pupil numbers. The failure to achieve Arthur's re-entry to school confirmed the views held by the school that Tommy was able to exert little authority over his sons. The headteacher commented: *"Tommy has come up here in the past and had a go at us for being 'too soft'. Well he's not doing too well either!"* Tommy's possible lack of authority over his two younger sons was dramatically displayed to me when I organised the opening of an exhibition in the local arts centre of photographs taken by the Gypsy teenagers on the South Forest site. The MP for South Forest was to officiate at the opening and I was keen for Fred and Arthur, who had contributed photographs, to attend. Tommy was also enthusiastic and was eager to come. He besought Fred and Arthur to come along, but the boys wavered and because the older boys on the site were not interested in coming they opted to stay on the site. It appeared the behaviour of their peers had more impact on the boys than the will or desire of their father. Subsequently, therefore, the exhibition opening was attended by Tommy and a number of Gypsy girls from the site.

At times Tommy felt anxious and dejected at his situation. He felt powerless and under threat on the site, because of the weak tenancy rights the residents experienced and the authoritarian, management style of the site manager, Dave Green. The Squire despaired:

> *"What a lot of people don't know is that Dave Green terrorises people, even some of the young children go screaming to their mothers when he comes up the road here, anyone like Chantelle who's a little weak hearted and nervous it doesn't help, when someone like Green says if you don't clear up your pitch in seven days you'll get evicted. That's no way to treat people! When you go around these council estates you can see old cars on the forecourts, caravans and stuff but they don't bother about them!"*

Tommy also voiced contempt for Green:

> *"Listen, our site manager here Dave Green, he's supposed to be a Gypsy liaison officer but I never voted for him for that, no one asked me if it was OK for him to be here. When we want to get hold of him to tell him something is wrong, he's never here, he hasn't got time, but if someone complains about us he's onto it fast, like with me when I had a bit of rubbish outside my pitch."*

Tommy was also deeply affected by the problems and tensions within his family. One day

Tommy complained:

> *"I feel like I'm in a rut, I can't move forward but want to, I want to be known by people as Mr Burrage not that Gypsy on the site. I want my children to have a better way of life than me and to have a decent cheque in their pocket at the end of the month."*

Tommy appeared to draw comfort from a piece of land he owned in the countryside, which he hoped one day to be able to move on to and develop as a private site for his family, thus being able to leave the South Forest site. Tommy believed that such a move would provide a panacea to the family's problems but the land was also a source of anxiety that reinforced perceptions of exclusion. Tommy had already submitted an application to live on the land but this had been refused by the local authority. He felt that this rejection stemmed from the fact that he was a Gypsy and that the council was simply discriminating against him.

In rejecting his planning application the council had claimed that the land was on the flood plain and therefore not suitable for habitation. Tommy had a collection of photographs taken during a period of heavy floods; the photographs showed his land and a tourist caravan site and housing estate near to his land. These last two photographs appeared to show more water than was evident in the picture of Tommy's land. These pictures for Tommy were strong evidence that confirmed for him that the council had been unfair in its ruling. Tommy exclaimed:

> *"Someone can go from Carwich City into the country and buy a cottage and that's OK but someone can't buy a plot of land and put a caravan on it, they object, it's all right for the 'yuppies' though."*

Through my campaigning work I had acquired a certain amount of expertise in planning matters and Tommy prevailed upon me to assist him in his further attempts to obtain planning permission. One of my interventions confirmed some of Tommy's fears. Tommy wanted to take a small step forward, which would have come two years after the failed planning application, and secure permission to place a storage shed on his land. I contacted the planning department and made a general enquiry about such procedures, taking careful note not to refer to Tommy's land, and was informed that there was no need for a formal application as a letter to the planning department would suffice. I drafted a letter for Tommy but when he delivered it to the planning department by hand they stated that a

formal application would be needed and he would have to pay one hundred pounds. A friend of mine who works in a planning department in a neighbouring authority informed me that there was no need for such a formal application but this had probably been requested because the applicant was a Gypsy who had previously submitted a retrospective application. Commenting on this Tommy's sister said:

> *"The problem is Travellers are too trusting, someone says no you can't have that, you can't do that, they take it as the truth and that's why Travellers haven't got half the things they should have."*

Part of Tommy's motivation to involve me in his planning matters stemmed from a belief that someone from the settled community was more likely to be treated fairly by the planning authorities than him. He stated: *"They won't listen to a man like me but perhaps they will take note of a man like you."* In part such feelings were also born from a sense of inadequacy. When the site had been refurbished, a site committee of residents had been created to give advice to the council on the refurbishment. After the completion of the project this committee had ceased to function. I argued that there was a need to reform the committee so that it could stage discussions with the school and other outside agencies. It could also empower the residents and give them a platform to project their numerous anxieties including concerns about how the site was managed. Although supportive of such an initiative, a number of residents, including Tommy, who could read and write, stated that such a committee would only work if there was someone like me to head it. Somehow the notion of acting as an advocate for the whole site and directly raising concerns with the powers that be was something that residents like Tommy shied away from. Mrs Smith, a resident on the site, explained such inertia:

> *"They don't have the confidence to do it for themselves, a lot of them can't read or write or they don't know how to speak in a meeting, they need help and support."*

Tellingly Dave Green opposed the idea, claiming that such a committee had existed in the past but that all people had done was talk over each other. One Irish Traveller who had known Tommy for a number of years argued:

> *"Tommy hasn't got a lot going for him really. Travellers like him are not part of the settled community and they're not Gypsies either, being stuck on a council site, with all that concrete around them twenty four hours a day. They're trapped in an*

enclosure like a dog's kennel, fencing steel wire, concrete posts, one toilet and shower per family, mother and father having no space for themselves.......if you live on a council site like that your hope has gone and you have no hope for your children, your family is going to rot. Wouldn't that depress you? People get in a trap and it's difficult to get out."

This assessment was typical of the perceptions that many Gypsies and Travellers had of local authority Traveller sites. Often they were disparagingly referred to as 'reservations'. As with reservations, their location on marginal space, and the strict rules and regulations that govern such sites made some feel they had surrendered their rights, and indeed part of their traditional lifestyle and cultural heritage. It may have been for these reasons that the incidence of depression on such sites has been recorded as high (Clark and Greenfields, 2006; CRE, 2006). For sites like South Forest, their problems became more acute as they mirrored the growing difficulties of the marginalised urban housing estates; characterised by deprivation, racial tensions and a growing culture of drug abuse and violence (Chapter Two). In this vortex of exclusion Tommy yearned for a form of escape but appeared to lack the opportunity or ability to make progress. His resentments and frustrations were often directed at other minorities on the estate, who he somehow deemed to be at some advantage and in some respects responsible for his plight. Part of this trajectory of blame involved the secondary school, which for Tommy encapsulated many of the injustices of the neighbourhood and was perceived to be part of the raft of bodies that oppressed and marginalised the Gypsies and Travellers of South Forest. The problems experienced by the Burrage family were indicative of the crisis that existed within a large number of the families on the South Forest Traveller Site, who like the Burrages suffered multi-faceted and extreme social exclusion and who did not always have a positive relationship with the school or the wider community.

Eszter Lee

Tommy Burrage, through his occupancy of a caravan on a Traveller site, espoused a more traditional Traveller lifestyle, yet it was one that reflected the lifestyle pattern of only a section of the Gypsy and Traveller community. For probably the majority of Gypsies and Travellers now occupy conventional housing (Shelter, 2007). Living in conventional housing, though, could cause tensions within the Gypsy and Traveller community. On the South Forest estate, it was reported to me by the Traveller Education Service that those

who had moved into housing were perceived by the Gypsies on the site as having somehow let the community down. For some, housing posed a cultural danger. The Squire once exclaimed:

> *"Travellers don't want it* (nomadism) *to die out, they would love it to come back, everyone you talk to, they'd love to travel but you go into a council house and after two years that's your lot, you're finished. It's like putting a wild bird in a cage. Gypsies were never made for houses, they like to roam free."*

For some Gypsies, living in a house could represent an abandonment of Gypsy culture. Some Gypsies and Travellers who have moved into housing have indeed jettisoned their cultural identity and assimilated with the settled community, at times through choice, in other instances through fear of what the reaction of the settled community would be if they were identified as Gypsies or a perception that somehow their cultural identity was something that was shameful and which, where possible, should be discarded. This was far from being the reality for all Gypsies and Travellers that moved into mainstream accommodation. Eszter Lee lived on the South Forest estate. She was a Gypsy but lived in a house. Eszter had lived on a Traveller site in Bromley until she was eleven, when her parents concluded that travelling was becoming too difficult and therefore opted to move into a house. In spite of living in a house, the family continued to mix with other Gypsies and Travellers and attend Gypsy cultural events such as fairs. Eszter had married within the Gypsy community. Her husband had been born in a 'bender' (traditional Gypsy tent made from branches and canvass) in woodland that was now part of the South Forest estate. Now in their fifties, they lived in a house on the estate and their only child Amy attended South Forest School.

Amy was in Year 9 (aged fourteen) and had an above average attendance rate and attainment in some of her classes. For example, in English she had achieved a very high grade of seven in her SATs. In her pastoral file there were no references to poor behaviour and she was an active participant within the school community, for example writing for the school magazine. It was her ambition to become a journalist. During an interview it became apparent that part of her motivation came from her parents' desire to see her succeed in conventional terms, i.e. achieve academic success and secure a good job. Amy stated that her parents wanted her "to do well". Eszter Lee also informed me:

> *"I want Amy to have a good education, I want her to go to college and have a good job because I think it's important."*

Eszter also expressed concern for the general lack of respect that teachers were able to summon from some pupils:

> *"When I was at school if you did something wrong, it wasn't detention that you got but the cane or slipper, but now all they get is detention, and half the time they couldn't care less. I really do feel for the teachers, it's not an easy job."*

The Lees still considered themselves to be Gypsies. Eszter had trained Amy in the use of the Romany language and she was able to hold a conversation in Romany. Amy felt herself to be a Gypsy and believed that this would not change with academic or career success: *"If I become a journalist and even live in a house, I will still be a Gypsy."* For Eszter, living in a house did not impact on her ethnicity:

> *"Many of my family still live in caravans or on sites. I think because we are in a house it doesn't make any difference at all but I want, how can I put it in the right way? I want the best for Amy."*

The last part of the statement indicates a perception that Amy was better placed to access the opportunities of mainstream society by living in a house; the same stance is also evident in another comment by Eszter:

> *"I do miss travelling. It was a good life. I'm not saying it wasn't but we've settled down on the estate now and have a nice house, at the end of it all though we want what's best for Amy."*

There may have been some regret and a sense of loss on the part of Eszter for the old way of life that she had distanced herself from. At weekends she and her family would often take to the road in a touring caravan and visit friends and family. Eszter and Amy Lee had reached a form of accommodation with school, but on whose terms was this accommodation reached? Although the Lees still considered themselves to be Gypsies, others from the community may not have agreed and may have questioned the level of acculturation this family displayed. The case of the Lees demonstrates that there are other dimensions to the common narrative of the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in secondary school, which diverge from the common picture of poor relations with the

school hierarchy and peer group and leaving school early, thus appearing to reject what conventional education has to offer. Despite self-ascribing as Gypsies, there were other situations where the Lees were more reticent. Eszter Lee acknowledged that many of their neighbours did not recognise them as Gypsies; no doubt because they did not openly advertise the fact and because they did not conform to traditional stereotypes of Gypsies. When I interviewed Amy she said she would be reluctant for a teacher to make a reference to her ethnicity in a lesson, a factor that also demonstrates unease about the expression of ethnicity outside the family unit. Given the greater levels of interaction with wider society that result from acculturation, the incidents in which expressions of ethnicity are suppressed may be great, due to the strong anti-Gypsy sentiments evident in wider society. Contact with these sentiments, or the fear of such and even the internalisation of such negative views could have damaging implications for self-ascription, leading to possible assimilation but also curtailing the effectiveness of acculturation as a process that can preserve at least the outlines of identity by assisting adaptation that can make such an identity continue to be socially and economically viable.

Agency and Ethnicity

In spite of the different challenges and diverse strategies adopted, the Gypsies and Travellers profiled in the case studies decided to retain their identity as Gypsies and Travellers at least in some form. A long-running debate has been whether ethnic groups are moulded by 'situational' or 'primordial' factors (See Chapter Two). The situational school suggests that ethnic loyalties are peripheral and that ethnic groups mobilise their symbols when it offers strategic advantage in gaining access to political or economic resources (Cohen, 1969). In contrast, some observers, most notably Geertz, who first propounded the concept of primordiality, argue that ethnic identity satisfies a psychological desire and need. Geertz argued that ethnic group membership was focused on kinship and neighbourhood but also shared language and beliefs and an intense feeling of belonging together (Geertz, 1963 and 1973). For Geertz, part of the continued attraction in ethnicity lay in the fact that in late modernity society has failed to successfully transfer a sense of mutual responsibility and obligation evident in kin groups to the state. As such values in the state are based on an abstract allegiance to a set of principles rather than a set of people (Guibernau and Rex, 1997, 101). The stubborn retention of identity as espoused by Tommy Burrage and Eszter Grant suggests that ethnic identity satisfies a deep seated need and

provided a compass and anchor in an environment of cultural turbulence and dislocation. A strong kinship group and sense of identity provided not only comfort but also a sense of protection against perceived enemies for Tommy. Yet at the same time ethnic identity was something that could be brought to the fore or placed in the background depending on context and choices made. I was left with the impression that Eszter Lee had chosen the latter course. Thus, although this thesis suggests a more situational dimension to ethnicity, it could be acknowledged that there may be an element of truth in both the 'situational' and 'primordial' perspective: both could have relevance.

The actors profiled in these case studies did not blindly act out their actions like automata in accordance with a set of mechanistic rules. Their 'habitus', a shared body of dispositions and classifications (Webb et al. 2002; Bourdieu, 1995) that had been shaped by their socialisation and membership of the Gypsy and Traveller community, amongst other influences, impacted on the strategies they chose to adopt. Within this framework, though, there was room for personal agency and improvisation and adaptation. Furthermore, habitus operates in relation to the social field; thus the same habitus can produce very different practices depending on what is going on in the changed environments, leading to new strategies and improvisations (Jenkins, 2007, 82). Hence, a number of the campaigners for Travellers' rights that I came to know were able to deviate from a norm of self-exclusion and shying away from political mobilisation and enter onto the public stage in defence of Travellers' rights. One of the most successful was Charles Smith who aside from being the chair of the Gypsy Council was also a local councillor, Mayor and commissioner with the Commission for Racial Equality. Activism was Charles's response to the overt challenges to his way of life. Eszter Lee was able to depart from perceived collective norms and live in a house and encourage her daughter to accrue symbolic mastery (Chapter Five).

For Tommy Burrage, such was the extent of change and challenge in the social field that his habitus was ill-suited for this new environment and he frequently lapsed into negative responses. Despite the expression of innovative strategies there was also much homogeneity and predictability in strategies adopted, revealing the power of internalised structures and practices and a common history. Bourdieu argues that certain perceptions are formed by the working class as a consequence of negative experiences in the economic system, the intensity and frequency of which forge a perception carried into the present

from the past (Bourdieu, 2006, 414). So it was with Tommy that displacement and dislocation nurtured a profound mistrust of majority society which shaped their relations with authority and institutions.

Some of the individuals discussed in this chapter were grappling with formidable challenges and were trying to navigate around these or overcome them and were adopting divergent strategies. During processes of redrawing identity there will be a competition as to which sub-group is the chief arbitrator of the group's identity and to what degree adaptation is accepted. At times this contest will arouse derision and condemnation for those who hold on to the old ways or those who deviate from perceived common codes and traditions. In turn there will be those who take divergent routes, clinging to tradition or finding a way between change and tradition. Time will tell to what extent and degree the life strategies adopted by those like the Burrages, Charles Smith and Lees have upon Gypsy and Traveller identity and the aspirations of this minority and the relationship with mainstream schooling and society.

To borrow from Merton's classification of responses to social trauma and social change there are four typical adaptations; innovation, rebellion, ritualism and retreatism (Merton, 1996). These traits were evident in my own typology where the 'mainstreamers' displayed innovation, whilst the 'resisters' featured rebellion, ritualism and escapism (Chapter Five). Innovation targets the resources that can protect against cultural trauma, such as extending cultural capital (symbolic capital). This seemed to typify the response of the Lees, who placed a high premium on success in the formal education system. Ritualism entails attempts to return to and retain established traditions and routines. Here Charles Smith typified this response, publicly defending Traveller traditions and campaigning for policies that would facilitate this and thus presenting a form of 'rebellion' by seeking to challenge the monoculturalism of mainstream society. Tommy Burrage voiced similar sentiments but to what degree his existence on a local authority site represented ritualism and rebellion is debatable. In reality, Tommy's resignation and profound sense of marginalisation, which at times manifested itself in bewilderment, could be classified in the 'Mertonian' classification as retreatism, as could the ghettoization of the South Forest Traveller Site, which witnessed the accentuation of bonds and the building of barriers around ethnic identity. It could be though that Eszter Lee also typified a form of retreatism which in her case chose to ignore the negative impact and price paid for social change and avoided this

realisation with a perception that her highly adaptive life strategy was the best for her family.

The carriers of cultural legacy, such as those featured in this chapter, found social change traumatic because they had been able to follow the trajectory of change and had lived and experienced the resulting dislocation. For Eszter Lee that journey had been less traumatic: it had been her father's decision to move into a house when she was eleven, so a large part of her life had involved a new and innovative lifestyle. Future generations of Gypsies and Travellers less close to the points of change may be more willing to adapt and change. However, cultural trauma is a powerful phenomenon that can be transmitted from one generation to another in terms of its influence on perceptions and interaction with others. Thus to this day slavery, though abolished for 150 years, continues to exert influence on the psyche of Black Americans (Eyerman, 2004, 61).

To varying degrees the families discussed in this chapter, like the vast majority of the others that were observed, were marginalised, experiencing cultural dislocation or were in a state of crisis. A contradiction was that some, such as Tommy Burrage, rejected education but were frustrated by a lack of it or had no viable alternatives. Burrage had no family business for his non-school-attending children to participate in, and they were languishing on the site, evidently a growing trend on some urban sites. Other children stopped attending school on the South Forest site to participate in traditional in-family training and work activities. However, a lack of formal education may be a serious impediment in the future, as it may narrow the scope, adaptability and range of their coping mechanisms and survival strategies. Yet others, like Amy Lee, could make instrumental compromises in their cultural identification and outlook yet continue to identify as Gypsies and Travellers. Such interaction, though, with school and other institutions could increase the pressures to assimilate or internalise the negative perceptions of wider society towards Gypsies. These case study profiles direct attention to the dilemma facing many Gypsy and Traveller families as to whether formal schooling is complementary to the aims and aspirations that they hold.

<u>Reflexivity</u>

As noted, the Gypsies and Travellers portrayed in this chapter are highly representative of the classifications into which this thesis divides research participants (See typology in Chapter Five). As part of the process of reflexivity it is useful therefore to consider how my interactions with these social actors shaped my interpretation but also what influence my background had upon this analysis. Ethnographic research is often about comparing two different world views, fundamentally differences between the researcher's world and the research participants. These differences can lead the researcher to question the presumptions of their own model: "In the process of talking with the group, observing the group and making constructive attempts, the researcher gains a deeper understanding not only of the way of life of the group studied, but also of the obscure presumptions that lie behind his or her own world-view" (Alasuutari, 1998, 69). This very much describes the journey that I embarked upon.

In chapter Four (methodology) I outlined the various roles I performed, including school teacher, researcher and campaigner, and tried to evaluate the impact these could have had on data collection and analysis. The final section of this chapter delves more deeply into my own perceptions and background and its interaction with social actors and the research field. I agree with Birch that an auto/biographical approach enables the researcher to distinguish the essential connection between the stories of others and the researcher's own story and how social research is a social construction (Birch, 1998, 175). Okely elaborates on this process:

> "The autobiographical insertion is different from the stamp of the author's authority: not simply 'I was there', but the self and category whom the others confronted, received and confided in. The people in the field relate to the ethnographer, as both individual and cultural category, whether or not the ethnographer acknowledges this. Auto biographical accounts are not confined to self understanding in a cultural vacuum. They show how others related to the anthropologist and convey the anthropological context." (Okely, 1992, 24)

In the following section I outline how I critically appraised the research and campaign field and continuously questioned and re-evaluated the position I adopted and interactions with research participants.

Aside from outlook and background, another important variable in interaction with the researched is gender (Callaway, 1992, 31). Gender roles are highly regulated amongst Gypsies and Travellers, with strict rules governing interaction between single men and married and single women. Consequently, as a male and outsider I found it harder to strike up more intense conversations with women. Conversations with women tended to take place in groups, often with men present. Eszter was an exception to this: as a housed Traveller it was easier for her to meet me for discussion without being under the gaze of other community members. However, our discussions took place in school, and I believe that this environment and her probable identification of me as part of the school establishment, despite a thorough explanation of my role, impacted on our interaction. I suspect Eszter's cooperation was in part instrumental as she may have perceived her cooperation as assisting her desired goal of achieving symbolic capital for her daughter within the school. I believe that with Tommy our shared gender and lengthy one-to-one discussions in his home environment yielded richer data and insights. Exchanges with Tommy could also serve an instrumental purpose. I believe our discussions provided an opportunity to present his interpretations of the plight of his community, a subject which at times consumed him. In me he had the captive audience he craved. I am not the first ethnographer to benefit from a research participant's desire to recount their troubles and ease the pain (Hastrup, 1995, 121).

My contact with Gypsies and Travellers in my campaign activities does not feature in this research but may have shaped my insights and analysis in the research process. When analysing the data and framing an interpretation, I found myself to be critical of some of some of the Gypsy spokesperson's positions on the South Forest site and wider Gypsy and Traveller community. These spokesperson's were 'charismatic leaders': their approach conflicted with the one that I and a number of more acculturated Gypsies and Travellers like Charles Smith were trying to develop in our campaigning. In the past, Traveller politics has been characterised by family-based activity focused on strong 'charismatic' community leaders, hence campaigning has tended to have a low funding base and organisational capacity and at times a lack of coherence. My fellow campaigners and I felt that a Gypsy and Traveller organisation based on NGO principles would provide an effective political platform for this minority that would enable them to more effectively articulate their needs and demands. Some observers might argue that such an approach was mistaken. Thirty years earlier, Martin Smith, in a Young Fabian pamphlet, asserted.

"Gypsies have no conception of democracy or representation. It is absurd for anyone to claim in a meaningful and technically democratic sense to 'represent' the Gypsies on anything. The mechanism for establishing such representation, and those attitudes and experiences which are necessary preconditions for their establishment, quite plainly are not to be found amongst any but a handful of Travellers. This near complete absence of democratic assumptions is important for the way in which Gypsies relate to each other, and in the way they relate to the non-Gypsy establishment"(Smith, 1975).

One long-term non-Traveller supporter of Traveller rights once reasoned with me that the nature of the Gypsies' and Travellers' culture would impede the development of an organised movement and to think otherwise was no more than cultural colonialism; besides, it was rationalised by this observer, that Gypsies and Travellers had a band of supporters and experts who could fill the vacuum created by the Gypsies' and Travellers' lack of education or organisational ability. However, such support and assistance created tensions and resentments towards outsiders, with notions of a 'Gypsy industry' and paternalism. This resentment in the past had caused acrimony about the involvement of non-Gypsies like me. I believed that more Gypsies and Travellers with the education and the requisite organisational ability were needed to come forward and fill the roles that non-Travellers were performing. These efforts, though, met with some internal opposition and suspicion from the 'charismatic' leadership, who may have felt threatened by this approach. This opposition may have at times accentuated my criticism of some of the 'charismatic' spokespersons. On reflection, I still subscribe to my earlier ideals, but have greater sympathy for those I was once critical of. I can now appreciate the uniqueness of the activism of Travellers who could be termed as 'charismatic leaders' who were very much stepping out of the narrow confines of a more conservative interpretation of Traveller identity that discouraged political engagement and advocacy. Later I worked for a Traveller organisation very much modelled on NGO lines but although working for Travellers there were times when I felt distant from the community I was trying to assist as the bureaucracy and administration that goes with a modern campaign organisation can at times preclude and create barriers for Travellers with low levels of formal education. Thus I can appreciate more the hostility that traditional and charismatic leaders had towards the campaign methods that I and others advocated. I still believe these are inevitable and necessary but appreciate that for some it is still not a valid option and is indeed one that can exclude those lacking the necessary cultural capital. The positions they adopted were,

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despite their flaws, more positive than the ghettoisation and retreatism of Travellers like Tommy Burrage.

Tommy was clearly deeply troubled by the marginalisation he endured. I felt, though, that some of his responses, such as his withdrawal of his children from school and hostility towards other ethnic minority groups, were counter-productive. My failure to side with Tommy in an inter-ethnic clash between the Travellers and a black girl in the school and instead to support the mediation of the Traveller Education Service led to a fracturing of our relationship (Chapter Eight). I still believe that I was right to be critical of Tommy's racism but my deep liking for him and his family enabled me to rationalise features of his racism as an illogical and self-harming response to exclusion. I argue that the anger that Travellers like Tommy expressed was legitimate but unfocused and misdirected. The Travellers like Tommy were no different from the working class supporters of the National Front on the South Forest estate responding to perceived unfair treatment and exclusion. With both groups the unsavoury nature of their racism should not deflect from the fact that the primary cause of the reactionary set of positions they adopted were the structural inequalities from which they suffered.

I initially felt that Tommy was also mistaken in withdrawing his children from school. I reflected on whether this was a consequence of a possible bias towards mainstream education that may have been a consequence of my background as a school teacher but also desire as a campaigner to see a more educated generation of Traveller community advocates emerge. These factors could have had an influence, but the principal reason for me adopting this perception was that whilst the school was not inclusive (See Chapter Seven), Tommy did not have an alternative. This was my initial perception but after gaining deeper insights into the unofficial school curriculum I had greater sympathy for his position. In the context of an educational experience that appeared to hold the danger of marginalisation and failure it was easier to understand why parents might withdraw their children from school if they could offer an alternative. But Tommy could not as he was not employed and his children for much of the time remained idle at home. Even the children who had a choice were in a difficult situation. They could participate either in the formal educational process with all the attendant dangers or in a traditional system which held the possibility of closing off future options and life strategies outside of the Traveller community.

Change, though, cannot be confined to institutions. I argue that adaptation and acculturation may also be necessary on the part of Gypsies and Travellers. Is this tantamount to cultural domination? Am I imposing my socialist values and belief that education is a tool for empowerment and advancement on a minority that has adopted alternative life strategies? I would argue that change, acculturation and cultural borrowing are part of the tradition of Gypsies and Travellers, which conflicts with a more promoted notion of cultural conservatism. It may have been these factors that in the first instance led to me being inspired and encouraged by Eszter Lee and her daughter's attitude towards school. However, after surveying the evidence, this enthusiasm was tempered by the fact that they seemed to be at risk of assimilation. Both denied their ethnicity in certain environments and the evidence suggested that their support for the ethos of school and its notions of meritocracy were misplaced. I detected a process of distancing by these social actors that had created a clinical and safe form of Gypsy identity that bordered upon being an abandonment of their ethnicity. Such was the degree that Eszter had internalised mainstream values that in one conversation she expressed highly derogatory views on Irish Travellers, accusing them of anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping and thus endorsing the 'othering' of this minority despite the collective experiences of such a process by the community she identified with.

In conclusion, I hope it is evident in the process of analysis and theory development that there has been a constant process of questioning and re-evaluation which I hope strengthens the validity of the conclusions that I have reached. The factors outlined in my various deliberations led me to doubt the viability of the 'mainstreamer' and 'resister' approaches in the present school context but in this process I have also come to the conclusion that the Gypsies' and Travellers' room for manoeuvre and cultural and educational inclusion can only come about with the development of a more inclusive educational system that will necessitate wide reform not only within school but within society as a whole. This has changed me in the sense that I now subscribe to more extensive reform of the schooling system than hitherto but realise more fully that the flaws of the education system are merely the faults of a flawed society. Malinowski correctly recognised that the essence of ethnography is to discover the 'researched' main passions but also to confront what is essential in ourselves (Malinowski, 1967, 119). Thus I have been changed by the ethnographic experience.

Chapter Seven

Gypsies and Travellers: School Organisation and Curriculum

Introduction

This chapter seeks to evaluate the extent of educational inclusion afforded to Gypsy and Traveller pupils in the research field observed. An educationally inclusive school has been defined by the Office for Standards in Education as one where the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Educationally inclusive schools offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties, taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. Inclusive schools are said to constantly monitor and evaluate the progress each pupil makes and they promote tolerance and understanding in a diverse society (Ofsted, 2000). This chapter seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of school organisation in increasing the educational inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in schools in South Forest, North Hill and West Lake.

Senior School Staff and Gypsies and Travellers

A number of studies have noted that senior management in a school play a key role in influencing the extent of educational inclusion by setting the tone or ethos of the school and strengthening policies to alleviate social and racial exclusion by vigorously supporting and promoting them throughout the school (Gillborn, 1995, 103). A consideration of senior management strategies in the three schools where observation took place is therefore a good starting point to help assess educational inclusion.

The three schools within the study operated in what Ofsted describe as 'challenging circumstances', that is, catchment areas characterised by high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. This clearly presented the schools' management regimes with serious attainment and pastoral challenges. At the same time the management and staff in these schools were under acute pressure to raise academic standards as a consequence of education reforms. The management in all three schools was particularly sensitive to their

standing in school league tables, especially in terms of GCSE results. Such results influenced the perceptions of the school by the community they served and impacted on enrolment rates and thus the income and the future of these schools. Furthermore, the attainment profiles of the schools also shaped the key outcomes of the inspection process that schools are subjected to by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Two of the three schools had not always received positive reports from Ofsted. West Lake had failed an inspection and been put on 'special measures' and South Forest had also failed an inspection. However, both schools had, in the years prior to my fieldwork, received good Ofsted reports, though the GCSE results remained low. North Hill School had enjoyed the most success, with very positive Ofsted reports and a GCSE pass rate that was above the average for schools operating in 'challenging circumstances'.

Despite their recent progress, West Lake and South Forest schools were still operating in a difficult environment. At West Lake the pressure of bringing the school out of special measures had resulted in the headteacher suffering a nervous breakdown. A number of staff informed me that this headteacher had been extremely effective but the pressure of work had proven too much. This headteacher was replaced by a deputy headteacher. Some of the teaching staff felt that he was struggling in this role and that the school was reverting to its previous state. South Forest School, in the opinion of some staff, also had management problems. Some of the staff felt the headteacher did not have the strength of personality needed to maintain confidence and a sense of direction in a school that they felt was lacking these qualities. This criticism was most often to be found amongst the older staff who had worked at the schools for extensive periods. These teachers could remember more successful periods in the history of the schools but they may have been unfair in levelling criticism over the perceived decline of the schools at senior management, for the catchment areas of these schools had changed profoundly and now had high levels of social exclusion that impacted on the educational achievement of the schools. Thus there seemed to be divisions and tensions within the staff teams at both of these schools.

The local authorities that included West Lake School and South Forest School also had intentions to turn these schools into academies. Academy schools are state funded schools run outside of local authority control by private sponsors. South Forest School reacted to the proposal to create a faith academy by engaging in a campaign to persuade the local

authority, which supported the faith academy, to support its own plans for a citizenship academy, which unlike the local authority plan would retain the existing management team. This intense campaign mobilised a great deal of time and energy from the school management team, in particular, on initiatives to raise attainment such as greater academic streaming. There was a perception amongst senior staff that improved attainment profiles would be central to maintaining the school, and their leadership, in their present form. In the opinion of the Traveller Education Service this campaigning and attainment driven focus was to the detriment of groups like the Gypsies and Travellers, as the school was distracted from addressing fundamental problems that existed within the school. A further irony is offered by the fact that academies were intended by the government to replace 'failing schools'. However, as the Times Educational Supplement noted, such is the government's determination to push through its academy programme that schools had been selected which had received good Ofsted reports. Amongst these were South Forest and West Lake Schools

At South Forest School the school management at times appeared to view the difficult relations with the Gypsy and Traveller parents and pupils as a serious nuisance that threatened to undermine attempts to save their vision of the school's future. The school management perceived the Gypsy and Traveller parents and pupils as being troublesome and anti-social. The required response in their opinion was the implementation of firm sanctions. The following interview extract concerning tensions within the school between Gypsy and Traveller and Somali pupils, two years earlier, reveals such sentiments on the part of Stella Cartwright, the headteacher:

> *"I had a largish group of Travellers banding together in school and they were not being 'put upon', they were being bullying, aggressive and violent and other children were just terrified of them and there were a couple of occasions when they were rampaging all around the building, so I just adopted this position on things, namely, you don't take the law into your own hands here, so I thought if I said it enough the message would get through. I can't help the fact it's against the way someone's culture is, I feel nobody has the right to treat other people like that and I have a responsibility to all children in the school to ensure they are not terrified when they come here."*

The statement clearly maintains a number of stereotypical images of Gypsies and

Travellers, who are perceived as being 'lawless' and 'intimidating'. The Traveller Education Service felt that the headteacher had adopted a polarised view of the tensions and was failing to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of the Gypsies. Instead, blame for the deterioration in relations and engagement with school was asserted by the headteacher to be the fault of the Gypsies themselves. Thus the headteacher felt her policy, which resulted in high levels of exclusion from school for this minority, was vindicated (Chapter Five). As a result of this stance the school management team ignored the advice of the Traveller Education Service to repair the fractured relations between the school and the Gypsy community by employing the local authority mediation service, as local authority guidance recommended, or initiate dialogue. Research has shown that third party interventions can enable concessions to be made in a dispute without loss of face to the opposing factions, thus promoting more rapid conflict resolution (Hare et al, 1995, 229). The school's failure to resort to constructive interventions and dependency on sanctions to settle the dispute served to homogenise and polarise the school and Gypsy community. These are factors which can accentuate conflicts (Kriesberg, 2003, 167, 175).

Within all the schools observed there appeared to be no meaningful dialogue or parental involvement in the decision-making or life of the school. No Gypsies sat on the governing body or were involved in the Parents and Teachers Association. Attendance at parents' evenings was also minimal. This is a forum, where on a more informal level views on school can be exchanged between parents and staff. Instead, relations with Gypsy and Traveller parents and school management often revolved around emotionally charged encounters, in which parents were called into the school as a consequence of their child's perceived misdemeanours. These were encounters that often generated hostility, defensiveness and mistrust on both sides. The school management teams in the three schools tended to be aware of the ethnicity of Gypsy and Traveller pupils who were frequently in trouble, and this contact seemed to shape their views on this group; a view they tended to apply to the group as a whole. Senior school staff were surprised to be informed by me that there were other Gypsy and Traveller pupils within the schools with much greater levels of achievement and participation. There was no evidence of any strategic thinking on how senior staff could guide processes that would raise Gypsy and Traveller school participation or achievement. None of the schools had a written policy statement on this minority.

The antagonism that senior management expressed towards the South Forest Gypsies was mirrored by the teaching staff. One perception of the 'resisters' was that they were a law unto themselves. The head of pupil support told me:

"I certainly know some teachers view them as a law unto themselves, they therefore become very difficult to teach but also a bad influence on the other kids in school. Other kids see them with bad uniform or earrings or whatever and they see them and think, why can't we do what the Travellers can? The staff get quite 'wound up' because the parents or whoever it is might come up to the school and will support the kid and that's not just something the Traveller parents do. It frustrates attempts to make kids follow school rules so you can get on and teach them but the parents come up to school and say the kids did not do this or that what they have been accused of."

There was also a view amongst the staff that there was extensive criminal activity taking place on the site, in particular drug dealing. Janey Smith's father was alleged to be involved in such activity (Chapter Eight) and was referred to as the *"local drugs baron"* by one staff member. The headteacher commented: *"I gather the site is raided all the time. It's fairly well known, in the area, that class A drug dealers are amongst the community on the site"*. In truth these allegations may not have been groundless but the same problems were equally evident on the housing estate in equal measure. However, it was the Gypsy community that seemed to be labelled as the biggest culprits in the eyes of the school. Senior school staff can play a pivotal role in reversing negative assumptions held by staff and facilitating new approaches by lending their voice to change and encouraging reflection on school practices (Gillborn, 1995, 128). At South Forest senior management appeared to lead negative perceptions.

Pressures born from government reforms such as school league tables, inspections and the academy school proposals could be considered as not conducive to the interest of marginalised groups like Gypsies and Travellers. These factors, combined with what some staff and Gypsy and Traveller parents perceived as weak management, and a failure to develop positive home-school relationships by some school management teams, accentuated this educational disadvantage. It would appear that the management in these schools appeared to be having difficulty in making their race-equality schemes, which the Race Relations Act 2000 required them to have, living documents. This was despite the

fact that schools were required to observe the impact of their policies and to consider discrepancies, such as high levels of exclusion for some minorities. School management, in particular at South Forest School, where worrying discrepancies in attendance, attainment and relationships were more clearly evident, were failing to ask basic questions about the impact of the curriculum upon Gypsies and Travellers and their relations with this group.

Classroom Management and Curriculum

I observed lessons with Gypsy and Traveller pupils across the age group from 11 to 16, and also across the whole range of ability where streaming was in operation. In most of the lessons I took on the role of a classroom assistant and was thus actively involved in the educational process. I was perhaps therefore in a better situation to judge the impact on Gypsy and Traveller pupils' learning outcomes.

A majority of the lessons observed were teacher-centred. Teacher-centred teaching is where the focus is on the teacher, with the pupils expected to play a passive role (Sarup, 1978, 58). The classrooms also tended to be set out in static rows of desks, again reflecting traditional teaching concepts (Meighan and Siraj, 1997, 86). In this formalised classroom environment, the teacher would often set a series of written tasks based on reading and writing skills. Discussion, drama and other more creative activities were kept to a minimum. In one school, a long-standing member of staff acknowledged the formalism of much of the teaching that took place within the school:

> *"It's a question of resources. Flexibility in the classroom takes a lot of experience. Teaching now is very demanding because of all the demands such as discipline, planning and bureaucracy. It's very stressful! No wonder so many teachers don't make it to the end."*

So pressures and time restraints meant that teachers were not in a position to design dynamic and stimulating learning experiences and instead tended to adopt formal teaching approaches. In part, such methods were a consequence of the fact that since the heyday of progressivism in the 60s and 70s such methods have been increasingly discredited and

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superseded by teacher directed approaches (Reay and Mirza, in Majors 2003, 99). Change was also dictated by the demands of the national curriculum, which meant that large amounts of information needed to be transmitted from the teacher to the pupil. Furthermore, in all three schools there was a high turnover of staff and many of the teachers were relatively new to the profession. For example, the Ofsted report for the West Lake School in 2001 noted that 40 teachers had been appointed two years prior to the inspection and one-third were new to the profession. For some of these teachers, lacking experience and confidence, and others burdened by the demands and challenges of national curriculum teaching, such formal teaching provided the best means of covering the curriculum through minimal planning and no doubt for the teachers offered the best form of control of large and at times unruly classes.

It was in the lower ability streams, where Gypsies and Travellers were more likely to be located, that challenges to a teacher's authority were likely to be at their greatest and, in turn, teaching could be at its most formal. This was the reverse to the North Hill success story where high GCSE results had in part been secured through greater streaming. Streaming left in its train a greater number of what could be described as low ability 'sink classes', that created highly challenging teaching conditions given the noise levels and disruption that characterised many of the classes I observed. It has been argued that students with learning problems most frequently do best in structured learning programmes where direct teaching methods are utilised and a well organised and predictable learning environment is provided (Gow and Ward, 1991).

Conversely it is argued that a child-centred teaching environment can increase occasions when pupils fail, leading to disaffection; thus there is a need to move gradually to providing greater independent learning experiences for children (Westwood, 2002, 34). Teacher-centred approaches are said to be especially effective in the early stages of learning, when basic skills are being acquired (Westwood, 1995) but also for slow learners, where progress and confidence can be carefully built up (Westwood, 2002, 6). In the classes observed, a lack of differentiation, even within streamed classes, which failed to take account of different pupils' individual needs and learning styles, combined with poor discipline, undermined the effectiveness that teaching-centred approaches could have held.

The authoritarianism of teacher-centred approaches, with their lack of opportunity for flexibility and improvisation, was also at odds with the traditional in-family training experiences that some of the Gypsies and Travellers were exposed to, where skills were learnt through 'doing' and interaction and the instructor acted as an equal in a common task but also, more generally, adolescents were treated like adults by parents and given a range of rights and freedoms usually associated with early adulthood in wider society (See Chapter Five). Thus it may be right to argue that a vital component of teacher education should be to help teachers understand the ways and needs of cultural groups but also adolescents in general, understanding that it is right and natural for adolescents to be accorded independence and responsibility in learning activities (Blair in Majors, 2003, 35). The mismatch in learning styles is revealed in the following statement by one Traveller pupil with a history of non-attendance "*I don't want to stay* {at school} *until I'm sixteen, I'd like to stay at home and the teachers could come to me and train me or maybe just come in for a couple of days*".

In interview, many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their learning experiences in the classroom. Nearly all the pupils expressed greater appreciation for their time at primary school where, in particular, they felt that relationships with teachers had been stronger, whereas at secondary school moving from one class to another and having a large number of teachers was unpopular. The sentiments of many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils interviewed are expressed in the following comments by one Gypsy pupil, Lizzie Penfold: "*The teachers were better at primary school. They didn't shout at you all the time like they do now.*" Frequent discontent was voiced in my interviews with pupils about the poor relationship between teachers and pupils, where threats and shouting to maintain discipline were also frequent. Mary Smith exclaimed during an interview: "*They're 'moany' and always want to be seen to be right and they are like that with most of the Travellers*". This may underline the fundamental importance of relationships in delivering effective learning experiences whatever teaching approach is adopted. Preference was also expressed by a majority of Gypsy and Traveller pupils for more creative and stimulating learning experiences. For example, Fred Burrage commented: "*A lot of lessons repeat the same old stuff and you get bored of it.*" Henry Brazil reflected the views of many of the pupils classified as special educational needs by

voicing concern at the heavy diet of reading and writing-based activities by stating: *"All they want you to do is write. It's boring and a waste of time!"* Clearly teachers were failing, for these pupils, to differentiate for different needs and skills strengths and create confidence-building learning experiences. This, combined with poor classroom management, meant these pupils were what has been termed 'curriculum disabled', being unable to fully access and benefit from the school curriculum (Elliot and Garnett, 1994, 6).

The response of many Gypsy and Traveller pupils was, like their peers, to challenge the classroom regime of some teachers through disruptive behaviour. At times teachers would plead for silence, or try and shout down those causing disruption. This not only led to noise levels actually rising but meant that the teacher's instructions were not only incomprehensible to the pupils, but also to me in my role as a classroom assistant. The poor focus on some teachers' instructions and the general noise levels also meant that tasks set would be below the general ability of the group and learning outcomes could be limited. Correspondingly, levels of attainment and achievement appeared to be low, with large numbers of pupils failing to demonstrate a strong grasp of key concepts. In a number of cases teachers struggled to maintain order. They had all but abandoned an effective discipline regime, issuing threats for misbehaviour which were never delivered, feigning deafness or blindness to acts of poor behaviour and thus avoiding the need to issue reprimands. For some teachers such was the volume of challenges to their authority that it was virtually impossible to punish all the miscreants they encountered during the school day. In the process these teachers opened the floodgates to ill discipline by failing to observe the basic code of classroom management by being confrontational and failing to implement or follow through effective sanctions (Welsh and Williams, 2005, 64). The challenging tactics adopted by some teachers in fact escalated poor behavior by drawing attention to deviant behaviour and in effect unintentionally rewarding misbehaviour by constantly reacting to challenges in front of a pupil's peers (Westwood , 2002, 53). In the following statement, the Squire reflects the common contempt for the strength of school discipline held by Gypsies and Travellers, which also indicates a lack of confidence in the exertion of female authority in school. The statement therefore also reveals the sexism of some of the males:

"These boys (Gypsy pupils) *would be a lot better off if there was a strict man to thrash them if they didn't behave themselves but they get a young girl in that school and they're laughing at them all the time."*

Gypsy and Traveller adults on the South Forest site expressed little regard for the curriculum that school had to offer. Traditional Traveller training processes where children learnt skills by working with their parents were viewed as superior. During an interview, one Traveller pupil called John MacNamara, as with the adults cited, could not identify a connection between the formal school curriculum and the world of work and material reward. In response to a question about when he wanted to leave school, he retorted: *"When I'm about fourteen, School doesn't get you no money. I want money."* Many Gypsy and Traveller pupils expressed a strong preference for more vocational studies, but they did not exclude the possibility of school offering such training. Indeed, where schools were able to offer this option, it was a possible course of study that even successfully lured non-attenders to improve their school participation. One year 10 girl called Katy Jane, although only attending a nominal number of school lessons and virtually a 'non-attender', attended all the practical training sessions in hair and beauty at a local college that the school organised for her, for part of her school timetable. For some, though, vocationalism was merely a means to escape the conventional curriculum of the school. Mary Smith, who was capable of achieving good GCSE grades, told me that she would take up a vocational course in year 10 to enable her to leave school at an earlier date.

Government revisions to the national curriculum have taken note of the fact that for some pupils school is perceived as being too abstract and academic and at Key Stage Four (age fourteen to sixteen) have injected a greater degree of vocationalism. In spite of this, for many Gypsy and Traveller pupils these possibilities came too late. At a much earlier stage in their secondary school career, many Gypsy and Traveller pupils had already become alienated from school, and become disenchanted and 'dropped out'. They either started work with their parents or fell into a lifestyle that rejected any notion of school attendance, so that by the advent of Key Stage Four, the length of their absence from school made it extremely difficult to lure them back into a more conventional learning and training programme. Another opportunity to enthuse Gypsy and Traveller pupils for the school curriculum was afforded through the Connexions programme, where counsellors discussed

with pupils their career options and the relevance the curriculum can have to help them achieve their desired work ambitions. These sessions were only available to pupils from the end of year nine, a point in the school life cycle by which many Gypsy and Traveller pupils had already long ago ceased attending school.

Whilst based at South Forest School, I had investigated the possibility of another new reform known as extended work practice, and whether it might be utilised for Gypsy and Traveller pupils to formalise the training experiences they were accruing from their family group. Extended work experience allowed a pupil to work in a business for an extended period, which in effect could constitute the bulk of a pupil's timetable, so long as their work was monitored and accompanied by at least one day of attendance at school, to carry out literacy and numeracy work possibly connected to their work experience. Extended work experience was designed to re-engage pupils disillusioned with the conventional learning programme, and I thought initially might be the solution for non-attending Gypsy and Traveller boys working with their fathers to help them avoid the danger of prosecution for non-school-attendance or employing a minor. Local authorities, though, were not enthusiastic to support extended work practice in areas of work where there was a chance of physical risk to pupils. Hence they were extremely reluctant to endorse placements in construction, scrap metal or tree surgery: staple employment activities for many Gypsy and Traveller families. Furthermore, businesses offering work placements had to be registered. Some of the family businesses I encountered amongst the Gypsies and Travellers I observed operated in the informal economy because they lacked the skills and profitability to become registered.

Thus it appeared that an inflexible and formal curriculum was failing to enthuse Gypsy and Traveller pupils and afford them educational inclusion, traits that were also evident in the special educational needs policies and practices of the schools observed.

Special Educational Needs

Approximately a third of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in the research field were classified as

'special educational needs' (SEN). It is therefore relevant to consider the importance of this term in a discussion of Gypsy and Traveller pupils' learning experiences. According to the SEN Code of Practice 2001 (government guidance which schools have to follow when providing for SEN pupils) pupils in special educational provision have one or more of the following features:

1   a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of the same age; or

2   a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in school (Para 1:3, 2001),

The SEN Code of Practice (Para 7:52, 2001) gives broad categorisations of SEN that relate to:

1   communication and interaction

2   cognition and learning

3   behavioural, emotional and social developments

4   sensory and/ or physical needs;

These categories are graded. The most acute grade is 'profound', then 'severe' and finally 'moderate'. According to SEN data records, a significant number of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils with special educational needs had cognition and learning difficulties. Du Plessis claims that research has shown that cognitive skills are a determining factor of an individual's learning ability. Cognitive skills are mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge, and are claimed to constitute the skills that separate the good learners from average and below average learners. Cognition involves skills such as logical thinking, memory, perception and concentration. When cognitive skills are weak, learning becomes a struggle. Many children become frustrated and find schoolwork difficult because they do not have the cognitive skills required to process information properly (Du

Plessis, 2008). Learning is a process of relating new information to previously learned information. Learning is most likely to occur when an individual can associate new learning with previous knowledge. Thus background and socialisation processes are important determinants of learning proficiency. Some children will have impaired educational performance because of flaws in earlier development processes. Another common factor ascribed to Gypsy and Traveller pupils' learning difficulties was communication and interaction. The poor literacy skills of many of the parents was held to be an important factor which negatively impacted on their children's development.

A number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils were also classified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and could be described as expressing 'challenging behaviour'.' Generally, educationalists prefer the term 'challenging' to what they argue are less satisfactory alternatives, such as 'inappropriate' or 'problem' behaviour. They see the term as more respectful and less deficiency-oriented and indicate that such challenging behaviours represent challenges to services rather than 'within-person malaise' (Visser, 2003, 3.15). Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties can incorporate at a personal level low self-image, anxiety, vindictiveness or defiance; at a verbal level the child may be silent or threaten and swear a great deal; at a non-verbal level the child may cling, truant, fail to observe rules and be disrutive and aggressive and at a work/skills level be unwilling to work without direct supervision (Birkett, 2007, 39).

It has been estimated that 20 per cent of the school population will have SEN at some point during their school careers (Westwood, 2002, 1X). Data collected by central government revealed that within the three schools, there were a high number of pupils with special educational needs (learning difficulties). At North Hill School an estimated 36 per cent of pupils had special educational needs. At the West Lake School, this percentage was an estimated 22 per cent. At South Forest School, the approximate percentage was 34 per cent (Chapter Five, Table 10). At all three schools the great majority of Gypsy and Traveller pupils fell within the special educational needs category, primarily because of literacy problems. At South Forest over half of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils were SEN (18 out of 32). In North Hill and West Lake schools the proportions for SEN were 4 out of 6 and 6 out of 7 respectively. There was a greater tendency for male Gypsies and Travellers to be classed as SEN. At South Forest 13 boys in the Gypsy and Traveller cohort were classified

as SEN in contrast to 5 females. At South Forest a quarter of the Gypsy and Traveller cohort, mostly boys, were classified as having behavioural, emotional and social problems, here there was considerable overlap with learning difficulties.

The schools observed clearly had a greater proportion of SEN than the national average and the proportion of SEN amongst Gypsy and Traveller pupils was much higher than the average in these schools. In the case of South Forest School, it was three times the national average. The high proportion of Gypsy and Traveller pupils classified as having learning and emotional difficulties mirrored similar trends found in other studies which have identified a high proportion of SEN pupils located in poor/working class socio economic groupings (where the majority of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in the three schools would have been located) but also a strong correlation between ethnicity and male gender (Galloway et al., 1994, 114; Lindsay et al. 2006, 49). Such correspondence, though, may say more about our society and schools than about the nature of ethnic minority pupils' learning abilities (Barton and Tomlinson, 1981, 37). This point is developed at the section ' *Symbolic Mastery and Interactive Skills Learning'*.

Within the three schools there were a number of support initiatives designed to assist Gypsy and Traveller pupils, as well as other pupils, to overcome obstacles to educational inclusion. A few were designed specifically with Gypsy and Traveller pupils in mind. One of the major means of support was through the Special Educational Needs Department, which assisted SEN pupils. Support was delivered primarily through pupil withdrawal, for example to deliver extra literacy or numeracy tuition, or counselling and support in lessons through the provision of classroom assistants. The SEN Department also undertook or coordinated the assessment of SEN pupils and developed individual learning or behavioural plans which mapped out strategies and goals for improved performance and reviewed progress made and classifications.

Most of these pupils had what educationalists would describe as 'moderate learning difficulties' as opposed to 'severe' and 'profound'. These last two categories signify that a child so classified possesses impediments in their cognitive abilities (brain-based skills and mental processes needed to carry out any task, and related to the mechanisms of how you

learn, remember and pay attention rather than knowledge required). The number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties was small. At South Forest School one pupil was 'statemented'. Pupils who are statemented usually have a form of cognitive impairment, which in reality makes it extremely unlikely that they will reach even average attainment. Statemented pupils, after a statutory assessment carried out by a multi-disciplinary team, are issued with a statement of educational support that classifies their educational needs as being at the greatest possible level. Such a statement gives pupils exemption from the national curriculum and thus gives a school greater flexibility in curriculum design for these pupils. A statement, though, also enables a pupil to be allocated a greater level of resources by the local authority, which could mean much greater support from classroom assistants. The SEN coordinator and staff are expected to study the SEN statement and understand the implications for them in the teaching of the child (Birkett, 2007, 11).

In addition to the one statemented pupil at South Forest School, there were two pupils (Fred Burridge and Bobby Stokes) who were classed as merely having moderate learning difficulties, but who were in effect illiterate, and it was acknowledged by the school that they could have been statemented. The special educational needs coordinator felt that if their attendance had been more regular then greater effort would have been made to secure a statement. At West Lake School another pupil, Henry Brazil, despite being illiterate was not statemented, much to the puzzlement of a number of staff. At a social services case conference for one Irish Traveller pupil, John Power, who attended North Hill School, it was actually noted that the boy's poor school attendance was one factor responsible for him not being issued with a statement. Given the poor attendance of many Gypsy and Traveller pupils in my survey, this could be a significant factor that generally hinders the allocation of extra support. The Traveller Education Service coordinator at North Hill School also felt that there were financial factors at play, making it difficult to obtain statements for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, as such statements meant a large financial outlay for the local authority because of the extra resources that would be allocated to a pupil. This coordinator felt that local authorities considered Gypsy and Traveller pupils to be a bad investment in terms of issuing a statement because of their poor attendance and propensity to 'drop out'. Thus approximately 8 per cent of my total sample, of fifty Gypsy and Traveller pupils, were not receiving the critical learning support they needed in the opinion of some staff.

The level of support given to Gypsy and Traveller pupils held the possibility of helping them to overcome educational impediments caused by their learning difficulties. A number of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils developed strong bonds with classroom assistants. One Gypsy pupil at the West Lake School, Denny Brazil, who had a reputation for disruptive behaviour, was said to have had a very positive relationship with one classroom assistant who left the school just prior to my arrival. During an interview he noted the value of this support and commented: "*She helped keep me out of trouble and I did my work and she listened to me.*" At times, special needs departments could offer a more flexible learning environment with positive staff and pupil relationships. One special needs coordinator commented:

> "*I get the impression from all the kids and not just the Travellers that they enjoy coming in here* (special needs department). *There's a small group here and the teachers don't shout at you all the time and there is some flexibility and allowance for swearing, or if they come in a bad mood they can have ten minutes where they can relax before they get started. I have a positive relationship with all the kids that come here, the problem is then they just want to stay here and they don't want to get back into the mainstream classes which might be disruptive or where the teacher acts in a certain way and it's very difficult for them.*"

Some Gypsy and Traveller pupils were resentful of classroom support. I recorded a large number of incidents of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, primarily from year nine, failing to attend support sessions outside of mainstream classes, where they were expected to report to a special needs staff member for one to one tuition. In one case I was asked by the Traveller Education Service to investigate why Denny Brazil was not attending literacy support sessions. In part this was because he was being teased by other pupils about receiving support. At times I was able to witness this directly as a consequence of my role as a classroom assistant. During an interview Denny revealed that he was not going to literacy support sessions because he believed he no longer needed such support.

The schools also offered mentoring and counselling and helped pupils overcome emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the West Lake School, the Pupil Support Unit was coordinating an innovative and pioneering project where pupils who looked likely to

become disaffected with school met on a weekly basis with counsellors, and through role plays and discussions, pupils were encouraged to develop more positive attitudes within school. Toby Quibell, director of Total Learning Challenge, a charity involved in the design of the project, was quoted in a high profile national newspaper article on this project:

> "We take children seriously and listen to their experiences. We don't just take their behaviours away from them: we teach good ones, too. Its not rocket science. Most teachers we train feel they are rediscovering their child-centred teaching skills by doing this." (A Safe Place, 18/3/2003)

The Pupil Support Unit at the West Lake School had a notable success with Denny Brazil, who at one point in his school career seemed perilously close to permanent exclusion. He had been excluded in year 7 after only having been at the school for two days. His first year at the West Lake School was characterised by frequent conflict with staff and peers. At one stage he was placed on a part-time timetable, where he only attended school for two days a week, but acts of serious misbehaviour continued. Two days after appearing before the school disciplinary committee, a committee that involved senior school management and governors, and that placed the boy on a part-time timetable, he was allegedly seriously abusive to another pupil. In exasperation the deputy headteacher sent a letter to the boy's parents:

> *"This most recent incident happened even though he is attending school for only two days a week. It happened two days after the meeting (disciplinary committee). He is out of the school's control."*

Denny had been allocated regular counselling sessions in the Pupil Support Unit and his passion for football had even been utilised by the unit, which arranged for him to have an apprenticeship with a local amateur football club as a strategy to develop his confidence and self-esteem. Following this intervention, Denny's behaviour greatly improved. Denny could still be difficult and even reject parts of the curriculum as was demonstrated by his rejection of support lessons referred to above. However, the difference was that he was now no longer in continual and extreme opposition to the ethos of school and had reached a form of accommodation.

The work of the Pupil Support Unit at the West Lake School attracted a great deal of jealousy from staff in other departments because of the considerable resources it was awarded, but this generous allocation of resources did not represent the norm for most schools. The other schools in my survey were not in the position to allocate the same time and attention to pupils experiencing difficulties. Indeed for some Gypsy and Traveller pupils, part-time timetables and partial or permanent classroom withdrawal to special units within the school seemed to merely present a temporary stopping place before permanent exclusion or 'dropping out' rather than form part of a solution. As one special needs coordinator commented on Gypsy pupil Janey Smith, who was withdrawn from classes and educated within the special needs department:

"It was a case that either she came here or was 'chucked out'. It was almost like a last chance saloon for her. If it didn't work in here we were going to have to permanently exclude her, given how violent she was being everywhere."

Janey eventually 'dropped out' of school. For her, as for many such pupils, with limited space and resources, most special needs/pupil support units were not in a position to deliver a viable long-term alternative to the official school curriculum. Reflecting this concern, one special needs coordinator commented:

"The main thing when you are talking about resources is staff. We haven't got enough people to be able to provide that sort of service (innovative and individually designed learning programme) *for a large number of kids. We've got very few teaching assistants and teachers in the unit, so when you talk about resources the thing we need more is people."*

As already outlined under 'Classroom Management and Curriculum', curriculum and class size pressure meant that teachers were often unable to offer the differentiation the SEN pupils in particular needed. Rarely was a multi-sensory approach adopted, a recommended good practice approach for the range of learning styles found amongst SEN pupils (Birkett, 2007, 32). Consultation by teachers of pupils' individual learning plans and close liaison with teaching assistants was also rare despite 'good practice' recommendations (Birkett, 2007, 17; 31). Welsh and Williams state, with regards to SEN pupils:

"The importance of good differentiation and personalised work cannot be underestimated. It not only offers the increased possibility for the pupil to experience success, whatever their level, but that success in itself will have a positive effect on the pupil's own self esteem, motivation and very often behaviour" (Welsh and Williams, 2005, 74).

Thus the mainstream classes were unable to adequately meet the needs of SEN pupils, which escalated behavioural and learning difficulties. As a 'stop gap' SEN support mechanisms were not sufficiently resourced either to fill the void created by an inappropriate curriculum and may, as in the case of Janey Smith, have merely presented a 'half way' house between inclusion in mainstream classes and exclusion - a 'half way house' which may have offered relief to tired and stressed staff but for the pupils often failed to provide them with the fulfillment and support they needed, hence a high proportion of SEN pupils truanted, 'dropped out' or were expelled.

Symbolic Mastery and Interactive Skills Learning

Tomlinson has argued that the rationale behind SEN is often one of 'benevolent humanitarianism' which contains an assumption that special education provision is an enlightened and moral response to learners who have difficulties and who will benefit from the classifications and support afforded (Tomlinson, 1982). There are grounds, though, for challenging this assumption. Most children classified as SEN experience difficulty in reading or maths; few if any, are so classified because of a low aptitude in arts and craft or music. Knowledge is socially constructed: what constitutues legitimate and valued knowledge varies according to the priorities of a culture at a given time (Galloway et al, 1994, 11). Bourdieu rightly claims, therefore, that the education system reflects the interests of dominant groups in society (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1990). As outlined in Chapter Five, Bourdieu argues that the school system reproduces the status quo by favouring those with the right form of cultural knowledge, which can translate into 'symbolic mastery' (academic success and qualifications). For Bourdieu, children who fail in the educational system receive a stigmatised education which fits them for low status occupations and a low socio-economic position in society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

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In chapter Five, I argued that many Gypsies and Travellers in the research field were at a disadvantage in such a system as they were not culturally equipped to secure academic success. Instead, the priority of more traditionally orientated Gypsies and Travellers was 'interactive skills learning', success and aptitude in skills and trades taught informally through in-family interaction. Within their family groups, young Gypsies and Travellers often excelled in such skills and in the eyes of their family did not constitute a SEN category. Only in school did such classifications appear, again reflecting the fact that such labels are based on teachers' normative judgements, which are value-laden and subjective. It is ironic that some of these educationalists may have great difficulty adapting to some of the skills prized by some of the Gypsy and Traveller families, like car repair or landscaping, and would no doubt have been deemed to constitute 'slow learners'.

It is not clear whether Gypsy and Traveller parents rejected SEN classifications: there were no cases in the three schools where observation took place of parents objecting to their children being termed SEN. Contact between the school and many of the Gypsy and Traveller parents was minimal and was often reactive, that is initiated as a response to some action by the school to sanction the behaviour of their child. Emotionally charged exchanges between parents and the school over behaviour did little to induce trust and openness and create an environment where parents could voice wider concerns and anxieties over educational achievement with confidence. The behavioural disciplining of Gypsy and Traveller pupils was often challenged and questioned by parents (See Chapters 8 and 9) but rarely did such challenges take advantage of official complaints machinery, no doubt because poorly educated parents were intimidated by the bureaucratic complexity of such a process but also were possibly influenced by a perception that the 'cards were stacked against them' anyway. Similar factors may have been at play over concerns with SEN classifications and support. Habermas has noted that those in authority legitimate actions through technical language that validates their decisions but limits the scope for open discussion and challenge as the non-professional's objections can be rebutted with arguments that appear to have scientific and theoretical substance (Habermas, 1974). Thus Gypsies and Travellers lacking the requisite cultural capital would be especially ill-suited to challenge some of the educational and behavioural classifications accorded to their children, which were dressed in pseudo-technical and medical language and rested on the

judgements and assessments of a number of professionals.

Targeted Support – The Traveller Inclusion Officer

Lack of resources, and in some cases poor planning and understanding, appeared to hamper many of the support measures available to help Gypsies and Travellers increase their educational inclusion. In part, such measures only offered temporary or emergency 'fire-fighting' solutions, as school and the curriculum in general did not afford the flexibility to deliver more effective learning programmes for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Instead, many Gypsy and Traveller pupils seemed to be consigned to learning experiences that failed to inspire them or address their needs. For some, disruption, conflict and non-attendance represented their response to this state of affairs (Chapter Eight - Gypsies and Travellers: Rejection, Resistance and Accommodation with School).

One incident that offered insights into the degree of flexibility in the curriculum and degree of educational inclusion that schools could offer was evident in the episode concerning the post of Traveller Inclusion Officer. This was a position designed by the South Forest Council Social Inclusion Unit, which utilised a grant from the Home Office, for tackling anti-social behaviour and criminality amongst youth by establishing community worker posts for the Vietnamese, Somali and Gypsy communities in South Forest. The community workers were to build better links between home and school, and also find activities and courses to engage non-attenders. However, friction soon emerged between the post-holder, Gemma Davies, and Mike Weller, one of the assistant headteachers at the secondary school. Gemma Davies had a long background of involvement in ethnic minority youth and community projects and wanted to focus on relationship-building with the Gypsies in the South Forest area. Once trust and insights had been established, she would proceed to design initiatives for disaffected Gypsy pupils.

South Forest School became impatient after few tangible objectives and measurable goals seemed in their minds to have been achieved after a three month period. Mike Weller became vociferous in demanding that the post-holder should contribute more directly to

initiatives to persuade the Gypsy pupils to return to school and give assistance within the school to those pupils who needed support. This created a great deal of tension, as Gemma Davies felt the school was being short-sighted, focusing on immediate concerns like improving attendance without seeking to explore more fundamental reasons for Gypsy pupils being disaffected. Eventually he resigned. She informed me of her reasons:

"I resigned for a number of reasons, some to do with a mismatch between what I thought I was and should be doing and what they (school) wanted. The job title, 'Traveller Inclusion Officer', was a bit of a euphemism. What they actually wanted was someone who would go round and persuade kids back into school. I would have liked to work in a broader way. Also if there are reasons why they (Gypsy pupils) didn't attend, then the school shouldn't assume that it's because the Travellers are somehow amiss, but maybe the school needs to look to itself."

The catalyst for his resignation was said to have been the demand by the school for a work plan with specific targets. Commenting on this and the resignation, Stella Cartwright, the headteacher, declared:

"She (Gemma Davies) never got going. I assumed something had gone wrong on the Traveller site. I had a meeting with her and she showed me a load of photos and I suggested we get the teenagers who were not attending into literacy classes where they could also do some photography with her. I just wanted them engaged in something. I don't have low expectations, it's just better than doing nothing. She wouldn't tell us where she was, and weeks would fly by and you would never see her. Then it was suggested that she produce a work plan, which wasn't asking too much. She wasn't coming under huge pressure, but she just left."

It may have been that the school had failed to grasp the importance of developing relationships with the Gypsy community and designing a programme that reflected their needs and aspirations. Instead, a work programme was to be imposed that fitted more the school's conception of the situation. The rigidity of the curriculum and the pressures schools are under to see quantifiable gains for projects materialise at an early stage appeared to have hamstrung an initiative that could have increased the Gypsies' educational participation. It appeared, therefore, that desires to work in a broad and flexible manner as espoused by Gemma Davies and a desire by the school to see quantifiable results as quickly as possible, leading to increased formal participation in school, were not always

reconcilable and could flounder because of the mutual mistrust and tension that could arise from these two approaches. It is important to note that when projects were initiated which were organised along the lines proposed by Gemma Davies they reaped significant results in improving relations with disaffected Gypsy pupils (See conclusion).

Targeted Support – Special Classes

At South Forest School a major project, designed specifically for non-attending Gypsy pupils, was the literacy classes. The classes were to focus on a number of Gypsy boys, mainly from the South Forest Traveller Site who had dropped out of school. The parents of the non-attenders strongly supported the concept of such a special and 'Gypsy only' class when canvassed by the Traveller Education Service. All of the boys had special educational needs and it was felt that a part time course that focused on their literacy problems in a small group, using more innovative educational approaches, might help them make educational progress, and also attract them back into mainstream classes or courses, where it was hoped that they could eventually be transferred. I was able to observe the development of the course from the outset. At an early stage, problems in terms of planning and expertise were clearly apparent. The first planning meeting was attended by one of the assistant headteachers, the coordinator for the Traveller Education Service, and members of South Forest Pupil Support, a local authority unit that delivered special courses across the borough. The deputy headteacher was only able to stay for five minutes. He claimed the demands of the intensive organisation of the year 9 standard attainment tests had "*knocked him for six*" and he had forgotten to organise cover for a lesson he was due to teach. The members of South Forest Pupil Support also seemed to be woefully ignorant of the needs and educational aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers and prescribed a course based on set texts on literacy and numeracy, which I suspected would not appeal to these boys. The Traveller Education Service Coordinator alerted the meeting to this fact and stated that if the course was to be successful it would need to be activity-based. It was eventually agreed that the project would be based on a role play to create a business, and that most of the learning material would be specifically designed by the teachers involved in delivering the course.

Another fear was the suitability of Karen Stoppard, who was to be the core teacher, who I suspected did not possess the strength of personality to bond with the Gypsy pupils or impose effective discipline. My fears seemed to be confirmed as the lessons were often too static and formalised and attendance quickly waned. Karen not only appeared to be lacking in skill and expertise, but appeared inept. This was a view the Traveller Education Service and headteacher came to concur with. In the first week, Karen proposed to take the pupils on a fishing trip. Commendable as this may have been, if combined with educational tasks, there seemed to be no such plans. It was an idea born out of frustration at failing to engage the boys effectively. More worryingly though, Karen had not sought approval from the school management and had also failed to issue the boys with formal letters informing the parents of the out-of-school activity and seeking their permission, which is a legal requirement. Upon learning about the trip, the senior management instructed Karen to postpone the excursion and the boys were served with another disappointment. Within the special needs department, staff reached the conclusion that the local authority had directed this particular teacher to this particular project as she was one of their weaker staff members who was, in the words of one member of the Traveller Education Service team, 'surplus to requirements' and could be spared for a project that was deemed to probably have limited prospects of success.

The course was re-launched at the start of the new academic year, and after complaints were issued by the school about Karen Stoppard, a new teacher was found. Despite this, weak discipline and planning again plagued these classes. During the first week, one of the teachers who had taught the group the previous term got the boys to complete a project they had been working on the previous term. After the summer vacation the activity now no doubt appeared stale to the boys and the mundane task of sticking pictures of fish on cardboard was unlikely to enthuse them. During the class the boys grew restless and started to be disruptive; calls were made to senior staff for assistance to enforce order but no support appeared. Towards the end of the class, the boys left the classroom early and caused disturbances to other classes in the corridor, much to the chagrin of staff members, who issued complaints to the school management team. The classes seemed to be on the brink of collapse. I purchased a model car and suggested to the teacher that she use the car as a learning resource. I argued that the pupils could construct the model and the instructions could be used as a learning resource for literacy. The whole exercise could

have been a springboard for literacy and numeracy exercises based on cars, a major passion of the boys. The construction stage of the model was successful, but the teacher had left the near-completed model and instructions on top of a bin which the cleaner identified as rubbish to be taken away. Hence, a project that had a promising start again ended in failure because of poor planning and classroom management. The new member of the team, though more conscientious in her planning, staged dull and static numeracy and literacy activities based on themes such as time and the seasons, which appeared to fail to inspire these pupils.

Attendance in these classes, as was the case the previous term, tailed off to almost zero. Fred Burrage, one of the boys who had orchestrated the serious disruption in the class, informed me that his expectations for the classes were low: *"When I last attended school* (mainstream classes) *I got nothing out of it and I don't think I am going to get anything out of this. So why bother with it?"* After the serious incident of disruption, the boys were spoken to by the special needs coordinator and asked to be more considerate and to invest more effort in the project. Bobby Stokes, who had attended the most of these classes, exclaimed: *"I don't want to be some 'dosser' who sits around and does nothing all day. I want to learn how to do something so that I can get some money for myself one day."* Given the track record of poor planning and staff for these classes, it seemed unlikely that the school would be able to effectively harness the motivation of this pupil and others like him. In fact the response of the school management team, following the serious incident of disruption, was to consider making the boys wear school uniform, something they had been exempt from because of their part-time attendance. So the school's response to the crises in the project was to try and assert stronger rules and regulations rather than review the basic methodology of the classes. This was in part fuelled by resentment from some members of staff in the school who were critical of the project and the flexibility being afforded to the Gypsies; a resentment inflamed by the incident of serious disruption. One staff member who was against the project informed me: *"The staff are tired of the Travellers getting away with things!"* The failure of the literacy and numeracy classes revealed the lack of flexibility and prospects for successful innovative modifications in the curriculum and special educational needs provision.

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<u>Targeted Support - Traveller Education Services</u>

Traveller Education Services are sections of the Local Education Authority that give support to Gypsy and Traveller pupils in accessing education, but also give strategic advice and guidance to schools. A key component in enabling a Traveller Education Service to fulfil its role is to develop positive relationships with Gypsy and Traveller parents. Given the polarised relations between some schools and Gypsy and Traveller parents, these relationships could be brought under strain as either side in a dispute tried to draw the Traveller Education Service to support its particular grievance. This had been the fate of the South Forest Traveller Education Service at South Forest School following the large-scale disturbances that took place in the school following a fight between a Gypsy and Somali pupil. Following this incident the Gypsy parents were angered, as they felt that the Traveller Education Service was in fact taking sides with the school in the dispute. In turn the school failed to appreciate the strategic role of the service and felt that it should be more proactive in increasing Gypsy and Traveller pupil participation in school rather than expecting the school to always take the initiative. A recent report for the Department of Education and Skills suggests such tensions are common (Ivatts, 2005, 24).

The fragility of maintaining good relations with Gypsy and Traveller parents was demonstrated to me in the wake of an incident in which South Forest School expelled two Gypsy girls (Janey Smith and Mary Jane Penfold) for attacking a black pupil who had allegedly earlier attacked another Gypsy pupil. I had sat in on the meeting with the headteacher and Gypsy parents and, along with the Traveller Education Service coordinator, tried to steer a more neutral course and foster greater dialogue and understanding between the two parties. This stance was interpreted by Tommy Burrage, as taking the side of the school. Tommy stated:

> *"Tell me please, I know that school has no control and they let the blacks do what they want but ours get punished for nothing. It was wrong they expelled those two girls* (Janey and Mary Jane): *they were only standing up against a bully, doing what we have always done in our culture, that is, stand up for each other. Why did you allow that to happen? Why didn't you stand up to that Mrs Cartwright (South Forest Headteacher) and say she was wrong?"*

On the other hand, it appeared that the staff at South Forest School also felt hostility towards the Traveller Education Service. I had often sensed a hostile atmosphere when walking into the staff room with the head of the Traveller Education Service, who also acknowledged the existence of this and felt it was the product of tensions between the school and the site. I noted how few of the staff would enter into conversation with me or Sandra and how staff discussions in small groups would on occasion abruptly end when either I or Sandra James (Traveller Education Service) entered the staffroom. Sue Anne, one of the classroom assistants who transferred from the primary school to the secondary school to work, was in fact a Gypsy living on the South Forest site and was entitled to sit in the staffroom, but this caused anxiety from staff who were concerned she might overhear comments by staff about Gypsy pupils. These were views that were articulated by the school management also. The view of the Traveller Education Service was that this would only be a problem if improper comments were being made about Gypsy pupils. The concern of staff on this matter may have been a reflection of the fact that a great deal of negative comments were being made in the staff room about the Gypsies. I had in fact overheard a number of conversations in the staff room linking the Traveller site to drug dealing and other criminal activities, as did Sandra, the Traveller Education Service Coordinator, and it was one factor that strained the relationship between the Traveller Education Service and staff.

Regarding attendance and prosecution, the three Traveller Education Services that I worked with had different policies. South Forest and West Lake Traveller Education Services were against, or extremely reluctant to press for, prosecution as they believed such measures alienated Gypsies and Travellers further from formal schooling and harmed relations with the Traveller Education Service and that compulsion should only be resorted to when schools could offer a curriculum and learning experience that offered real benefits to Gypsies and Travellers. In their opinion the present curriculum failed in this respect.

North Hill Traveller Education Service favoured a different approach. The North Hill Traveller Education Service coordinator told me that in her opinion North Hill Borough did not prosecute Traveller parents for non attendance as such cases required a large amount of resources. Apparently local authorities tended to choose their cases on a

strategic basis and Travellers were not seen as a priority group because of their general poor attendance. This Traveller Education Service coordinator was keen to see such a prosecution as she felt that such litigation could send an important message to the Traveller community in the borough, namely that school non-attendance was not an option. For Traveller Education Services this could present a real dilemma. A coordinator in one borough outside my study had resigned their post because of the conflict of having to play a part in forcing Traveller pupils to be in school through the threat of prosecution by the local authority, yet nothing constructive was offered to these children once they were in school.

During my fieldwork in South Forest Borough a change seemed to be set in motion to improve Gypsy and Traveller school attendance, which appeared to be moving closer towards active compulsion. The Traveller Education Service in South Forest had worked closely with Margaret Foster, a local authority education welfare officer, in dealing with non-attendance. This had involved a great deal of contact with families on the South Forest site, and a process of relationship building and persuasion for families to reengage with school. As part of a change of policy, Margaret was to adopt a more advisory role, and contact with parents would be undertaken by local authority school attendance officers. The reorganisation was basically because South Forest had a poor pupil attendance rate across the borough, which was below the national average. The Traveller Education Service felt the local authority was nervous about this, as Ofsted were set to review the local authority's procedures on non-attendance. Despite fears about the damage the change could have, on account of the positive relationships Margaret was said to enjoy with parents, her line manager refused to contemplate any compromise on this policy change. The Traveller Education Service believed that this was part of an attempt by the local authority to introduce a more 'hard-line' approach to reduce rates of non-attendance and thus avoid criticism from Ofsted. Margaret was deemed to be too sympathetic and close to the parents, and thus school attendance officers with little contact or understanding of the community might be more inclined to 'crack the whip'.

As part of this new strategy the site manager at South Forest site, detested by the residents for his alleged stern management approach, was to work closely with the local authority in

increasing school attendance and participation. Residents of the site were notified of this fact in a letter that was sent by the site manager to the residents. Rather than consider why Gypsy and Traveller pupils were not stimulated by the curriculum and whether more fundamental reforms were required, in the opinion of the Traveller Education Service the local authority had opted for a short-term solution that was both coercive and irrelevant to addressing the fundamental causes of Gypsy and Traveller disaffection.

Cultural Inclusion

A large number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils expressed interest in seeing a greater recognition of their culture in the curriculum. For example, Mary Smith stated: *"In Religious Education we learn all about other cultures and so we should learn about Travellers."* Louise Sedley stated: *"It would be more fair if Traveller culture was included in the lessons as we have to learn about other religions and things."* In contrast many Gypsy and Traveller pupils expressed a degree of reticence about references being made to their culture in class, especially if the teacher drew direct attention to their ethnicity. This reticence may have stemmed from a feeling of insecurity within school and fear of being bullied. Many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils made reference to the fact that they had been called derogatory names because of their ethnicity in school. This may in part explain why, for example, at South Forest School only 8 out of 32 of the Gypsy and Traveller intake described themselves as Gypsies on ethnic monitoring forms; the remainder preferring to be ascribed as 'White British'.

Ofsted recommends the promotion of Gypsy and Traveller culture in the curriculum and staff training (The Education of Traveller Children, 1996, 19 point 38; Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy and Traveller Pupils, 2003, 5 point 2.2). In part such promotion is regarded as a tool that will raise staff and pupils' general awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture and hence reduce friction. Within North Hill School and West Lake School many Gypsies and Travellers were almost a hidden minority, in part because these school populations were highly diverse and contained numerous minority groups. The relatively small number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, and the lack of external markings of difference, made their identity less obvious. Many staff members seemed unaware that

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certain pupils came from the Gypsy and Traveller community and were attending the school. No reference was made to their presence in the curriculum or staff training. The only reference in any official school policy documentation at North Hill School was a short passage in the draft race equality strategy that declared that the school had a high turnover of pupils, in part because some were asylum seekers or Gypsies/Travellers/Roma. At South Forest School the number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils was greater, and the history of conflict made them more apparent. Again, reference to their culture was scant in the curriculum and staff training. One head of year at South Forest commented:

> *"Well, I don't think we're flexible enough for many of our groups of children in school. I'm sure a lot more could be done to raise the status of Traveller children as a group and to give them an identity. From time to time you feel things have moved on and various work has come in bits but it never gets to a pitch where it is significant as I dream it might be. There will be some sort of public demonstration of their culture and Sandra (head of Traveller Education Service) will come in and do some lessons with some groups in history and lessons like that, it just seems to be scratching the surface always, its better than nothing at all but it's probably not as comprehensive as it should be."*

At South Forest School the most visible feature of Gypsy and Traveller culture was a display cabinet that a classroom assistant employed by the Traveller Education Service made with a small number of Gypsy pupils on Gypsy culture. The display was rather essentialist, with models of bow-top wagons, pictures of horses and pieces of crown derby china, and was now rather tatty with age and neglect. The cabinet stood in the school reception but, interestingly, after the refurbishment of the school reception, the cabinet was left neglected in a small store room, with no attempt being made to restore the cabinet to its former glory or replace it with a new exhibition of Gypsy and Traveller culture.

Despite their superficial or negligible references to Gypsy and Traveller culture, all three schools were praised in their Ofsted reports for celebrating the diversity that existed within their schools. The 2001 Ofsted report for South Forest School declared:

> "There is good cultural provision. The school celebrates the many cultures that are represented. For example, there was a recent black history month and there is an exhibition to show the distinctive culture of Travellers."

Ofsted were clearly happy to accept mere tokenistic gestures as commitment to diversity. A more in-depth analysis of the progress minority groups were making in school may have indicated that some minorities did not feel cherished and valued. An approach directed at institutional racism, which looked at the wider curriculum and power structures in the school, and the impact of these on achievement and integration, may have concluded that an exam-based and academic driven curriculum, heavily based on formal teaching, greatly disadvantaged some minorities such as sections of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Likewise, the cultural policies in the schools were tokenistic and often dualistic, being based on doctrinaire notions of ethnicity revolving around essentialised notions of black and white identity.

Conclusion

It would appear that school management priorities and even indifference, combined with government reforms that were encouraging processes such as streaming and a static curriculum which minimised flexibility, together with financial shortages for key support agencies such as Traveller Education Services, were in fact marginalising Gypsies and Travellers. The failure of the school curriculum produced tensions and resistance. Despite this, rather than review fundamental questions as to whether school was working for these disaffected pupils and how the curriculum could be reformed, the school authorities seemed in many cases content to ascribe disaffection as stemming from poor behaviour, anti-school sentiments and even racism. Consequently it appeared that punishment rather than curriculum reform was the favoured approach. It is clear, therefore, that the findings of this thesis support the arguments of those who contend that low achievement can be primarily located in structural and curricular factors and thus does not support a deficit model that seeks to apportion blame to the child and their ethnicity, class and or gender (See Chapter Three).

At South Forest School, the headteacher's failure to foster a 'preventative approach' and promote dialogue and mediation and to encourage reflection, introspection and innovative anti-racist measures contributed to the strained relations within the school. A harsh policy

of punitive sanctions and negative labelling led to a perception by the Gypsies that there was not a climate of justice in the school, a notion that can do much to fuel pupil resistance, for pupil counter-cultures are shaped in part by factors within the school (Docking, 1989, 20). Attitudes and traits within pupils are transformed and released in pupil counter-cultures in part when they are activated by certain conditions such as an authoritarian management approach, racism and negative labelling (Hargreaves, 1982). South Forest School in effect had adopted a 'crisis management' approach, one that is reactive and locates the problem in the child (Tattum, 1989, 67). If South Forest School had moved away from its ethnocentrism and instead adopted a position of cultural relativism it may have come to realise that the values and practices that suit one culture may not work well for another (Stewart, 1978, 83). More to the point, the school may have concluded that the behaviour of the Gypsies and Travellers involved in the school counter-culture, which the headteacher and staff viewed as repugnant, was in fact a 'cry for help' and was fuelled by considerable vulnerability and insecurity on the part of the pupils and was a product of exclusion and racism, not a deviant culture.

In defence of the schools, under-resourced and serving areas characterised by high levels of social exclusion, they were not in a good position to introduce an ambitious and complex piece of legislation like the amended Race Relations Act which could have had an important impact on the work of schools in tackling disadvantage, discrimination and improving community relations. The Race Relation Act as amended had only come into force one year prior to my fieldwork and many schools and institutions experienced difficulty in effectively implementing its provisions (Runnymede, 2003, ix; Gillborn, 2008, 128). In South Forest, where relations between the school and Gypsies and Travellers were especially strained, a more open and consensual approach by senior management may have done much to improve dialogue and understanding between home and school and support for measures to tackle the educational disadvantage of Gypsies and Travellers amongst staff. This, coupled with greater curricular flexibility reflecting pupils' aspirations and research and understanding of minority and ethnic groups that resisted the conception of essentialised and homogeneous profiles of minorities like Gypsies and Travellers, could have done much to deliver genuine educational inclusion and a form of anti-racist education that was neither moralistic nor doctrinaire and thus avoided the dogmatism of previous forms of anti-racism, which have proven to be counter-productive to genuine

educational inclusion.

The low educational participation rates of many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils, supported by their parents, who in many cases seemed reluctant to encourage non-attenders to return to school, were indirectly demonstrating their lack of confidence in the school, including the SEN system. Instead, the more traditional Gypsies and Travellers that I termed 'resisters' continued to maintain confidence in traditional in-family training and economic practices, hence attendance amongst this group was especially low in comparison to the group termed 'mainstreamers', who tended to live in housing rather than on sites but who were also more generally tied to the waged economy and who had little alternative than to hope the educational system was able to deliver the prospects of some type of employment for their children in the future.

As I have argued in this chapter, the scope for change was limited: a lack of resources and flexibility reduced the possibility for adaptation. Primarily the resource regime of the educational system meant that increasingly for schools to deliver academic success for a priviledged few and a national curriculum then large classes of 25 -30 pupils taught by tired and stressed teaching staff would have to be accepted. This structure could only function with the support of a SEN system that provided additional support or withdrawal for those deemed educationally and behaviourally challenged whom the class teacher was ill equipped to assist and who in some cases were apportioned the blame for the difficult teaching environment teachers had to work in rather than the school, curriculum and resource regime. Thus special educational needs processes could be classified as a 'safety valve' that helped balance and rationalise an education system that was failing for large numbers.

Many of the staff in the Traveller Education Services believed that reduced class sizes, a less prescriptive curriculum with greater differentiation and better resourced and structured support systems could have improved relations between the school and dissafected Gypsies and Travellers and raised their educational inclusion. Instead, Gypsies and Travellers were perceived to be growing increasingly frustrated and rejecting mainstream education not only by favouring their alternative educational systems above school but by supporting

separate provision within the mainstream. Hence, parents had been initially enthusiastic about the all-Gypsy literacy and numeracy classes at South Forest School. Another example was the Traveller Inclusion Worker (community worker) who wanted, and to a degree was encouraged, to explore the feasibility of activities on the South Forest Traveller site to re-engage Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Pupils experiencing behavioural problems within school also found themselves withdrawn from mainstream classes and taught in pupil support units. For some this was merely a staging post before being sent to a pupil referral unit or 'dropping out'. To many of the staff employed by the Traveller Education Services these developments were a worrying trend as they appeared to be at odds with official educational policies which prescribed mainstream education for Gypsies and Travellers (Chapter Three). Jim Hanson, a Traveller Education advisor to South Forest Traveller Education Service, had worked with Gypsies and Travellers since the late 1970s. His comments are illuminating on the fractures that were evident in the policy of educational integration for Travellers:

> *"I remember in the early days going on sites and doing educational activities with young Travellers, but we fought hard to get them into schools. However, when you look at sites like South Forest where there has been a complete rupture in relations between the school and community, there's somehow a need in some cases to go back to 1970s solutions, which involves some activity outside of the mainstream."*

It seemed, therefore, that the mistrust and isolation that a number of Gypsies and Travellers felt was as profound as it had been thirty years ago and there was a need, as in the pioneering days of Traveller education, to bring projects more into the home environment, where trust and relationships could more easily be developed, and education could be delivered in an environment and manner which Gypsies and Travellers felt comfortable with. This approach was only a starting point and ultimately educationalists like Hanson wanted to see Gypsy and Traveller pupils move from such initiatives and become more fully integrated into the mainstream education system. However, many staff within the Traveller Education Services expressed negative opinions regarding the ability of the curriculum and range of resources that could be employed by schools to meet this challenge. An influential body of opinion on social justice and equality of opportunity holds the core belief that all students have the right to be exposed to a mainstream and common curriculum (Ainscow and Muncey, 1990). The development of a national

curriculum in Britain is supportive of such principles. Delivering such a curriculum to a student body with a wide ability range and cultural background may be problematic and actually exclusionary. The survey of educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in this chapter suggests the freedom to access a less presciptive learning experience built around living skills and cultural lifestyles may be one that should be increasingly coutenanced.

South Forest School Since 2003

In September 2003 South Forest School appeared to be at a low ebb after the third serious disturbance which led to two permanent exclusions. A further blow to the school came with the decision to turn it into an Academy School; subsequently the school has stopped taking new annual pupil intakes as part of a process of closure.

In April 2007 I met with Sandra James (Coordinator of South Forest Traveller Education Service). I was informed that there had been a significant improvement in relations between South Forest School and the Gypsy pupils and community. In part this was a consequence of a project developing materials to supplement the history curriculum and involved school staff, the Traveller Education Service, pupils. The pilot project also extended the photographic work that I and the Traveller Education Service developed which had led to an exhibition of photographic work by Gypsy pupils at the South Forest Arts Centre in the summer/autumn of 2003 at which the MP for South Forest attended. The photography project involved Gypsy pupils in years 8 and 9 working with a professional photographer and documenting their perceptions of their world and their locality. The exhibition was attended by many Traveller families and is felt to have raised the profile of Travellers in the school.

These projects were important in cementing stronger relationships but the process was also helped by the contraction of the school. In interview many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils had expressed a preference for primary school because of the more intimate learning environment it provided because of its scale. As South Forest contracted it may have lost some of the impersonality that is typical of large secondary schools which has frequently led to the alienation of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. A new pupil support unit learning suite

which opened in the autumn of 2003 and operated by skilled staff also made a contribution to improved relations between the school and Gypsy pupils, the various initiatives were strongly supported by the Deputy Head Mike Weller who I was informed worked hard to increase his understanding of Gypsy and Traveller issues. Mike even attended a conference organised by the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition.

Chapter Eight

Gypsies and Travellers: Resistance and Accommodation with School

Introduction

As a major agent of socialisation, school represents an arena where, when conflict occurs, it may be an indicator of fundamental differences and divergences between a minority and majority culture and indeed class. In the three schools, especially South Forest, many Gypsies and Travellers were alienated from school. In contrast to this alienation, some adopted an approach based on acceptance of the value of school and were willing to subscribe to the ethos of school.

A group I termed the 'resisters' rejected what school had to offer. They tended to have a low opinion of the curriculum and school staff, and a high frequency of low achievement, non-attendance and expulsion. The 'semi-accommodated' maintained a more strategic approach and took part in occasional poor behaviour on a generally minor scale. Such an approach meant they were not labelled as ultra school conformists by their peers and school, yet on the other hand they were able to generally subscribe to the ethos of the school. The 'mainstreamers' had a very good level of attendance and a high level of conformity to the ethos of the school. They demonstrated a desire to stay until 16 and some expressed an intention to study in further or higher education. These pupils had few recorded incidents of misbehaviour. The 'assimilated' no longer subscribed to Gypsy and Traveller identity and often held negative views or no interest in Gypsy and Traveller identity. Generally they lived in housing and aspired to waged labour employment. (For a fuller discussion of this typology see Chapter Five.)

This chapter focuses on the largest two groups that were evident in the range of cultural responses to school, namely the 'mainstreamers' and 'resisters'. The varied responses of Gypsies and Travellers to school are detailed and I seek to determine the impact these approaches had upon relationships, participation and aspirations, but also to try to identify the possible reasons that led to these pupils adopting these positions. The descriptions of the research participants in this chapter are what are termed as 'thick descriptions' (Chapter

Four): much detail is provided on the social and cultural lives observed so that the reader can decide whether the conclusions drawn are legitimate.

Visibility in School

Many of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils that I observed did not feel at ease in the school environment. State schools are now required to keep records of the number of ethnic minority pupils on the school roll. These records are compiled through self-ascription. The parents and pupils choose the ethnic category they feel correctly classifies them. At South Forest only 8 Gypsy pupils classified themselves as Gypsies, whilst 24 classified themselves as White British. I found similar figures amongst Irish Travellers in North Hill and West Lake, where respectively 2 out of 5 and 2 out of 7 self-ascribed. There was a clear division on this matter between Gypsies that lived on the site and in housing; few in housing declared their ethnicity. At South Forest none of the housed Travellers self-ascribed in school ethnic monitoring. It is important to note that in interviews or other situations of interaction, many of the pupils who described themselves as White British in ethnic monitoring forms would in conversation ascribe as Gypsies and Travellers. The hesitancy to officially state such more publicly through school records may have been a consequence of the fact that they believed being ascribed as a Gypsy and Traveller could bring forth hardship. Tommy Burrage once said to me *"I don't want to hide what I am, I'm a Gypsy and I'm proud of it but there are lots of situations that Gypsies find themselves in where they can't say who and what they are."*

I had seen for myself such hesitancy in openly identifying as a Gypsy by some of the pupils. As part of a photographic exhibition in the local library that I organised with a group of Gypsy pupils on Gypsy culture. The Mayor of South Forest opened the event and met some of the Gypsy pupils. Two of the pupils, one from the site and one who lived in a house, who in earlier discussions had indicated they were both proud to be Gypsies, asked that their photographs and names not appear in the local newspaper article that a local newspaper reporter was preparing. This subtle game that Gypsies conducted, of hiding and revealing their identity when they considered it safe or appropriate to do so, must have impacted not only on self-perceptions but also on relationships with bodies such as school,

which given the response to ethnic monitoring, was obviously one of the school processes where care and caution had to be expressed. This act of subtle balancing on a 'cultural tight-rope', was evident amongst the 'mainstreamers' and the 'resisters'.

In other aspects of behaviour the Gypsies and Travellers were more open about expressing their identity. Many of the pupils stood out from their peers because they wore large gold jewellery. Both the boys and girls wore earrings, gold chains and rings. This was considered to be a traditional part of their culture. The regulations outlawed large jewellery, ostensibly for health and safety reasons and for being out of character with the uniform in general. Earrings, if worn, were to be no bigger than a ten pence piece. It was a part of their identity that brought them into conflict with the school as their jewellery often infringed the school regulations on uniform. However, the Gypsies viewed this as interference with their culture by the school. Some commented that it was unfair that they could not wear their gold jewellery whilst the school made uniform concessions to Sikh and Muslim pupils. One female Gypsy with a generally good school record complained: "*She* (French teacher) *is always picking on me, saying my earrings are too big. She does it because she doesn't like me and it gives me the hump.*" One female Gypsy pupil with a good school record informed me that she had only been in trouble for wearing her jewellery but she now had two pairs of earrings: a large pair, and a small pair that she wore when a class was being taken by a 'strict teacher'.

It is interesting to note that the Gypsy pupils (mainstreamers) who had reached accommodation with the school generally wore jewellery that was less ostentatious than those who seemed to be in perpetual conflict with the school. Mary Smith fell into the latter category. She had a low opinion of the school uniform: "*I hate the uniform: it's a bogey green jumper, and they don't let you wear jewellery.*" In one situation, Mary chose the school uniform as a means of visibly returning to and maintaining rigid boundaries with the school. On account of what was deemed as Mary's generally poor behaviour, a meeting was held with Mary, her mother and grandmother, the head of year 7 and the head of the Traveller Education Service. It was felt by the head of year that the meeting had been successful and it was agreed that certain changes would take place. In future Mary was to wear the proper school uniform and refrain from wearing large jewellery. The

following day Mary appeared in school, dripping in gold jewellery and wearing orange combat trousers. This was a provocative challenge to the school as well as a dramatic display to her peers that she was still prepared to be at 'loggerheads' with the school. The school, though, rang Mary's mother and the next day she was in school uniform.

These points of tension between school and Gypsies and Travellers were common points of friction for the 'mainstreamers' and 'resisters', demonstrating that even for the 'mainstreamers' school posed a number of cultural difficulties and challenges, but, as will be demonstrated, there were broader and deeper factors at play behind these processes of hiding identity and opposing uniform codes which were more pronounced amongst those pupils who were categorised as 'resisters' and more widely evident in other spheres such as relationships and participation in school.

Rejection of and Resistance to School

The 'resisters', it appeared from an inspection of their pastoral files and comments made in interview, found their time at primary school to be more positive. Their attendance at primary school had been much higher and views towards school seemed to be more favourable at that age. In interview, many now at secondary school commented favourably on the better relationships they had enjoyed with staff and how they had preferred working with just one teacher and staying in one classroom. In West Lake and North Hill, none of the Irish Travellers on the local authority sites attended secondary school yet most had attended primary. Likewise, attendance by Gypsies and Travellers living in housing declined in the secondary school. In part this may have been a strategic decision. It has been said that many Gypsy and Traveller parents value the literacy and numeracy that primary education can offer but see little value in the more academic syllabus of secondary school (Clark, 2001). Janey Smith was a year 9 Gypsy pupil who lived on the South Forest local authority Traveller site and was one of the chief 'resisters'. Her final report from the primary school stated:

> "Janey has made progress in all areas of the curriculum and is often proud of her achievements. Janey is usually on task and enjoys a wide range of activities. Janey

does need support with her reading and needs to take responsibility for learning her spelling. Janey is a very talented pupil who has a great deal to offer and receive from the school and I hope she continues to believe this. Janey is incredibly strong-willed and mature for her age and for most of the time, this has been deployed positively".

Bridget Noble was a year 10 Gypsy pupil. Her parents had lived on the South Forest site but following the refurbishment of the site they moved into a house. They were now on a waiting list to move back to the site as they were deeply unhappy about living in a house (See Chapter Five). Bridget was also a principal actor amongst the 'resisters'. Her final report at primary school declared:

"Bridget has blossomed and matured over the last year, showing what a kind, considerate and reliable girl she can be."

The files of both pupils from primary school give little indications, or underestimate, the scale of the problems that would lay ahead at the secondary school. Both pupils were prominent in the group termed the 'resisters' and were to be principal characters in the series of events that further fractured the relations between the South Forest School and Traveller site, which is described later (Chapter Case Study). It was at the secondary school that alienation and disaffection with school became more highly pronounced for the 'resisters'. The most apparent signal of disaffection with school was demonstrated in the high non-attendance and drop-out rates for Gypsies and Travellers in all three schools. Disaffection and non-attendance were in part prompted by disillusionment with the school curriculum (Chapter Five and Seven).

The regimentation of school, with its rules and regulations preparing pupils for the realities of waged labour, must have grated with some Gypsy and Traveller pupils on account of family adherence to self-employment. The freedom to make decisions by themselves, accorded to Gypsies and Travellers at an earlier age than those in the settled community, meant that many Gypsies and Travellers chose to stay at home and play around with their friends and even work with their family rather than attend school. Given the choice, it is likely that more pupils from the settled community would make a similar decision if they were presented with the same freedom.

Within Gypsy culture, learning and training took place through practice, with boys and girls often working with their parents and learning adult skills. Tommy Burrage once informed me: "*A Traveller is a jack of all trades but master of none.*" By this Tommy meant a Gypsy can turn their hand to many skills but has no formal recognised training in any of these. Gemma, the Traveller Inclusion Officer in South Forest, had resigned from the post because she believed that the school merely wanted someone to get the Gypsy pupils back to school (Chapter Seven). Gemma explained why she believed the Gypsies were no longer attending school:

> "*Maybe an unexpected outcome of increased Traveller emancipation is that they have more self-confidence in their own way of doing things and can't see the point of much that the school says it has on offer. One local Traveller girl in her late teens said to me that she did what was required, stuck at it, got her GCSE's and got a job on the checkout at Tesco's. She said to me, 'why bother, if that's where you end up with an education. I should have left school at twelve and got on with my life.'*"

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the comments revealed to Gemma but there are grounds to question the validity of this interpretation, for the rationale for non-participation was not based on positive factors, and rejection came at a price, as traditional socialisation and training practices were no longer available to all of the 'resisters' who dropped out of school. A dislike of regimentation, and submission to the ethos and authority of school, and rejection of a future in the wage economy were therefore possible reasons for many Gypsy and Traveller pupils I termed as 'resisters' rejecting school at precisely the time when it became more focused in its preparation of young people for the wage economy and mainstream society. This rejection became more pronounced prior to, or at the commencement of, Key Stage Four, where from the age of fourteen pupils started to study for their GCSEs in a programme that was largely accorded status and reward on the basis of academic ability and conformity. It was little wonder, therefore, that most of the 'resisters' completely ceased attending school in year 9 or 10, just prior to, or after, the start of this educational programme.

For a number of Gypsy and Traveller 'resisters', the transition to a state of non-involvement

in mainstream schooling was far from tranquil. The large number of exclusions within the three schools in my survey in part reflected disillusionment with the curriculum by these pupils but also their poor relations with staff. At South Forest School sixteen pupils (ten boys and six girls) had been excluded for a fixed period, the vast majority on more than one occasion. Much of this conflict is recorded as having taken place in the classroom and revolved around confrontation between the pupils and staff. Interviews and discussions revealed, though, that many pupils and parents interpreted such punishments as being unfair and discriminatory. Mrs Brazil exclaimed to the headteacher at the West Lake School after her son was excluded following a number of incidents of reported misbehaviour: *"Everyone in this school has it in for Denny and is 'gunning for him.'"* She refused to attend a number of meetings with the headteacher to discuss the behaviour of her child and according to the Traveller Education Service had no confidence in the fairness of the school disciplinary regime.

Mary Smith, a prominent 'resister' at South Forest School stated: *"They* (staff) *hate us because we are different from the way they are. I hate nearly every teacher in this school."* Amongst the 'resisters' there was a perception that the school did not like them. They objected to what they saw as the officious nature of some staff at the secondary school. A Gypsy pupil called Bobby Wood stated: *"This school has it in for Travellers."* Pete Joe Bendell said: *"Some teachers pick on Travellers: if there's trouble the Travellers get the worst punishment."*

This perception of a culture of unfairness was demonstrated in one reported incidence of conflict involving Janey Smith. In 2001, one year after entry into South Forest School, Janey was excluded for two days for being aggressive to a pupil and kicking a door whilst a teacher was on the other side. Mrs Fletcher (head of year group) informed Janey that she would telephone home but Janey stormed off and slammed the door twice saying that she did not want her head of year to ring home because she tells *"lies"*. Chapter six also provided evidence of staff hostility towards Gypsies and Travellers. These negative perceptions may have stemmed from long-standing societal prejudices to this minority and led to negative labelling (Stonewall, 2003). Gillborn has argued that such processes are to be found in teachers' treatment of African-Caribbean pupils and has led to pre-emptive disciplining (cited in Strand, 2007, 11 and 99). This may have accounted for the high

frequency of conflict situations between Gypsy and Traveller pupils and staff and the likelihood that these conflicts would be of a serious nature.

The perception of unfair treatment at the hands of school was shared by the parents of the 'resisters'. In her first year at South Forest School, Bridget Noble is said to have responded to an alleged racist comment by threatening to hit the girl in front of a teacher. Bridget was excluded and a letter was sent home. In a letter to the school Bridget's mother stated "*I am unhappy with the way this has been dealt with. I feel this decision has been one-sided, as I was not given a chance to give my point of view, and the mother of the other child was believed.*" The parents of Bridget were said to be extremely hostile towards the school, according to the head of the South Forest Traveller Education Service, who also felt that it was in part this hostility that helped mould Bridget's antagonism to the school. The Squire shared such animosity and once declared:

> "*What puts a lot of Travellers off is the way they are treated there when they get there (school). Take Tim boy and Frankie (two of his grandchildren): if they fight with other boys, they don't get sent the notes to them but they come to us, saying your boys have been fighting. Its all with the Travellers, they're all against the Travellers, it don't matter where you go. It started off years and years ago, when Gypsies used to travel around: they had their stopping places but people would say, 'if you go down the lane tonight there are Gypsies there.' Right back to the stone age they have turned against Gypsies, 'lock your children up tonight, Gypsies are down the lane,' that's what they done.*"

So for some the relationship with the school was part of a wider and historic matrix of prejudice against Gypsies. Many of the Gypsy pupils could recount being called derogatory names on account of their ethnicity. Henry Brazil stated: "*They* (other pupils) *call me 'pikey' sometimes, some just do it for a laugh but they know we get the hump over it.*" Pete Joe Bendell believed such taunting had been taking place at the school for many years: "*Some parents say when they were at school they were picked on because they were Travellers and they still are now!*" Complaints such as these were more frequent amongst the pupils I classified as 'resisters'. Sometimes conflict with other pupils had a racial nature. At West Lake and North Hill schools all of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils interviewed had been called names on account of their ethnicity. At South Forest School, 10 pupils were formally interviewed and 6 had experienced or witnessed bullying towards Gypsy and Traveller pupils. My discussions with the rest of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils

took place in a more informal context and included a higher number of 'resisters'. Accounts of racist name calling or other types of bullying were even more frequent.

The tense relationship between the school and Gypsy pupils manifested itself in several ways. One outcome was a high number of recorded behavioural incidents. Within the three schools there were a large number of exclusions. Most of the incidents were classified as insolence, swearing and aggressive behaviour towards other pupils and staff (See Chapter Five). Tensions and conflict between Gypsy and Traveller pupils and staff may have escalated into serious situations on account of cultural factors. Adolescent Travellers are often treated as young adults in Traveller society, which can give them a certain confidence in adult company (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). This, combined with their strong sense of pride, would reduce the chance of perceived unfair treatment by pupils and even staff going unchallenged. Mary Smith noted this in the following statement: *"They* (staff) *tell me at school to talk quietly and explain what you're unhappy about. That's not our way. We prefer to shout and have it over and done with."*

At North Hill School, one Traveller pupil called Ritchie McDonagh stated in an incident report: *"She began kicking me, and I said, 'leave me alone', and her friend gave me a kick as well. Julie called me a Gypsy and a thief and started laughing. This happens every time she sees me."* Possibly because she was a girl, Ritchie did not physically retaliate: to do so would have undermined Traveller notions of masculinity, where to have hit a girl in public would not have been deemed appropriate (see chapter Nine). In this case, Ritchie took the rare step for a Traveller pupil of approaching the school authorities. In most cases, Gypsy and Traveller pupils chose to respond immediately and directly to any challenges that were made. Ritchie had a history of being involved in such clashes with male pupils. Such violent responses were in part, no doubt, a consequence of the fact that in Gypsy and Traveller culture, fighting is a major signifier of masculinity that can translate as prestige and status (Levinson and Sparkes, 2003). Failing to respond violently or conforming to the school's notion of a model pupil, and using the school complaints system would have been considered a dilution of masculinity and should therefore be avoided. Katy Collins noted the significance of this when commenting on the high incidence of fights involving Traveller boys: *"I think it's because if people say something they will take it very badly and they deal with things through fighting."*

Much of the general misbehaviour was classified as disruptive behaviour in class. Not wearing proper school uniform was also a frequent complaint from the school authorities. Misbehaviour could sometimes constitute serious challenges to authority from the Gypsy pupils. A note from Janey's pastoral file dated 6/3/2002 states that she was excluded for four days. She had had a call on her mobile phone in class, refused to switch it off and walked out to continue her call. The teacher closed the door and Janey started kicking the door to be let back in. The headteacher confronted her during this incident and Janey, who insisted on telling the headteacher what had happened, was reported to have shouted: *"You've got to listen"* and *"I'm not doing this"* and *"Why should I do as you say"*. Allegedly Janey also used foul language. A letter sent home from the headteacher stated: *"I am seriously concerned by Janey's continued misbehaviour and impact this is having."* On a number of occasions Janey was excluded for physically threatening staff.

Not all the 'resisters' demonstrated poor behaviour. A number sought to avoid or minimise their contact through non-attendance. Some of the non-attenders were quite passive in school and were considered by staff to be polite towards them. At South Forest School, 16 out of the 32-strong cohort of Gypsy pupils did not attend school. Of this group, 13 lived on the South Forest site. Many of the non-attenders had experienced particularly poor relations with school. From an analysis of the data of Gypsy pupils who had particularly poor relations with school, those appeared to be a pattern of them eventually 'dropping out' of school. A form tutor wrote of Tony Wood, who lived on the South Forest site:

> *"He cooperates in school only on his own terms and when he chooses. He is threatening to teachers and refuses to follow instructions. He frequently truants from lessons. He makes racist comments and threats to black members of his tutor group. He fails to respond to the report system. He is disengaged from the education process. He has stated that it is his intention to leave in year 9 and therefore fails to see the point in cooperating."*

True to his word, after a long catalogue of conflict with the school authorities, he stopped attending in year 9. Likewise Janey and Bridget, after a long sequence of clashes with the school authorities, stopped attending school in year 9. The negativity of the comments in the above report reflect the resentment that many staff felt towards the 'resisters', whom it

was deemed were a serious distraction from the work of the school. Once such pupils had ceased attending, the schools were, it appeared, at times reluctant to encourage or even invoke legal powers to compel these pupils to return. For example, Bridget's head of year group had openly expressed to Sandra James (South Forest Traveller Education Service) a desire that Bridget did not return to school, as she was too disruptive. Eliza Hall, one year 9 Gypsy pupil with a positive attitude to school, who was related to Bridget, noted that the school did not seem to care about Bridget 'dropping out':

> "*Bridget don't want to come to school because she gets into trouble and has to come out of lessons. If they start on her, she starts on them. They* (school) *also don't want her to come back to school.*"

A large number of the recorded incidents of misbehaviour had a racial dimension, where pupils used racist language towards other pupils and staff. A high number of racial incidents were recorded in the students' pastoral files. Twenty years ago, the three boroughs, in particular South Forest, had had larger white populations and the three schools had been predominantly white working class. In recent years, the local population had become more racially diverse, in part because of the settlement of asylum seekers into local authority accommodation. Some of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils were resentful of these more recent arrivals and showed the same hostility as the wider white community. This hostility may also have reflected the fact that they felt nervous about interacting with other ethnic groups as the prospect of such contact was diminished by the insularity of Gypsy and Traveller families, as well as the spatial isolation created as a result of the location of many sites on marginal space (Niner, 2003). In my interviews with Gypsy 'resister' pupils I recorded a high number of negative comments about other ethnic minority pupils. Pete Joe Bendell said: "*Black people smell, they put all that cream on them. To be honest they think they own the school.*" Bobby Wood stated "*I wouldn't take black boys who are friends down to the site because they would probably be called names and get beaten up.*" Mary Smith informed me: "*My mum, she aint being racist or nothing, but she thinks they are taking over this country. We were here before anyone else was.*"

A common feature of Janey's and Bridget's conflicts was racial. Janey's pastoral file contained the following account of an incident.

Table (7.1) – Note from Janey's Pastoral File

> Janey began by picking on Sukpreet Nagra, a student of the Sikh faith. She ridiculed his hair and said he should have a hair cut. The teacher tried to explain that it was part of his faith but Janey said:
>
> 1/ People like 'them' should not come over to England if they are going to continue this 'rubbish'.
> 2/ Mum votes NF
> 3/ Blacks should go back to India and Africa
> 4/ Blacks were coming in and taking jobs from good white people and lived off benefits.

One of the largest groups amongst the recent arrivals to the South Forest area were the Somalis. Janey and Bridget and a number of other Gypsy pupils were involved in a long and protracted dispute with this group. Some of the Gypsy pupils' xenophobia reflected growing racial tensions in South Forest and south Carwich City, which had witnessed the growth of black and white gangs which fought each other on race lines. For some 'resisters', their rejection of school stemmed from the belief that the school was racist towards Gypsies and Travellers and showed favouritism to other ethnic minorities. One gang from Fordway in South Forest was called the 'Ruthless Attackers' and were sometimes called the 'Racist Attackers' because they liked to pick fights with black teenagers. Janey was dating one of the gang members. Some of the Gang members were said to be Gypsies but they did not live on the South Forest site or estate. The inter-ethnic tensions that were prominent between the 'resisters' and other ethnic groups were a reflection of their frustration and anxiety at their perceived increasing marginalisation in school and the wider community. In the following case study I explore the dispute between the 'resisters' at South Forest School and the school management and Somali community, in which Bridget and Janey were prominent, and assess more fully the impact of exclusion in this narrative.

Case Study - The Disturbances in South Forest School

When I arrived at South Forest school in the spring of 2003, there had been in the previous three years two major disturbances within the school. These had taken on a mythical status and were often referred to by the staff when talking about the Gypsies. Both disturbances were manifestations of the tensions that existed in relationships between the Gypsies and the school and the wider community. The disturbances, often referred to by the different parties as the 'riots', occurred in 2000 and 2001. Sandra James, the head of South Forest Traveller Education Service, felt that the Gypsies were wrongly blamed for the first 'riot'. There had been a fight in the school and as a consequence hundreds of pupils refused to return to their lessons and ran amok in the school. The Gypsies were a prominent group that got carried away and joined in the melee. The Gypsies were brought into prominence in this incident by the fact that the mother of Bridget Noble came into the school, rounded up many of the Gypsy pupils and marched them out of the school. This act was no doubt viewed as a further humiliation to the authority of the school.

The most notorious of the disturbances occurred in December 2001. Bridget had prior to this incident been involved in an ever-increasing series of clashes with other pupils and staff, according to her pastoral record. The incident report in her pastoral file alleges that during a lesson taken by a supply teacher, Bridget had goaded a Somali boy. The boy had retaliated and head-butted Bridget, leaving her with a bleeding nose. Bridget was said by the supply teacher to have thrown a bin and stool across the room and then moved from class to class, collecting a large number of Gypsy pupils, who and congregated in a group in the playground. Bridget contacted her parents by mobile phone about the incident and they came into the school reception. The distraught parents argued with the headteacher Stella Cartwright in the reception. Mrs Noble then repeated the action she took in 2000 and proceeded into the school playground and collected a large group of the Gypsy pupils and took them out of the school. In the tail of this were a large group of inquisitive non-Gypsy pupils who took advantage of an opportunity to create further mayhem. For the second time Mrs Noble had shown a lack of faith and confidence in the school and for a second time had withdrawn many of the Gypsy pupils en masse out of the school, an act which

again seriously challenged the authority of the school.

In a letter sent to the Nobles to inform them that Bridget was to be excluded, the headteacher wrote:

> *"You proceeded to shout angrily at me for ten minutes. You remained standing, quaking with anger and pointing aggressively at me throughout. Amongst other things you said that Bridget had been head-butted by a black boy and said it was racist and not fair and that I should get the boy's parents up to the school immediately."*

The letter also noted with dismay that the Nobles had spoken in an aggressive manner to Sandra James of the Traveller Education Service who was trying not to take sides and mediate a solution. The letter concluded:

> *"In future, would you only come to school by appointment, arriving at the front entrance. This requirement will be followed by a letter from the borough legal department."*

The boy who was involved in the clash was excluded for two days but many of the Gypsies felt this was an insufficient punishment. School incident reports record how the conflict between the Somalis and Gypsies continued after this, as some of the Gypsy pupils sought revenge, in particular against the boy who hit Bridget. Two days after the fight and the return to school of the Somali boy who had been involved in the fight with Bridget, Janey and three boys from the South Forest site surrounded him and hit him. One of the Gypsy boys said to a teacher: *"See, I told you we would get him."* In a further incident, the Somali boy was chased off the playground by a group of Gypsy pupils, which included Janey. A letter home from the school to Janey's mother stated:

> *"Janey's behaviour following the first fight was inexcusable. She knows the school rules and what is expected of students when there has been a fight. I have said on many occasions that I will not tolerate students taking the law into their own hands. In doing so she incited violence and seriously disrupted the work of the school. Continuing to act against the boy is one of the worst examples of bullying and intimidation I have come across in thirty years of teaching."*

Conflict also took place outside of the school. Several parents on the South Forest site informed me that one day the Gypsy teenagers from the site had to run home as a gang of Somalis chased them from the school. For a long time after the second disturbance many of the Gypsy pupils stayed away from school. Bob Noble, a housed Gypsy and Bridget's cousin who was classified as semi-accommodated, informed me: *"After the big fight a lot of the Travellers stopped coming into school because they looked up to Bridget and followed her."* Duncan Phelps, a long-standing member of staff also noted the boycott:

> *"There was a dramatic impact: pretty much all the Travellers withdrew for several months. It was several years ago, so I may have some of the details wrong, but they withdrew en masse for some time. Several months later a few filtered back. It was a very difficult time: there was a complete breakdown in relations between the Traveller community and the school. Lots of effort was put into making links but it took a long time, but I think things have got back to an even keel, but I think there is still a time issue. They do seem to have largely let it go, but I don't think all the parents are happy about the way their children are dealt with in school."*

The Gypsies on the site believed that the disturbance in 2001 confirmed many of their anxieties about the school. In their opinion the school did not offer a safe environment and newcomers such as the Somalis received favourable treatment. The school was deemed to be prejudiced against Gypsies. The headteacher was considered to have been unfairly lax with the Somali boy and merely excluded him for a matter of days, whilst Bridget, who they perceived as the victim, was severely reprimanded by being excluded for four weeks. In the following two years, aside from the local authority initiative of creating the Romany Traveller Inclusion Officer post, little had been done to heal the wounds. Sandra James from the Traveller Education Service had suggested using the local authority mediation service to initiate dialogue and greater understanding, and the authority mediation service was enthusiastic about taking on such a role. The headteacher chose not to take up this offer. In the opinion of the Traveller Education Service it was because she was adamant that the problem lay with the Gypsies and it was merely a matter of the "Gypsies playing by the rules".

The notion that time may have healed these tensions was rudely shattered in the autumn of 2003. The school term had started with what the management no doubt considered was a buoyant mood. For some time the school had been under threat. There was talk by the local

authority of merging South Forest School with a successful Anglican school or even of closure (Chapter Seven). At times the management felt under threat, as there were education officials within the local authority who considered the school to be suffering from a weak management regime; a belief reinforced by the disturbances that had occurred in recent years. The talks about the future of the school were now reaching a critical stage but the school management team was encouraged by the improved GCSE results, which they believed would strengthen their campaign. The school's GCSE results had gone up from thirteen percent the previous year to 25 per cent achieving 5 GCSEs grades A-C. At this time the government target for 'challenging schools' was twenty percent. In the staff meeting at the start of the academic year the headteacher reiterated her intention to oppose the local authority's plans for the school and said: "*I want to fight this merger, that takes strength and determination but I need all my staff behind me and no negative publicity in the coming weeks as it will be crucial during this time to save the school.*" As it transpired, the headteacher was not to be afforded her wish of avoiding negative publicity.

For the Traveller Education Service the autumn term also witnessed a number of positive developments. A number of persistent non-attenders on the site were either attending school or alternative classes. Some of these pupils had been coming in late and there had been conflict over school uniform. Mary Jane Penfold started back at school in the second week of the new term. She had been away from school for nearly four months because the family had been travelling. Mary Jane seemed especially unsettled to be back at school, often not wearing the uniform or arriving late in the mornings. Part of the problem was that she had not been properly readmitted into the school. She did not have a timetable because of her later return and she was going to a friend's classes (Katy Jane) who also lived on the site and was, after a lengthy period of non-attendance, making an attempt to re-attend.

In one lesson, Mary Jane clashed with the deputy headteacher, John Harper, in a class he was taking. Mary Jane and Katy Jane were said to have had a play fight over a pen, which caused some disruption. Mary Jane was sent to A8 (a special room for pupils who misbehave) but instead she is reported to have hung around in the corridor outside the classroom and then returned to the classroom and taken Katy Jane away with her. This must have represented a serious challenge to the authority of John Harper, given that he was a deputy headteacher. I spoke to Harper about the incident. It was interesting to note in

an aside that he felt that in the twenty years he had been at the school that the "*Gypsy pupils had always been troublesome*". If John Harper shared the headteacher's animosity towards Gypsy pupils then this may have been one factor why these pupils disrupted his lesson.

Later in the day I spoke to Mrs Bell, mother of Katy Jane. She had heard about events and felt the school was picking on the Gypsy pupils. She informed me that Katy Jane had been reprimanded for wearing jewellery and carrying a mobile phone, yet others in her opinion were allowed to get away with it. She had made Katy Jane wear smaller jewellery but felt that the school had not made similar concessions: "*I'm giving into their rules but they're not giving in on theirs.*" The next day Mary Jane was not at school but on her return a serious incident occurred, which was comparable to the major disturbances that had taken place in previous years. Lizzie, the younger sister of Mary Jane, had apparently got into a fight with a black pupil called Priscilla. According to Lizzie, she had been sitting on the stairs and had been told by Priscilla to get out of the way or there would be consequences, and as a result Lizzie was kicked. In the school incident report, Priscilla is reported to have claimed that she was merely trying to walk past Lizzie and had by accident trod on her. Whatever was the cause, a serious scuffle broke out which was stopped by the intervention of the headteacher, who saw the closing stages of the fight. The headteacher made the two pupils agree to end their differences and Priscilla apologised. The headteacher thought that this would resolve the matter.

That day, as school finished, a major fight took place outside the school. A group of Gypsies (composed mainly of the pupils not attending school such as Janey, but Mary Jane was also with the group) waited outside the school. They had received a mobile phone call telling them that Lizzie had been attacked and they were there to provide support. The school secretary was alerted to the perceived danger and called via the tannoy system for all male members of staff to go to the bus stop where the group from the site was waiting. This was a serious mistake as the school was finishing for the day and hundreds of pupils, rather than going home, were alerted to the disturbance and decided to stay around in order to watch the fracas.

Sue Anne, a Gypsy classroom assistant (Chapter Seven), had come to the school to collect Lizzie and she tried to control the awaiting group of Gypsies by imploring them to return home. The headteacher and several staff demanded that the group go home but these entreaties were ignored and Mary Jane, egged on by Janey, attacked Priscilla, whom they had found. Following this incident, Janey and Mary Jane were permanently excluded, and Lizzie was excluded for ten days for cheering as the attack took place. The next day the headteacher convened a special staff meeting and according to Sandra James (Traveller Education Service coordinator) who heard reports of what happened, some of the staff said that they were afraid of the Gypsy pupils. Sandra James was not invited to this meeting and was very concerned that the school did not contact her immediately to inform her about the incident. She found out two days later.

The following Monday I came into the school. Mrs Penfold, mother of Mary Jane, and her mother Mrs Smith, came into school to meet the headteacher. Sandra James and I were also invited to the meeting. They accepted the permanent exclusion of Mary Jane. To a degree I sensed that they were not sorry that Mary Jane would no longer have to attend school. In fact, Mrs Penfold said it would have been more of a punishment to make Mary Jane attend, a statement which reflected the low regard she had for the school and the dire state of the relationship between the site and the school. There was not agreement on the question of Lizzie. They were angry that, whilst Lizzie had been suspended for ten days, Priscilla had gone unpunished. The headteacher said that she did not feel a need to punish Priscilla as she had apologised for her initial misdemeanours, as had Lizzie. However, the women accused the headteacher of "double standards". The whole episode was a rerun of the clash between Bridget Noble and the Somali pupil two years previously. In response, the headteacher stated that she had a good track record on equal opportunities, implying that the school was not at fault. The conversation went around in circles with both sides continually repeating the same points until Mrs Penfold appeared to lose her patience and left the room. The meeting ended, and the headteacher was close to tears. Sandra James still felt that the school was failing to listen to the Gypsies.

Sandra and I visited the site. We met Mary Jane and asked her why she had hit Priscilla. She responded that Priscilla had attacked her sister and she was only standing up for her sister. Again, a 'you attack us and we will attack you' mentality was being demonstrated.

We visited Mrs Bell. She informed us that there were rumours that Priscilla's black friends were planning to attack Gypsy pupils outside the school. Again, as with the case with the Somalis, it seemed as if the stage was being set for a long period of tension and possible feuding between rival groups. A further claim by Mrs Bell was clearly untrue. She said there was also a rumour in circulation that Priscilla had been pregnant but had lost her baby in the attack and this was why the black pupils were so eager for revenge. Such was the fear of the wider community and groups on the estate that the Gypsies on the site again were ready to believe the worst and felt under a state of siege. Mrs Bell had previously complained about Katy Jane being sent home for having a mobile phone and incorrect uniform and the lack of appreciation for the fact that they were bending their rules by making Katy Jane wear smaller gold jewellery. Katy Jane was now wearing huge pieces of gold jewellery. Mrs Bell stated:

> *"My husband has been really angry. He has told Katy Jane to put on her big earrings. He's angry because we have to make compromises in our culture but they don't make any compromises in theirs. The school is just not fair, my Katy Jane is picked on because of her school uniform but black kids in the school get away with it."*

At the heart of the tensions may have been a perception that the Gypsies' culture was continually being hemmed in by external forces, and that they were being persecuted. In spite of the fact that there had been no serious disturbances for two years until this most recent one, the fundamental problems in the relationship between the school and the Traveller site still existed. The root of these problems is complex and forms part of a matrix of exclusion in which the racism of the school and factors beyond the boundaries of school life came into play and pre-dated the onset of problems between the school and site (Chapter Nine).

The 'Resisters' and Separation

Responses from the school to the disaffection of the 'resisters' appeared to rely on the separation of 'resisters' from mainstream classes (Chapter Seven). This separation was also something which some of the 'resisters' positively welcomed.

Henry Brazil was a year 8 Gypsy pupil at the West Lake School, who was experiencing great difficulty in the classroom, as was evidenced by his poor behaviour, and was typical of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils that were excluded or 'dropped out' of school. The coordinator of the Traveller Education Service felt Henry's problems stemmed from his severe learning difficulties. His low literacy impeded his access to the curriculum, a problem compounded by lack of support, as he had not received an educational statement, even though in the opinion of many he warranted one. In spite of mentoring and counselling and limited classroom support, Henry's poor behaviour continued, and the school moved closer towards permanent exclusion. During my observation, Henry was at stage two in the disciplinary process. Another incident would lead to stage three where he would go in front of the school disciplinary committee, who would consider permanent exclusion. This state of affairs seemed to be drawing perilously close. On one occasion I overheard one deputy headteacher in conversation with Henry's head of year group in the staffroom. The deputy headteacher proclaimed: *"Enough is enough! We've got to sort him out once and for all!"* The coordinator of the Traveller Education Service felt that Henry was destined for a Pupil Referral Unit: a special unit provided by the local authority where permanently excluded pupils were taught outside of mainstream schooling. This separation was the fate of some of the 'resisters' that the schools felt they were no longer able to manage and support, but some Gypsies and Travellers actively clamoured for such separation.

A number of Irish Traveller parents whose children were registered at the West Lake School expressed the desire for their children to attend the pupil referral unit even though they were not classified as having severe behavioural problems. Within the unit, Travellers were largely taught in their own group, separately from the other pupils, and this seemed an attractive option to some parents. In part this may have stemmed from the fear some parents had of their children being exposed to the values of non-Traveller culture at a crucial stage in their adolescence, which might deter them from conforming to more traditional roles and expectations (as well as a rejection of the mainstream curriculum). School life and the curriculum are a means by which Gypsy and Traveller pupils "can get to know, and be known by, their peers" (Waterson, 1997, 127). It appeared that some Gypsy and Traveller pupils and parents did not relish such interaction or integration. Mary

Smith, a 'resister' pupil, exclaimed with regards to how they would like their time at school to be: "*What I would like is for all of us Travellers is being together and doing our own thing.*" Such sentiments may also explain why one housed Irish Traveller pupil called Katy Collins said to me that the Travellers on the site in the borough of North Hill did not attend school: "*....because they don't like to mix with others and that's why they don't come to school.*" Such desire for separation was viewed with alarm by the Traveller Education Services that I worked with, who felt that it went against the trend of trying to integrate Gypsies and Travellers into mainstream schooling.

Signs of a desire for such separatism were evident in other parts of the country, where there had been a sharp rise in the number of Gypsy and Traveller parents electing for their children to be taught at home, termed as 'Elective Home Education' (Ofsted, 1996, 70; Ivatts, 2005). In Gravesend, Gypsy and Traveller parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the secondary curriculum and went as far as establishing their own school, attended by ten Gypsy pupils. As with the Muslim community and a number of other minorities, it may be the case that Gypsies and Travellers seek to develop forms of formal schooling outside of the mainstream, which they may perceive as offering conducive learning environments and culturally appropriate forms of education.

For some Gypsies and Travellers, the modern inner city secondary school is held to pose a number of dangers for their children: primarily bad influences from their non-Traveller peers in terms of sexual activity and drug abuse (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Kendall, 1997, 86). One example which highlighted the fear and danger that school held was shown in the case of the McDonaghs. The McDonaghs were housed Irish Travellers living in West Lake. The girls in this family had not attended school for a whole year, as the eldest daughter had been molested (not raped) by another pupil whilst coming home from school. As a consequence of this experience the family was reluctant for all of the three daughters to attend school, although the boy in the family did continue to attend. Several months later, the mother had been scheduled to attend an interview about returning her daughters but she had failed to attend and they lost their school places and were now on the waiting list. The attack had naturally been deeply distressing to the girl and her family. Irish Traveller families are culturally bound to place a high premium on protecting the chastity

and reputation of female children, and often in accordance with this set a particular and strict moral code (Power, 2004). Such is the conservativism of this moral code that sexual assaults could tarnish reputations and honour. Nevertheless, the incident, according to the Traveller Education Coordinator, had left the family fearful of the dangers and level of security to be found within school for the three girls.

Traditional Gypsy and Traveller socialisation practices meant that in some cases the boys worked with their self-employed fathers collecting scrap or laying down pavement, which was part of their traditional 'in-culture' learning experience. In some cases, girls in my sample had to stay at home and assist their mothers with caring for younger children, again reflecting traditional socialisation practices for Irish Traveller females. For some, the reason for such support stemmed from the fact that the parents suffered from various health problems, reflecting the high incidence of ill-health amongst the Traveller community, which is often a legacy of the hardships of life on the road and sites with poor facilities, and generally poor access to services (Van Cleemput et al, 2004; 2007).

A parent might rely on their child even more if they were in a house, as the isolation of such accommodation meant that the parent could not fall back upon the support mechanisms that existed on sites (Shelter, 2007; Van Cleemput et al, 2004; 2007). This was graphically demonstrated to me in the case of the Maloney family. This family lived, because of their size, in a large house in West Lake, which the local authority provided. The mother was said by the Traveller Education coordinator to feel very isolated in the house and kept her daughters at home. The mother was suffering from depression as her son had died in a road accident. The boy had a history of reckless driving and he was awaiting trial for an incident in which his driving led to the death of a pedestrian. Struggling to cope with the grief, the mother had kept her children off school for six months. The head of the Traveller Education Service and I, visited her and tried to persuade her it was time for the children to return to school. The head of the Traveller Education service felt that the mother would have coped better on a site as this would have afforded support mechanisms from the wider kinship group. Isolated in a house she fell back on the support of her own immediate family at the price of disrupting her daughters' school attendance. Interestingly, the mother agreed to the daughters returning to school but

favoured them attending the Pupil Referral Unit, despite the fact that they were not demonstrating emotionally disturbed behaviour in school.

Thus a broad range of factors influenced the 'resisters' to reject school. These included perceptions that school was unfair towards them or presented a cultural danger or that the curriculum was inferior to traditional Traveller training practices. These factors were reflected in poor educational participation or strained relations with staff and peers. In the opinion of the Traveller Education Services school often seemed unable or unwilling to try to understand the deeper meanings behind this 'resistance' and adopt appropriate strategies. Instead, these pupils and their parents were categorised as 'difficult', 'uninterested in school' and even 'racist'.

Participation and Support for School

The 'mainstreamers' were pupils who generally accepted the ethos of school and strove to achieve academic success. These pupils, rather than maintain a series of rigid boundaries between themselves and the wider community and institutions such as school, reached a form of accommodation and acculturation. Accommodation and acculturation is a process of cultural change and adaptation. It is a response of a minority group to situations of racial conflict and inequality (Gibson, 1988). Acculturation involves a process of adaptation that reduces conflict and allows separate group cultures to be maintained. Gibson states: "The end result need not be the rejection of old traits or their replacement. Acculturation may be an additive process or one in which old and new traits are blended." (Gibson, 1988, 25) For some Gypsy and Traveller pupils this process involved acceptance of the value of formal schooling and was reflected in high levels of participation in the three schools where my research was conducted. The 'mainstreamers' in interview expressed a desire to stay in school until they were sixteen, take GCSEs and possibly continue their education after the school leaving age. In terms of employment, though, most seemed to prefer waged employment, again another marked contrast to the more traditional economic aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers.

Katy Collins was a year 9 (aged 14) Irish Traveller pupil at North Hill school, who lived in

housing. Her glowing primary school report noted that she had attended after-school clubs for literacy and maths as well as drama classes. Her Key Stage Two results were at the nationally expected level. In year 7 at North Hill she had an 89 per cent attendance level. However, in year 8 it was 43 per cent. This had been because her parents had needed her to assist at home because of their health problems. In year 9 her attendance was 77 per cent and her attainment grades in her report were average or above average. There were no records of poor behaviour in her pastoral file. Her plan was to leave education at sixteen or seventeen, take her GCSEs and enter the wage economy as a secretary. In the interview she demonstrated her adherence to the ethos of the school by stating that she felt the Traveller culture was beset with difficulties as the youth did not go to school: *"It's a waste of your life because you can't get a job and all they do is sit at home with their children."* Katy's cousin, Martin Collins, was an Irish Traveller in Year 10 (aged 14) at North Hill; his family were housed. At the primary school his final report stated: *"Martin is a mature and reliable member of the class. He has had many responsible jobs in class and in the school and has carried out his duties efficiently and sensibly."* His key stage assessments were also at the national average but his attendance had suffered as a result of the fact he was suffering from tuberculosis. Martin's attendance at the secondary school averaged 70 per cent on account of his health problems, but his grades of attainment indicated good academic progress. In interview Martin justified his positive attitude to school: *"I want to get my GCSEs and a good job and do well in school. 'Playing up in class' isn't going to help."*

The parents of the 'mainstreamers' were more likely to attend parents' evenings at the school, and when their children were punished by the school, they were much less likely to challenge the disciplinary regime of the school. Often the parents of the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers were keen to see their children achieve. For instance, Eliza Hall stated: *"My father messed up at school and that's why he hasn't got a good job now, so he wants me to do better."* Margie Draper told me that her mother would '*moan*' at her if she did not attend, as her mother could not read and write but wanted her daughter to have an education so that she could be spared the difficulties that her mother had encountered as a result of illiteracy. In part such motivation by the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers was attributable to the influence of the educational choices made by non-Gypsies in their immediate housed neighbourhood. One 'mainstreamer' Gypsy, Louise Sedley, who

expressed an interest in going to university, cited as an influence the fact that a next door neighbour had gone to university and she had listened to accounts of their experiences in higher education and was inspired to take the same direction.

The majority of the 'mainstreamers' were female but also lived in housing. In this respect Gypsies and Travellers are similar to other ethnic minorities, such as the black community, where girls are more likely than boys to reach a strategic accommodation with school (Rattansi and Reeder, 1992, 62). Attainment and participation in school was at its greatest amongst these predominantly housed female Gypsies and Travellers. These female Gypsy 'mainstreamers' also appeared to reject traditional Gypsy and Traveller gender roles for young women, which placed a strong emphasis on giving domestic support to the family group and early marriage. In interview nearly all the female 'mainstreamers' favoured marriage later in life and aspired to further education and training after leaving school.

The 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers were characterised by having more positive views of school. For example, a Gypsy called Amy Smith said the good thing about school was: "*Every day you learn something new*". Another, Eliza Hall, informed me, "*I like school work and I know there's a good job at the end of it.*" Amy Lee had evaluated the difference between GCSEs and training and concluded: "*When you do your GCSEs you can go for any job. You have more choice, but if you do training you will be stuck in one job.*" She wanted to go to university and be a journalist and to help herself in this aim she regularly wrote for the school magazine. Not all the 'mainstreamers' displayed academic ability. Some were in the lower streams at school but hoped, despite their low attainment, to achieve something from their school experience.

In spite of reaching a high level of accommodation with the school, the 'mainstreamer' pupils were far from being assimilated, and still considered themselves to be Gypsies and Travellers and displayed many typical Gypsy and Traveller cultural traits. In interviews, many said that, although living in housing, they would one day like to live in caravans and on a site for at least part of the time. One 'mainstreamer' Gypsy pupil called Charlotte Smith spoke of the joy of living on a site:

"I would live on a site, it would be different, you can go out and talk together, and call people aunt and uncle even though they are not blood relatives. You can go out and meet people on the site and you don't have to worry because everyone looks out for each other."

Entering into a waged job, even a professional one, would not mean an end to being a Gypsy: *"If I become a journalist and even live in a house I will still be a Traveller,"* Amy informed me. Amongst these accommodated Gypsies and Travellers, some had little or no experience of nomadism or caravan dwelling. This did not always diminish self-ascription. For example, Martin Collins, who had no memories of travelling, stated: *"Yes, I am a Traveller but I don't travel round like the different ones but stay in one place and don't live in a trailer."* There was a perception, though, that traditional Traveller lifestyles could be marked by hardship. Katy Collins stated, *"I'm interested in Traveller stuff but it's a hard life. A lot of them don't go to school."* Moreover, for Martin Collins travelling could also pose danger: in response to a question about whether he would like to take up travelling he responded by saying: *"I would and I wouldn't. You're not stuck in one place and you can go out to places but in a house you feel more safe."*

To an extent the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers still subscribed to the Gypsy honour code, which meant you should retaliate if attacked. One of the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies, Eliza Hall, informed me: *"I'd never start a fight but if someone hits me I'll hit them back. My dad said if someone hits you, you have to hit them back."* Another, Margie Draper, declared: *"I haven't had any sort of trouble here because there's more of us and they know there will be trouble if they have a go at us."* In spite of their pride in being Gypsies, some were nervous in certain situations. Amy Smith confided to me that she would only tell people she was a Gypsy if they asked, as she was nervous she might be "picked on". Some of the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers, despite being surrounded by non-Gypsy and Traveller neighbours on the housing estate, retained links with the culture by using the Romany or Irish Traveller language at home, by going to fairs and by visiting relatives on sites, not just the nearby local authority sites but ones further afield. Such trips would sometimes be made with a caravan, so at least for the weekend the family could live a more traditional Gypsy life. For the 'mainstreamers', though, accommodation with school could create tension with the 'resisters'. The educationalist Jim Hanson, who advised the Traveller Education Service at South Forest stated:

"The greatest problem for boys on the site is peer pressure: for some setting off for school in their school uniform with a satchel on their backs sets them up for ridicule from those who are not going to school."

One 'resister' called Tony Wood, who had stopped attending school, once informed me: *"The thing is, we tend to go along with what all the others do. Once one lot stop going to school, all the others stop as well; we stick together and do things together."* Another non-attender, Tim Burrage, said: *"We all do the same thing, what one does another follows and we all act together. That's why we stopped going to school; we followed the ones who first stopped going."*

Sue Anne was a twenty-year-old Gypsy who lived on South Forest site. She had completed her education at the South Forest School and reflected many of the traits of a 'mainstreamer' pupil. For a number of years she had successfully worked at the primary school as a classroom assistant. Apparently some of the South Forest site residents were critical of what they deemed to be collusion. The South Forest site manager Dave Green informed me that Sue Anne was *"getting stick"* from some on the site on account of her work and that he had offered to help her get a flat on the estate.

Another example of 'mainstreamers' experiencing the hostility of 'resisters' is afforded by the case of the Joyces. One of my earliest visits to North Hill School led to me being invited to the opening of a new computer laboratory, opened by the local Member of Parliament. The school selected a number of highly motivated pupils from amongst the school roll. Amongst this group was Dave Joyce, a Year 11 housed Irish Traveller, who was predicted to get 5 GCSEs grade A-C (the common bench mark for good academic achievement set by schools and government). The head of the Traveller Education Service said that she had had to wait a long time to see such a success story but felt this could be part of a growing future trend as more Irish Travellers progressed through the education system. Pupils like Dave were clearly reaching a form of accommodation with the school system but, according to one youth worker, who worked with non-attending Irish Traveller teenagers, the involvement Dave Joyce cultivated with school was greatly disparaged by some of the Irish Travellers he worked with. They had made derogatory comments about

this boy and his brothers, who also had good school attendance and participation. It is interesting to note that shortly after Dave completed school the family left their flat and moved onto a Traveller site in Slough, evidently because the father preferred living on a site to a flat. Despite the accommodation this family had reached with school, they still obviously closely identified with a more traditional lifestyle and did not think the two were irreconcilable as the children were re-enrolled at a new school in Slough to continue their education. The strategies of the 'mainstreamers', which in general involved greater school participation, high levels of waged labour and housed accommodation, held the danger of being perceived by others as weakening the communality of group life (bonding social capital) or even as divisive individualism.

Possibly to avoid peer rejection, some pupils appeared to maintain hybrid strategies in school, merging 'resister' and 'mainstreamer' traits, and were 'semi-accommodated'. For example, Pat Delaney was a housed, year 8 Traveller pupil (aged 13), at the West Lake School. Pat seemed to have some organisational problems, often losing his homework diary, and this was forwarded as a reason why he had not done homework. Pat was often late into class, as was the case with some of his peers. He liked to mill around on the playground until herded into class by the army of supervisors that patrolled the school. Pat occasionally found himself in trouble but only one incident report in his pastoral file was of a serious nature. This had been a fight in the school reception area with a pupil who had insulted his sister. Pat was generally quite focused in class and despite the fact that he had classified special educational needs he could read and write and cope with work on the whole independently. I told him in interview that I had noted his generally good attitude in class. He replied: "*I know the work and do it but if I can't do it, if it's difficult, I want to get on with the work then play around. I don't want to play around for the whole lesson.*" This indeed characterised Pat's attitude to work: he would race to complete his work and then engage in minor horseplay with his peers. Pat may have been trying to form a more strategic accommodation with the school. He wanted to succeed, and stated that it was his plan to stay until he was sixteen, but at the same time he did not want to distance himself completely from those who were more disaffected. On the South Forest Traveller Site there was only one 'mainstreamer' pupil during my observation, but the example of Sue Anne demonstrates that there had been exceptions to the rule. However, there were a small number of pupils on the site who could be described as having adopted a 'semi-

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accommodated' approach.

For the 'mainstreamer' Gypsies and Travellers, the 'resisters'' stance on school and relations with authority held negative connotations. For example, Margie Draper said of the non-attenders on the South Forest site: *"They just don't like coming to school, they like lying in bed, they're just lazy. Mum says they're stupid, they won't learn anything. Most of them can't even read or write."* Negative views of the site led to some pupils and their parents rejecting their ties with the Gypsy community. Bob Noble stated: *"My father used to consider himself a Traveller and he talks like them but he doesn't associate with them now because they are associated with trouble."* Negative assessments of Gypsies and Travellers were strongly evident amongst the 'assimilated'. The assimilated were housed and in general subscribed to the ethos of the school and waged labour. They refused to ascribe as Gypsies or Travellers and often reflected hostility to the group, reflecting the prejudices of the wider community, and accepted claims of deviancy and anti-social behaviour which made them loath to associate with the group. Contact with the site and involvement in Traveller culture was non-existent. In South Forest School, where I was able to gather a more in-depth understanding of the Gypsy pupils because of my extended observation, I was only able to find one pupil that could be ascribed as 'assimilated'. I had been able to identify this pupil because they were known to the Traveller Education Service, who had been able to identify them by the fact they had a well known Gypsy surname and were related to families who did ascribe as Gypsies and were known to the Traveller Education Service. I suspect, though, that within the school the number who had become assimilated was much greater than my investigation was able to reveal.

Conclusion

It can be seen, therefore, that rather than forming a close-knit and homogeneous group, which was the perception of some outsiders and a view that some within the Gypsy and Traveller community liked to cling to, the reality was that the Gypsies and Travellers had adopted a range of coping strategies towards school, change and marginalisation. These strategies ranged from resistance and maintaining rigid boundaries to (in the exception) assimilation and the abandonment of Gypsy identity and complete compliance to non-

Gypsy and Traveller norms and values.

The two principal strategies were those of 'resister' and 'mainstreamer'. Both, though, had one similarity, namely the convergence of the perceptions they held of school with those articulated by their parents. This should not surprise us as it is common for pupils to inherit and be influenced in how they choose to engage with school by their parents (Mac an Ghaill cited in Woods and Hammersley, 1993). Neither strategy was without its dangers. Both held advantages for those who subscribed to these strategies and provided a framework which afforded them direction or understanding for their given situation. For the 'mainstreamers' accommodation offered the opportunity of academic success and reward in the labour market and through such adaptation a means of successfully sustaining a Gypsy and Traveller identity, albeit on changed terms to notions of identity that others would have recognised. For some 'mainstreamers', though, the prospect of academic and waged employment success was in reality a remote prospect. There was also the danger of them being rejected by their wider Gypsy and Traveller peer group and also, in the opinion of some of their fellow Gypsies and Travellers, the danger of diluting their identity through a process of adaptation and greater interaction with other groups outside of the ethnic group. For some the 'mainstreamers' were turning their backs on traditional notions of group communality in favour of a divisive individualism.

For the 'resisters' the strategies they adopted afforded them comfort and understanding of the exclusion within and outside school from which they were deemed to suffer or it enabled them to sustain and uphold important traditional Gypsy and Traveller practices such as 'distancing' at crucial stages of adolescence or engaging in traditional economic and domestic roles in which the extended family was at the heart. They maintained what they saw as the core values and traditions of Gypsy and Traveller identity. However, the 'resister' strategy offered limited future choice and opportunity and was insular, often discouraging significant contact with outsiders. For some, such strategies were in a state of crisis, with the breakdown of traditional family coping strategies, which was leaving a number of 'resisters' languishing on the site in a malaise of lethargy and depression and vulnerable to deviant behaviour and a cycle of crime and even addiction. The next chapter explores in more depth the logic of the strategies adopted by the 'resisters' and the

implications they could have.

Chapter Nine

Identity, Exclusion and Change

Chapters five and eight described in-depth a number of Gypsies and Travellers (adults and adolescents) who had adopted competing and divergent life strategies and responses to school. Many of the Gypsies and Travellers observed fell into two broad groups that were termed 'resister' and 'mainstreamer'. In chapter eight it was claimed that some Gypsy and Traveller pupils, 'the mainstreamers', had reached an accommodation with school and reinterpreted the boundaries that defined what they were and to what degree, and under what terms, interaction should take place with others. However, 'resisters' did not countenance such accommodation, and subscribed to a rigid rejection of secondary school, perceiving it to be a discriminatory agent. This chapter explores in greater depth the strategy adopted by the 'resisters'. Much of the discussion will focus on the South Forest Traveller Site. It was there that I spent considerable time in a Gypsy home community, becoming acquainted with a range of age groups and their views, perceptions and life outside that of school, which impacted greatly on strategies adopted towards formal education. This allowed me to explore key issues of boundary maintenance and identity. It is evident, therefore, that I agree with theorists who argue that there is a link between the strategies adopted by pupils in school and their 'parent culture' (See Chapter Two).

Identity and Symbolic Capital

> "A sense of common origin, of common beliefs and of a common feeling of survival – in brief a 'common cause' has been important in uniting people," (De Vos, 1995, 15).

These factors played a role in the formation of group identity on the South Forest site. As will be demonstrated, other variables beyond the rituals and symbols of culture formed a central role in the formation of group identity. Dramatic changes had taken place for many Gypsies and Travellers across the country: in the case of the South Forest Gypsies, moving within a fifty-year time span from a state where they lived a truly nomadic lifestyle on the forest of Fordway to one where they occupied houses on a large, modern housing estate or

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pitches on the highly regulated local authority site. These major changes were bound to impact greatly on traditional lifestyles and create new environmental and cultural influences. The Gypsies and Travellers on the South Forest site had sought to diminish the influences of these external factors by maintaining, as far as possible, a cultural distance between their lives and those of the wider community. For many, being a 'Gypsy and Traveller' was a primary identity. A factor that fuelled 'distancing' was resentment. This resentment, termed 'cultural trauma', had been shaped by the dramatic changes imposed upon them against their will and the exclusion that they endured in the present, and took the form of hostility towards institutions like school but also a fear and distrust of the wider community (See Chapter Six).

The 'resisters' felt distancing strategies and minimised interaction with those outside the group would prevent cultural dilution. Douglas noted how some cultures have divided society into sacred and profane and developed taboo and avoidance rules to navigate and define these distinctions. Such rules, Douglas argues, should be viewed as a statement about wider society and unique assertions by groups as to who they are (Douglas, 1966). In other words, identity is relational and difference is established by symbolic marking in relation to others. Okley has noted how Gypsies, through elaborate hygiene rituals, perceived non-Gypsies, who did not follow these rules, as being polluted and posing a threat (Okley, 1983; See Chapter One). It is debatable as to how stringently these rules are now observed amongst Gypsies. However, it could be argued that amongst groups like the 'resisters' a new set of fears and taboos had emerged which needed to respectively be avoided and observed.

Wider society, in terms of its moral code, was something that was held to pose danger. Frequently the elder Gypsies on the South Forest site castigated the settled community on the estate for their perceived high levels of criminality but also immorality in the form of drug abuse and promiscuity. These fears in part accounted for, or were used to justify, non-attendance in school, where it was deemed young Gypsies and Travellers were vulnerable to possible moral contagion from their corrupt school peers. Guibernau and Rex (1997) have noted how a sense of ethnic honour on the part of poor propertyless whites in the southern states of America in the age of slavery led to higher levels of racism from this group than the actual slave-owning property classes, for this was because the social honour of the 'poor whites' was dependent upon the social declassement of the black population.

The Gypsies on the South Forest estate frequently compared their moral probity to the excesses they believed were evident in the school and on the estate; thus their social honour was a compensatory mechanism for the extreme levels of exclusion that they endured.

Gypsies and Travellers placed a strong emphasis on 'symbolic capital' (prestige and honour; see chapter two). Symbolic capital could be maximised by conforming to the 'Gypsy and Traveller way', a set of dispositions and classifications that for group members espoused their perception of what it was to be a Gypsy (Chapter Six). An important component of this sense of prestige and honour was to defend the group and oneself from challenge and threat. Failure to offer defence could lead to the loss of public face and was deemed to create a dangerous situation where others could follow and try to take advantage of the injured party. Family or group honour therefore had to be fiercely defended. It can be the case that the adversary also adheres to such an honour code or is sometimes in a position where it is dangerous to be perceived as being weak. As a consequence, disputes in societies where symbolic capital is prized can lead to intense and protracted disputes (Kriesberg, 2003). Hence, conflicts within the Gypsy and Traveller community have been known to take the form of vendettas and span generations and encompass wide extended family networks. Acton et al. describe the honour code amongst English Gypsies/Romanichals:

> "In such a system individuals are responsible for asserting their own rights and the rights of family dependents who are weaker than they are, or friends or kin who are unjustly outnumbered. To appeal to the non-Gypsy state is generally unacceptable except in certain clearly defined exceptional cases (drug dealing is frequently one) and there are among Romichals and Kaale no Gypsy authorities to appeal to either. Rather, if one is robbed, one must muster sufficient friends to recover the property oneself; physical or sexual assaults must be matched by counter assaults leading to submission or in extreme cases death; unhygienic behaviour by excluding the unhygienic person from one's personal space. Not to stand up personally for one's rights or those of a weaker dependant if one has been wronged is to be shamed, 'ladged' in English Romani" (Acton et al., 1997, 145; for Irish Travellers, Gmelch, 1976, 78).

Amongst the Gypsies in South Forest borough, two of their principal antagonists were the school and the recently arrived Somali community, who, as refugees, had been placed in social housing on the South Forest estate (Chapter Eight). It is ironic that the Somalis

shared many of the traits of the Gypsies. A Somali community worker who worked with the Somali teenagers in South Forest told me that the Somalis, like the Gypsies, had a strong sense of pride and would not countenance making concessions to those they were engaged in a dispute with. They were also said to have a strong honour code that demonstrated itself by grouping together and fighting vigorously to defend group honour. This was why the clash between the Somalis and the Gypsies had been so intense and protracted. (See symbolic capital and inter ethnic conflict, in this chapter.)

Symbolic capital reinforced group formation: so as to protect and maintain group honour the Gypsy pupils termed as the 'resisters' needed to 'gang together'. *"We all stick up for each other. The Travellers stick together, they fight together and they run together,"* exclaimed one of the adolescents living on the South Forest site. Grouping also provided a means of 'self- help' to fend off the dangers of a hostile world. As Mary once informed me *"If one of us gets fighting with someone, then we're* (Gypsies*) all up to the school. We all stick up for each other."* I once reasoned with Mary about the logic of confrontation and asked whether she ever contemplated not seeking revenge. Mary poured scorn on such a notion: *"You must be soft mate, if I did that people would think I was soft and all, and walk all over me. If anyone gives me a hard time they'll get this* (clenched fist) *in the face."* For Mary, belligerence was a clear feature of group identity but also a response to generations of exclusion and discrimination: " *'Cos in olden times, people called us names, they didn't like us and now we're giving it back to them."* Fear could drive young Gypsies more firmly into the arms of the group. Bob Noble, who did not closely socialise with the Gypsies on the site, informed me: *"I don't really go down the site any more but if I'm in trouble I go to Noah Yates (non-attender, aged fifteen, living on the site). I was threatened with a knife at a club* (teenage-run club in the youth centre) *but was told not to go to the police as it would stop the club, but I went to Noah Yates and he said that if it happened again I should see him."* Gang culture on the estate was in fact becoming increasingly violent, a phenomenon which Tony Wood, a 'resister', felt would have implications for the South Forest Gypsies. He exclaimed:

> *"One night a group of twenty 'Chinks' (*Vietnamese*) surrounded some Travellers and took out a gun to get the money of the Travellers. The Travellers ran and a shot was fired at them. Travellers don't use guns (they prefer to use their fists) but that might change in the future, there's no telling what the next generation of Travellers*

will do."

My interviews with Gypsy pupils gave further confirmation of the importance of maintaining symbolic capital. Bob Noble informed me: *"The Travellers act like their parents and are strong in arguments, they don't like losing and want to come out on top, and they want people to know that so they will be frightened of them and not take them on."* The alternative to retaliation was not to be countenanced, though. Tony Wood told me that one day he had gone to the shops, and a group of Somali boys laughed at him, which led to a scuffle. I asked him why he hadn't ignored this act. Tony replied: *"If I did that then I would have them on my back all the time."* The outcome, though, of his act of retaliation was that a gang of Somalis came to the site in turn seeking their revenge.

In demonstrating resentment and the maintenance of symbolic capital, a section of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, like their marginalised Black counterparts, had come together in subcultures that ritualistically played out expressions of anger (Chapter Two). Brake describes subcultures as "... attempts to resolve collectively experienced problems arising from contradictions in the social structure, and they generate a form of collective identity from which an individual identity can be achieved" (Cited in Brod and Kaufman, 1994, 186). As a pupil subculture the 'resisters' had created a set of perceptions and rituals which shaped their interactions with their peers and the school authorities. Haas and Shaffir have argued that a dramaturgical approach can be adopted towards understanding human behaviour; conduct can be viewed as a performance in which the script has to be enacted in such a way as to make the performance of a role credible to the audience (Haas and Shaffir, 1982; see also Goffman, 1959). Such an approach can offer important insights into the nature of protracted disputes between marginalised groups and authority. Joshua et al in their portrayal of black relations in the Bristol riot argue that the rioting demonstrated a shared understanding of racism that expressed itself in a violent form (Joshua, et al, 1983). Turner described the oppositionality of the Ndemu in Zambia as a 'social drama'. These crisis situations had regular and predictable features (Turner, 1967). Symbols and rituals strengthen the consciousness of a community and to be effective they have to be invoked and repeated at regular intervals (Woodward, 2000, 137).

Thus the conflicts and resulting actions from the 'resisters' had an almost formulaic and repetitive quality in terms of how situations were interpreted and how they as individuals

or as a group decided to respond. The 'resisters' concluded that school 'had it in for them' and the prejudice meted out towards them shaped the treatment they were accorded (Chapter Eight), treatment which they classified as unfair and which they felt had to be questioned and challenged for the sake of their 'honour'. These symbolic displays clearly created a sense of camaraderie and solidarity amongst the 'resisters''. The 'resisters' conflicts had regular and predictable patterns and starting points and conclusions. Such behaviour confirmed not only the sense of kinship and solidarity which the 'resisters' enjoyed and prized but how conflict acted like a script confirming who they were and why they were in the position they were in but also who in their eyes was responsible.

Symbolic Capital and School

As already recounted, school was deemed to be unfair to the Gypsies referred to as 'the resisters' and was felt to unfairly punish Gypsy pupils. It may even have become a locus of the resentment they felt at generations of exclusion: here was an agent of authority that unlike many of the other agents they felt was responsible for their exclusion, was one they could clearly identify and with which they were in frequent contact. Following the second serious disturbance in the school the Gypsy pupils, with the support of their parents, boycotted the school for a considerable period of time (Chapter Eight). Although not all of the 'resisters' were directly affected by this incident, they felt that Bridget had been unfairly dealt with by the school by being suspended for defending herself against what they considered to be a racist attack by the Somali boy. Group honour dictated, therefore, that they should show solidarity with Bridget and express their disapproval of the school's action by not attending school. Adams et al noted how Gypsy kin group solidarity is especially apparent in disputes or crises (Adams et al, 1975, 81). Evidence of belligerent responses from the Gypsy and Traveller pupils in all of the three schools observed may have been inspired by the common perception that these pupils held that school was discriminatory towards them.

On account of the long and protracted dispute with school it could be surmised that the Gypsies on the South Forest site had entered into a feud with the school. This feud may not have been without foundation in terms of their perception of ill-treatment. Analysis of

school pastoral files did indicate that there was a harsher punishment regime in force against Gypsy pupils than some other groups. One indicator of this is that Gypsies had one of the highest records of exclusion (Chapter Five). The inconsistency of the disciplinary regime at the South Forest School was demonstrated by the fact that in the space of one week, Katy Jane was sent home for not wearing proper school uniform, yet Priscilla and Lizzie, who had both engaged in a fight, were allowed to return to classes after apologising to each other (Chapter Eight). Weak and inconsistent discipline codes may not have assisted relations between the school and Gypsies. Feuds often come into play where there is no central authority or it is weak.

Numerous researchers have found that if pupils believe school is treating them unfairly then they may have trouble in accepting school rules (Gibson, 1988, 31). As I noted in chapter six it appeared that the headteacher and deputy head at South Forest School both considered the Gypsies from the site to be particularly troublesome, a factor which in their opinion was a threat to their authority and the efficient running of the school. The Traveller Education Service in the borough was concerned that the school management team appeared to assign all the blame for the conflicts to the Gypsies by merely ascribing their misbehaviour to their perceived racism. It was interesting to note from an inspection of pupils' pastoral files that, on a number of occasions where the headteacher had covered lessons or intervened in a conflict situation, the Gypsy pupils had failed to yield to her authority. The same defiance was demonstrated to the deputy headteacher just before the third conflict. An important question is whether this was a factor that explained the poor behaviour of the Gypsy pupils, not just with the school management team, but with some members of staff. One teacher, who worked in the (Pupil Support Unit) stated:

> "Sometimes kids are coming here and saying, 'all I did was to walk into the classroom and this or that happened.' Now, quite often you can tell it is their fault, but there are times when teachers are at fault: teachers are human beings and they are going to take a dislike to students; it shouldn't happen but it does. All it takes is for that kid to do something small, which if some other kid did you might act in a different way, but if you have had a history of trouble with them then that will be it and you will say, 'get out.' There is six of one and half a dozen of the other: it's not always the kids: there are times when teachers gang up and don't give kids a chance."

School subculture/counter-culture theory has been criticised in some quarters as

pathologising working class and ethnic minority pupils. It has also been accused of being culturally and socially deterministic (See Chapter Two). Wright et al, commenting on theories of hyper-masculinity and Black pupils, states:

> "To restrict discussion of the problematic nature of relationships between black male pupils and white teachers and male peers to expressions of masculinity can act to pathologise their identities and suggest that they are responsible for their own positioning. Black masculinities within school are not restricted to confrontation and aggression, anymore so than other masculinities." (Wright et al., 2000, 81).

Racism and exclusion were the principal factors influencing the resistance of the Gypsies and Travellers such as those on the South Forest Site and mutated elements of their culture into a belligerent counter-culture. Furthermore, as demonstrated in chapter seven, disinterest in the curriculum and poor teaching were also to blame for resistance and conflict. Furlong has suggested that pupils do not consistently act in accordance with a subculture or particular type of adaptation: pupils will behave differently in different contexts (Furlong, 1984). However, the forces to act in unison or in accordance with set rituals in many situations can be powerful, soliciting notions of solidarity and identity. This thesis demonstrates that these factors were at play in the relations between the 'resisters' and school and explained the regularity and repetitive nature of the conflicts that occurred.

Symbolic Capital and Inter-Ethnic Conflict

Duncan Phelps, who had taught at South Forest School since 1974, was very familiar with the Gypsy community in South Forest. He believed that the community felt they were getting a "*raw deal*" and were tired of being "*bottom of the pile*". This had exacerbated racial tensions. Duncan stated:

> "*I think there has been a shift in recent years, with a lot of children coming from abroad, and I think there's been a lot of conflict between Travellers and some of the other ethnic groups, and I think that's about power basically, about who's going to be 'top dog' or 'second in the pecking order' and who's going to be 'bottom of the pile.*"

'Invidious comparison' is where a group is of the opinion that an 'out group' is of no greater worth, in effect feels the group is less worthy, and is at a loss as to why it is

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afforded greater privilege, a perception which often has little foundation (Zubin et al., 1994, 19). The perception that the Gypsies had of the Somalis and other asylum seekers being privileged was a major factor in the maintenance of their conflict. Not all the Gypsy pupils expressed hostile views towards pupils from other ethnic groups. Bob Noble a (semi-accommodated) pupil in year 10, mixed with black and Chinese students, and he commented: *"My cousin* (Bridget) *gives me a bit of stick for hanging out with non-Travellers"*. Such exceptions, though, tended to be located outside the 'resister' group.

On the estate there was now a much more diverse ethnic population. Twenty years ago the estate had been predominantly white working class but now there was a large black and Indian community. In recent years there had also been the arrival of relatively large numbers of asylum seekers, mainly from Kosovo and Somalia. The resentment to these other ethnic groups was intense on the site, as the perception was that they were getting treated better than the Gypsies, who felt that as they had been there longer should be at the *"front of the queue not the back"*. There was also anger at the violence that the Gypsies believed was directed towards them from these minorities. These responses are similar to those recorded by Hewett in the borough of Greenwich in the wake of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, where the white working class were aggrieved at their perceived loss of privilege to ethnic minorities, which in their opinion had disadvantaged them, giving rise to racist extremism (Hewitt, 2005; Cohen and Bains, 1988). Back, 1996; See also Chapter Two), in his study of multiracial urban environments, notes white working class racism and comments:

> "Thus racist reactions identified in the adult population have to be viewed in terms of how working class people react to and make meaningful sense of their economic and social situation, racism became a way of explaining the declining housing conditions by correlating these changes with the presence of 'black' and 'yellow' people" (Back, 1996, 97).

More recently, a report by Communities and Local Government has voiced similar arguments, claiming that poor accommodation and services has left large sections of the white working class feeling disempowered and resentful towards migrants and ethnic minorities. (The Guardian, 2nd January, 2009) These conclusions could equally explain the cause of the 'resisters'' racism to other minorities. These factors motivated what some outsiders believed to be the racism of the Gypsies on the site. Indeed, many of the attitudes

they expressed towards other ethnic groups were racist, but some in the school used this as a means of dismissing them out of hand. Few appreciated that this racism and 'scapegoating' was a product of their marginalisation, reflected in the spatial and racial exclusion they endured, which was steadily eroding their traditional lifestyle. It is not uncommon for marginalised groups to blame other similar groups for their misfortunes, for they are more visible and direct targets than policy-makers and structural factors, which some might hold to account (Stark, 1994, 43).

The 'resisters' used their cultural identity as the building blocks to mount resistance to the numerous enemies they perceived as being set against them. The 'resisters' became ultra-conservative in their cultural ideals, according higher status and esteem to adherence to traditional Gypsy lifestyles and deriding those like the 'mainstreamers' who embraced change and adaptation. 'Reactive ethnicity' is a tendency for ethnic groups to construct ethnicity as a defence against racism and discrimination. Ballard and Ballard have noted how second generation Sikhs sought to strike compromises with British society but were stung into an ethnic pride in their ethnicity because of racism (Ballard and Ballard, 1977). Similar developments have been noted in the African-Caribbean community (Pilkington, 2003, 202). Reactive ethnicity, though, can intensify perceptions of group boundaries and those who are in the group and outside, providing opportunities to affirm identities and group loyalties (Zubin et al., 1994, 17) and thus increase the chance of inter-ethnic conflict. As will be argued in the following sections of this chapter, this cultural strategy was not without disadvantage.

The intensity of the conflict between the Somalis and the Gypsies and Travellers was born out of the striking similarities between the two groups. Somali society, like the Gypsy and Traveller community, had undergone cultural trauma (Chapter Six) through the violent disintegration of Somali society. Somali culture, also like that of the Gypsies and Travellers, was based on clan traditions and nomadism. This, together with Islam, was a central foundation of their culture and habitus. Within Somali culture there is also a prevailing sense of insecurity and hegemonic masculinity (Keynan, 2006, 189 – 90). Keynan states:

> "These characteristics, particularly, the perception of threat, have become deeply embedded in the fabric of the Somali equation (culture). As a result Somali

society's core traditions have become impregnated with a kind of siege mentality and primeval quest for survival, with men assuming the roles of protectors and providers. This in turn has led to the emergence of a pattern of socialisation that glorifies and rewards aggressiveness, bravery, courage, strength and toughness, traits associated with the macho role" (Keynan, 2006, 190).

Keynan (2006) proceeds to argue that the culture of conflict underlying the Somali clan system can be attributed to the centrality of a feud culture . The similarities between the Somalis and Gypsies at South Forest intensified and prolonged their feud.

Gender and Conflict

From the 1970s a series of ethnographic studies appeared which claimed to have captured a more complex picture of school experiences, in which pupil subcultures were able to articulate opposition and resistance. A number of studies into pupil subcultures have focused on race. Studies of Black pupils by Mac an Ghaill and Majors and Billson claimed that Black pupils responded to the racism they endured in society and school by developing a 'Cool Pose', a strategy of opposition to school which enabled them to regain status and self-esteem eroded by low teacher expectations and racism. These researchers depicted their subjects as displaying accentuated forms of masculinity. This 'hyper-masculinity' emphasised 'toughness' and reflected itself in ridiculing the masculinity of those who conformed, associating school work with femininity, and in aggressive behaviour and conflict with staff. Subculture resistance theories suggest that such masculinity atavistically regenerates traditional cultural traits (See Chapter Two). Bourdieu has described masculinity as one of the last refuges of the identity of the dominated classes. It can therefore provide a canvass through which discontents can be articulated (Bourdieu, 1995, 4).

Hyper-masculinity increases the chances of conflict between pupils and school staff in part because being unfairly disciplined and not offering a challenge could present a threat to self-conceptions of masculinity. As is evident in the running feud between South Forest School and a section of its Gypsy pupils, conflict within school could threaten symbolic capital and thus prompted resistance on the part of the 'resisters'. Their heightened machismo, 'invidious comparison' and rejection of the curriculum may have been an act of cultural inversion in which they displayed their oppositionality to their perceived

oppressors, namely school, and acted as a means of boundary maintenance (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Majors, 2003, 47).

Membership of the 'resisters" subculture at South Forest School was not confined to male Gypsy pupils; neither was challenging behaviour (See Chapter Five). In North Hill and West Lake the female Gypsy and Traveller pupils adopted more passive roles in school than their male counterparts but in South Forest this trend was less evident, as girls were not only involved in a number of conflicts but also orchestrated and led a number of serious challenges in the school. The female 'resisters' often did not have the attainment and literacy levels or cultural capital to acculturate like the girls in the 'mainstreamers' were able to. Most of the female 'mainstreamers' lived in housing and their parents were employed in the waged economy. These factors may have meant they were more embedded in mainstream culture and prepared to 'buy in' to the ethos of school.

Mirza (1992) notes the importance of parental views and gender in her study 'Young Female and Black' which seeks to explain why Black female pupils achieve relatively good attainment rates compared to their Black male and working class peers. Mirza notes the importance of valuing the economic role of the female wage earner in the Black family, which helps to promote young Black female aspirations. Unlike their Black male counterparts, Black girls were more likely to adopt passive forms of resistance to teachers' racism, such as not taking up certain subjects if they did not feel at ease with staff, as a short term coping strategy, but simultaneously striving for longer-term educational goals and academic success. Mirza labels this 'resistance in accommodation', a strategy that allows female pupils to indirectly subvert oppressive structures of authority and racist expectations by achieving academic success and opening up transformative possibilities (Mirza 1997. 269, 276 ; see also Wright et al., 2000, 38). As with the pupils in Mirza's study, the female 'mainstreamers' were more likely to adopt passive modes of resistance like wearing large jewellery, which was popular amongst Gypsy pupils, though it should be noted that it was often less ostentatious than that worn by the 'resisters', but in general they subscribed to the ethos of the school and hoped to secure academic success and reward (Chapter Eight).

A number of studies have noted that girls are more likely to reach an accommodation with school and boys are more likely to offer challenges to school authority (Askew and Ross,

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1988, 9). Furthermore, femininity as constructed in western culture is characterised by passivity (Foster et al., 1996, 99), whereas males are expected to be more assertive and aggressive (Hare et al, 1995, 60). The female 'resisters' appeared to defy these trends and conceptions. Most of the 'resisters' lived on the site or had strong connections with it, having only recently left it following the council's decision to reduce the size of the site and move some residents into housing. The Gypsies at South Forest were therefore a more cohesive group than the Gypsies and Travellers in North Hill and West Lake, whose families had come to live in those boroughs only in the last thirty years, whereas the South Forest Gypsies had been a distinct community for centuries.

Although an established community, the South Forest Gypsies did not feel secure: they had seen their lifestyle increasingly hemmed in and there was a strong sense of collective mistrust which may well have influenced the perceptions of the male and female 'resisters'. Other cultural traditions may have had a part to play. Although heavily gendered roles appeared to exist on the South Forest Site, with men being the main 'breadwinners' and women staying at home to tend to domestic duties and children, the role of women did not conform strictly to traditional male and female conjugal roles. Gypsy and Traveller women have often been left to mediate with the authorities by men and represent the community in a broad range of contacts with the settled community, the perception being that women were better placed to take on such roles (Kendall, 1997). This is one factor which explains why the great majority of Gypsy and Traveller campaigners are women. It may also explain why female Gypsies were prominent in orchestrating challenges to the authority and perceived racism of South Forest School.

In Gypsy and Traveller culture, men are often expected to take a prominent role in the physical challenges and defences that occur in a feud but it is not unknown for women to also take on such a role and to be actively involved in the conduct of a feud or defence in the face of a challenge which can involve distancing as well as assertiveness and violence (For assertiveness and defence see Griffin, 2008, 267). The Gypsies at South Forest Site had entered into a feud with South Forest School, a feud which involved males and females. Their sense of solidarity was one factor that motivated them to group together in challenges. Research has noted how Black female pupils have shown empathy to their Black male peers at the high exclusion rates they have been subjected to by expressing support for their peers and contempt for the perceived racism of the school by articulating

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their own challenges to school authority (Wright et al., 2000, 67). This may have been another factor in motivating the female 'resisters' to play a prominent role in the challenges that took place in South Forest School.

In other monographs on pupil subcultures membership is recorded as being primarily male and exalting macho behaviour, violence and sex and being in opposition to academia (Frosh et al., 2002). However, each sub-group has its own identity shaped by its own set of circumstances and history (Swain, 2006, 216 -18). At South Forest, such was the pressure on Gypsies and sense of isolation that male and female Gypsies came together in a school counter-culture. This interaction with females was not considered effeminate, neither did it have a sexual dimension: the girls often referred to as 'cousins' had the status of extended family members, indeed some were. This collaboration was confined to the school for on South Forest Traveller site roles and behaviour continued to be heavily gendered, supporting the conclusion that gender identity is situational and shifting.

Research has argued that Black pupil subcultures can be counterproductive for the group members. Hyper-masculinities, a common feature of these subcultures, can lead to dangerous behaviour and self-harm. A strong machismo can lead to gang activity, violence and deviance (Oliver, 1984) but also internal oppression as reflected in wife abuse (Majors et al., 1994 253) and sexual oppression in which an exaggerated phallocentricity seeks to find alternative forms of power to compensate for the exclusion Black men suffer from mainstream society (Hooks 1992). The Gypsies at South Forest demonstrated some of these traits in the maintenance of a feud culture and their inter-ethnic conflict with rival gangs on the estate such as the Somalis.

On a wider level the issue of feuding has become an extremely serious issue in the Gypsy and Traveller community as protracted feuds are waged involving dangerous weapons which all too often are now resulting in death and serious injury. Likewise, domestic violence is an issue of concern: there is evidence to suggest that the Gypsy and Traveller community is in a state of denial about its existence and that community and family pressure deters abused women from seeking outside help, as to do so could incur ostracism and rejection from the group (Griffin, 2008, 272; Traveller Times, Edition 32, 2007). Willis, in his famous study of a school subculture 'Learning to Labour, 1977', argued that the 'lads' in his study had a partial understanding of capitalism and realisation that society

was not a meritocracy, but their rejection of school led to them reproducing their class position by consigning them to low-grade manual labour. The 'lads'' sexism and racism also obscured their understanding of the structural nature of society. Similar arguments could be made for the 'resisters' of South Forest, who believed themselves to be the victims of racism at the hands of school and wider society, but blame was too often diverted to other vulnerable minorities such as the Somalis as part of a process of 'dual closure', where the excluded marginalise a weaker group or scapegoat as part of a process of social closure in order to access greater resources or power for themselves (Parkin 1979).

Subculture strategies also make the members become targets in the school; their defiance makes them stand out and they are deemed to pose a challenge to the very authority of the school, which staff feels needs to be met with punitive sanctions or more vigilant policing within school (Brod and Kaufman, 1994, 185). Some teachers, frightened by some Black pupils' overt masculinity, misunderstand the intention of culture-specific behaviour and overreact (Majors et al., 1994, 255; Sewell, 1997; Majors, and Gordon, 1994). This can result in members of a subculture being accorded unequal punishments, which in turn reinforces perceptions of discrimination (Wright et al., 2000, 8). To maintain control of volatile classroom situations, some teaching staff adopt masculine teaching approaches characterised by authoritarianism, formalism and minimal interaction with pupils and even aggressive strategies to impose control and deter potential challenges (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 1996, 53). It is claimed that such approaches are detrimental when dealing with pupils with hyper-masculinity as they interpret such teaching strategies as an attack on their masculinity which cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged (Majors et al. 1994, 255).

Masculine teaching strategies are not confined to male teachers; some female staff have adopted such stances (Askew and Ross, 1988, 45; 57). Strained relations between the school and disaffected Gypsy and Traveller pupils were evident at all three schools where the research was carried out but in particular at South Forest School. Relations between the Gypsies and South Forest School were especially problematic, not because the headteacher at this school was female rather than male, as was the case at West Lake and North Hill, and perceived as weak, but because this female headteacher had adopted a masculine management style which refused to countenance mediation and dialogue with the disaffected Gypsies; instead, punitive sanctions and exclusion were the favoured tactics to be employed with this particular minority (Chapter Seven). Research has noted the central

role that headteachers have to play in determining the tone set in schools for relations with pupils and parents and as the key arbitrators in disciplinary matters moulding the disciplinary regime that operates in a school (Wright et al., 2000, 25). The authoritarianism at South Forest provoked the hyper-masculinity of the 'resisters'

Change and Adaptation

The process of grouping, and the maintenance of the honour code, gave the 'resisters' on the South Forest site a point of reference and understanding of the marginalisation they suffered, in particular, who was to blame and who posed a threat. The strategy offered physical protection and a mechanism that helped maintain boundaries and identity. A key question, though, in the case of Gypsies and Travellers, such as those at South Forest, is whether the creation of cultural enclaves and oppositional and 'distancing' strategies in response to exclusion are the best means to challenge inequality. Following from this, though, an important question that needs to be posed is what the alternatives were. In the final section of this chapter I seek to ascertain what the implications were of alternative life strategies and why the 'resisters' chose not to adopt them.

Developing alternatives and cultural adaptation could be a difficult process, as deviation from perceived collective values and norms could incur sanctions from other group members. Mrs Smith lived on the South Forest site and was not a Gypsy herself. She told me that when she first came on the site as a teenage bride, the Gypsies were shocked by her 'warmness' and by acts such as kissing in public. Mrs Smith recounted to me that her eldest child had suffered terribly on the site because of bullying by the other Gypsy children. Mr Smith felt it was because she had been raised as a non-Traveller. Following on from this her husband stated that their other children like Janey and Mary would be raised more like Gypsies. Interestingly the eldest daughter had completed her education and was now attending art college but living with her non-Gypsy grandmother in a house and not on the site. It was said by the Traveller Education Service that she felt a sense of resentment towards the site. Janey and Mary, though, seemed to possess what some teaching staff considered were the group traits of Gypsy pupils on the site. Both girls had extremely poor relations with school staff and could be very challenging. Mary Smith

though was especially proud to be a Gypsy. It was the belief of some staff that it was the fact that she was of mixed parentage that made her accentuate aspects of the group's culture. Her desire to 'fit in' with the other disaffected Gypsies, though, was perceived by staff to come at a price, namely poor attendance, hostility to other ethnic groups and continual conflict with the school authorities.

Minorities are defined by the boundaries they create, and sanctions and restraints for behaviour outside the group code (See Chapter Two). Unity and 'imagined community', which divides the world between 'us and them', is maintained, and ideologically reproduced by a whole system of 'border guards' or what could be termed 'identity managers' that identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity, and are linked to specific cultural codes or styles of dress and behaviour, and customs and language. The story of the Smiths demonstrates the pressures these cultural border guards could place on non-conformity and the pull towards conformity to group ideals.

Some of these 'identity managers' who were the most 'conservative' and resistant to change were not all they appeared to be. Amongst the Gypsies at South Forest there seemed to be a hierarchy of status. Others on the site were continually being described as 'not real Gypsies' because they behaved in a certain fashion or one of their parents was a 'Gorgio'. Those who voiced such criticism, though, considered themselves to be 'pure Gypsies' and 'real Gypsies'. One prominent judge of such boundaries and classification was a Mr Adams who was in his late seventies. When he first saw me he asked what I was doing and when I informed him about my community and education work he replied: *"Thanks, but we don't need any of your 'Gorgio' education."* After this he would often stare at me in a hostile manner. On the site he was considered to be a very traditional-minded Gypsy, but several people from the site told me that he was in fact a 'Gorgio' who had lived in the East of Carwich City with his family in a house and worked as a plumber's mate. As a teenager he had met his Gypsy wife. It was said he tried to hide this fact by passing himself off as someone who was born a Gypsy. Hence, prior to his life amongst the Gypsies of South Forest it appears that he had known the world of waged labour and a housed existence.

Another community elder and self-considered exemplar of the 'Gypsy way' whose family

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had also deviated from the norm was the Squire, the father of Tommy Burrage. In conversations he frequently bemoaned the changes that had taken place and assaults that Gypsy culture endured from the 'Gorgio'. The Squire revealed to me one day, though, that his father had been a Gypsy and joined the navy and that he had spent much of his formative years living in the naval family quarters, or on a small farm the family had owned. Despite antagonism to school, which is clearly chronicled in this thesis (Chapters Five and Six), he had himself attended school. In his adolescence he had joined other family members in a more traditional travelling lifestyle. The Squire therefore knew both worlds and in the eyes of some on the site could also not be considered a 'real Gypsy'. Despite the 'conservatism' of Gypsies like Mr Adams and the Squire and the cultural rigidity and distancing they advocated, the reality and practicality of such a stance was not always feasible or supported by the actual life patterns of those who urged others to conform to their ideals.

Whether or not it was countenanced by the community, change was inevitable and unavoidable. The new and different circumstances that the younger generation found themselves in, compared to the older generation, were bound to provoke profound change (Chapter Five). In the past, divorce and separation had been rare in the Gypsy community but amongst the Gypsies at South Forest there was a growing number of one-parent (female-headed) families. Just over one-third of the Gypsy pupils registered at South Forest School had just one parent at home. This was having a negative impact on traditional family socialisation practices. Where the father was no longer at home it was harder for the boys to go and work with their fathers. Some of the non-attenders, instead of going out working or helping their mothers, lay in bed for long periods of the day. Janey Smith and others like her appeared to be suffering from lethargy and depression. A number of families became dependent on welfare, some due to health issues, often depression. Others were forced to take benefits because the income they could draw from their self-employment was becoming increasingly limited, a factor exacerbated by high rent and site regulations. It was said by some that increasing exclusion was giving rise to dangerous behaviours on the site (Chapters Two and Five).

Many of the changes I have described had been imposed and were clearly negative. Of most concern was the dangerous vacuum that some of the younger Gypsies appeared to be

in. They were benefiting neither from formal education nor the socialisation practices of their family, leaving them unskilled and susceptible to low self-esteem and self-confidence, and the corresponding dangers that accompany long-term unemployment such as welfare dependency, addiction and even criminality (Chapter Two). A clear question, then, was whether the strategies the 'resisters' were adopting were sustainable. There was a danger of their distancing strategies creating a cultural enclave, leading to the Gypsy community of South Forest rejecting tools like formal education which could assist them in raising their inclusion. Moreover, hostility to outsiders, especially new arrivals, held the risk of them failing to identify the primary actors and factors responsible for their marginalisation. Instead, in a process of 'dual closure', other vulnerable groups were being blamed and the maintenance of symbolic capital was leading to protracted disputes, not only with these groups but with institutions like school, disputes that reinforced negative and damaging stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers. A form of cultural conservatism, based upon notions of ideal behaviour that in fact did not match the reality of life, for to the staunchest advocates of this code, did not facilitate the process of adaptation and alternative responses to exclusion.

Some Gypsies and Travellers embraced change. For many of the 'mainstreamers' the challenges of living in housing or working in the waged economy led to the development of new coping strategies which included greater participation in formal schooling. It is debatable as to how effective these new strategies were, as many of the 'mainstreamers' found they enjoyed more narrow social networks on the estate than in the past, many were employed in low waged occupations and only a small number of pupils in this group enjoyed genuine academic success (Chapter Eight). The Gypsies on the South Forest site were said by Sandra James (Traveller Education Service) to have resented those who had moved into housing and they believed they had turned their backs on their culture. The cultural conservatism of the 'resisters' thus created a wedge between themselves and the 'mainstreamers', a divide that threatened to undermine a more general sense of unity and collectivity amongst this ethnic group.

A strong sense of being unjustly treated by the wider society was a common theme in the perceptions and narratives of the Gypsies and Travellers on the South Forest Traveller Site. A sense of victimisation can be an important component in maintaining identity but can

also create a dangerous victim culture (Woodward, 2002, 319). The dangers of victim culture are revealed in the following quote from the prominent black novelist James Baldwin:

"I refuse absolutely to speak from the point of view of the victim. The victim can have no point of view for precisely so long as he thinks of himself as a victim. The testimony of the victim corroborates simply the reality of the chains that bind him, confirms and as it were consoles the jailer." (Baldwin, 1985, 78)

However, in the minds of the 'resisters' they were not passively enduring their marginalisation, but through the maintenance of their honour code were actively resisting. Youdell has noted how Black pupils' cultural identities play a significant role in the maintenance of their self-esteem or even sense of self (Youdell, 2004, 99). A similar process may have been at work with the Gypsy and Traveller pupils observed, thus symbolic capital provided a coping mechanism that could diminish low self-esteem and fatalism, classic consequences for those who are unable to withstand the pressure of long-term exclusion. Culture for the Gypsies and Travellers in my study as for other groups was a meaningful attempt to resist the dominant hegemonic culture (Cohen, 1972) through the development of what Willis has termed a 'common culture', a place of resistance where the dominant culture cannot reach (Willis et al., 1993), thus demonstrating that though individuals are born into structures not of their own making they are able to create their own meaningful action (Willis, 1977).

The 'Gypsy way' and rigid adherence to that identity appeared to offer comfort to the Gypsies of South Forest in the world they now found themselves in, which in many respects bore little resemblance to previous living environments and patterns of existence. Identity has offered a number of minorities, particularly those suffering from marginalisation and profound change, something of an anchor and sense of certainty in a world that is in a state of flux produced by de-industrialisation, globalisation, mass communication and conflict (Woodward, 2000). These identities can be condensed into rigid and uniform 'sameness' where 'difference' is despised (Young, 1999, 95). These identities can demonstrate themselves in bitter and protracted disputes with other groupings. Woodward captures this process and the rationale:

"In the post colonial Europe and the United States, both peoples who have been colonized and those who colonized have responded to the diversity of multiculturalism by a renewed search for ethnic certainties. Whether through religious movements or cultural exclusivity, some previously marginalised ethnic groups have resisted their marginalization within the 'host' society by reasserting vigorously their identities of origin." (Woodward, 2002, 17)

Cohen echoes this point:

"It has long been noticed that societies undergoing rapid, and therefore destabilizing, processes of change often generate atavistically some apparently traditional form, but impart to them meaning and implication appropriate to contemporary circumstances" (Cohen, 1995, 46)

These processes become more 'oppositional' and collective consciousness and internal solidarity more intense when change is imposed from outside (O'Connell, 1996, 118). The maintenance of group identity often requires some form of periodic display of identity to uphold and intensify group bonds between members (Anya et al., 1982, 187). Within the Gypsies' cultural armoury practices like attending fairs and occupying caravans provided this function, yet incidents of conflict between the group and 'others' e.g. school and the Somalis, in which symbolic capital is maintained and upheld, also served this purpose. Conflict affirmed who they were and was a means to manifestly assert their defiance towards incorporation and marginalisation.

No culture is static and held in suspended animation. Culture and identity are continually subject to change. It is something that can evolve and in extreme cases fundamentally redefine borders and relations with others (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992, 34). Often such change witnesses (as with the South Forest Traveller site) the elder generation in particular resisting change and denouncing those who embrace it as having left the minority. Change and adaptation could have been more easily managed and accommodating to Gypsy and Traveller customs and practices, if rather than being imposed, had been negotiated by decision-makers. During the post-war period strong restraints had been placed on nomadism, combined with a sites shortage that forced many Gypsies and Travellers into housing (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). The experience of secondary schooling with its mono-cultural and inflexible curriculum and perceived discriminatory attitudes and practices could be viewed as a further imposition (Chapters one, two, six, seven).

Targeted and tailored responses from policy-makers aimed at creating living environments and educational experiences and employment opportunities or helping to develop existing business practices that reflect the Gypsies' aspirations could have eased the pressure of their marginalisation. Such inclusive options and opportunities would have been more readily embraced and would also have created an acceptable alternative to strategies of cultural distancing and isolation or inclusion into the 'mainstream' that held the clear danger of assimilation and cultural erosion. Inclusive policies would allow Gypsies and Travellers to attain 'accommodation without assimilation', a strategy which allows pupils to excel in school without losing self-concept and to participate in two cultural frames for different purposes without losing identity or loyalty to community (Ogbu, 1992).

Instead, policy-makers had ignored the views and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers. Change had been ruthlessly imposed, and the pride of Gypsy symbolic capital had combined with a strategy of resistance. If this is to change, policy-makers need to become more responsive to the views and aspirations of this community, and in partnership with them, develop the policies that are now required to alleviate their marginalisation as a matter of urgency. These are comments that are applicable not only to the members of the South Forest Traveller community but also to Gypsies and Travellers elsewhere. It would be wrong, therefore, to assert that the highly marginalised Gypsies' and Travellers' exclusion was solely the product of cultural conservatism. A failure to consider more strategic cultural adaptation was part of the chemistry of a problem that had largely been shaped and formed by the demands and perceptions of majority society which translated into a set of policies that were assimilatory and authoritarian. This policy agenda has accentuated the marginalisation that Gypsies and Travellers suffer. Thus the state and majority society should have a central role in changing this exclusion. These are themes more fully explored in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to analyse the educational exclusion that Gypsies and Travellers suffer and the varied responses they demonstrated to that exclusion, including the first detailed case study of a school counter-culture involving Gypsy and Traveller pupils. In the preceding chapter the process of framing a number of conclusions was started; namely the situational nature of ethnicity where boundaries could be drawn to protect what were perceived as group interests and where ethnic identity could act as a coping mechanism in response to exclusion. Some of these points and other conclusions drawn from the research are elaborated on below.

I combined an ethnographic approach with critical research that fused macro and micro analysis with multiple forms of data collection and analysis. This approach enabled me to link local trends with wider processes but also facilitated insights into the multi-dimensional nature of Gypsies' and Travellers' exclusion, probing the part that different spaces, actors, institutions and historical factors played in shaping exclusion. The fieldwork data revealed that many Gypsy and Traveller pupils feel alienated from formal schooling in Key Stages three and four. This alienation stemmed from disillusionment with the curriculum on offer and strained relations with staff and peers, which were a product of acute levels of exclusion and racism. These factors were in part responsible for poor attainment and attendance rates and high levels of disciplinary incidents.

The data revealed that this catalogue of disappointment, failure and marginalisation was not the only dimension to the educational experiences of Gypsies and Travellers. Some did achieve and succeed in the educational system and had in fact reached a form of accommodation with school and embraced what school had to offer. Liégeois speaks of the importance of education for Gypsies and Travellers:

> "Education increases personal autonomy, providing the tools for adapting to a
> changing environment and a means of self-defence from the forces of assimilation;
> it makes it possible to break out of the passive rut of welfarism to play an active

role in cultural and political development." (Liégeois, 1998, 19)

If we accept Liégeois's statement, the poor levels of educational achievement and participation by Gypsies and Travellers in the secondary school system should be the cause for serious concern regarding this group's opportunity and ability to diminish the marginalisation that it suffers. However, my investigation revealed this to be a complex issue with many competing arguments and strategies being adopted by Gypsies and Travellers, as espoused by two of the principal groups the 'mainstreamers' and 'resisters'.

This thesis lends support to the theory that ethnic groups are not rigid or static entities but are capable of change (Hall, 1991; 1992). Some of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils in my investigation were reaching a form of accommodation with mainstream society that was reflected in their greater educational participation. For the 'resisters', greater involvement in school was rejected. This thesis indicates that the conditions that allow Gypsy and Traveller pupils to seek accommodation may be declining as a result of central government policies on education and inclusion which emphasise a 'Social Integration Discourse' at the cost of cultural inclusion. 'Labelling' and a deficit model approach as adopted by some staff in schools also proved counter-productive to raising educational inclusion.

For Gypsies and Travellers who do adapt and integrate into mainstream schooling and society, a symbolic ethnic identity may be created, e.g. a pride in Traveller tradition and practice of rituals but an ethnic identity that can be maintained without having to incorporate it into daily behavioural patterns (Gans, 1995). Derrington and Kendall feel that Gypsy and Traveller pupils who are able to belong to two cultures are able to retain a sense of cultural and familial identity (2004, 179). There is the danger that such pupils are making too many sacrifices and that they or their children will eventually succumb to assimilation, or a form of identity that is in cultural terms practised with a whisper by only being revealed and enacted in the confines of family groups whilst hidden in the wider world of school and work. It was for these reasons that many of the 'mainstreamers' failed to self-ascribe in ethnic monitoring. Thus for Gypsies and Travellers to feel comfortable and confident enough to acknowledge their ethnicity there will be a need for greater acceptance of this group in wider society. Such a development would have implications not only for how schools treat and view Gypsies and Travellers but also the media and other

opinion-forming institutions.

On the other hand, the reaction of the 'resisters' and Travellers on South Forest site could reflect a state of affairs where ethnicity becomes essentialised and conservative because of external threats. Ethnicity and identity for some Gypsies and Travellers could mean retreating into defensive enclaves and could constitute new forms of nationalism or fundamentalism, a process that has been noted with other groups (Hall, 1991). In the research field I observed a growing desire for separate educational provision and a belligerent school counter-culture that the school authorities used to pathologise Gypsy and Traveller pupils disaffected from formal schooling (Chapter Nine). It should be noted, though, that such responses are not the norm. In most schools Gypsies and Travellers suffer their marginalisation in relative isolation and silence and little collective resistance is offered aside from giving up on school and not attending.

This thesis focuses on Gypsies and Travellers at the margins and cannot be presented as being representative of Gypsies and Travellers in their entirety. Despite the periodic bouts of conflict chronicled in this thesis, Gypsies and Travellers in general live a peaceable life (Acton et al., 1997), especially where not subjected to intense marginalisation and racism. At South Forest School the nature of the management regime's authoritarianism and the bonding social capital of the Gypsies and Travellers combined with their numbers provoked a particularly strong pupil counter-culture.

There is a danger that such behaviour will continue to be replicated where Gypsies and Travellers are marginalised and sanctions rather than dialogue predominate. Thus mono-cultural and inflexible education and accommodation policies could in fact accentuate differences with damaging effect. This thesis suggests that policies framed by a moral underclass discourse where pupils and parents are blamed for disaffection are likely to create future tension. Unlike other educational studies on Gypsies and Travellers this thesis has brought into greater focus the impact of economic and spatial exclusion as well as cultural trauma alongside racism as factors that alienate Gypsies and Travellers in school (Chapters Five and Six).

The degree to which the majority of Gypsies and Travellers are willing to adapt is dependent on how conducive are the conditions for change; this involves a determination

of the costs and benefits. A significant number of Gypsies and Travellers are still coming to the conclusion that limited or non-engagement with wider society and institutions like school is preferable to the alternative. New insights are also offered into the scale and impact of the damage being caused to the social, cultural, economic and emotional capital of Gypsies and Travellers at the very margins and notes that a decline in traditional learning practices has not prompted an increase in the level of participation in formal schooling. Spatial exclusion, poor living conditions and a failing 'Traveller economy', were important factors in shaping perceptions of exclusion that impacted on educational participation. These forms of exclusion help 'other' this minority and undermined their confidence and traditional coping mechanisms. The strong social bonding capital of the group was still evident on the South Forest Site but was not strong enough to enable the majority to overcome their difficulties.

Through what Delgado terms a 'call to context' this study offers a 'thick description' of the research field. In this sense it differs from a number of other studies which are more detached, school-focused and concerned with input-output variables. The ethnographic account provided offers a more holistic account of school relations. An ethnographic approach also allows us to explore the role of personal agency in determining actions. In the case of Gypsies and Travellers at the margins, culture and identity appeared to offer valued protection and certainties in a hostile and changing world, which could act to reinforce collective identity. Similarly the nature and intensity of the exclusion and racism that they endured could also have a profound effect on identity, shaping equally intense reactions and responses from the marginalised Gypsies and Travellers.

The study also suggests that gender identity is something that is situational. The female Gypsies and Travellers in the research field had been able to negotiate change to traditional roles, securing new freedoms, which in some cases was reflected in greater accommodation with school. However, males seemed less successful in achieving innovation and instead, for some, accentuated forms of masculinity were canvasses on which they could articulate their resistance and raise confidence and self-esteem. The danger of responses from a section of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils was that 'resistance' was unfocused and misdirected and instead 'scapegoated' other vulnerable minorities.

For many Gypsies and Travellers in the research field school was failing. School mirrored

the monoculturalism of wider society and favoured those with the requisite cultural capital. For those alienated by such a system, school appeared to represent a series of strategies and ploys to pacify, contain and ultimately exclude those labelled as deviant. The tragedy is that schooling and training could provide a key role in reforming traditional coping strategies and revitalising them but this appears to be an opportunity that is being missed. The dangers inherent within this failure are captured in the insightful comments of one elderly Gypsy from the South Forest site:

"Travellers need education: they need to live in the 21st century. I'd like to live how we did when I was a child but we can't go back to those days. Most of them kids, they couldn't cope with that life but they need to be able to cope for this life."

Meaningful dialogue between the Gypsies and Travellers and schools and educational policy-makers may be the first important step in delivering educational inclusion. Dialogue and the creation of 'working relationships' create bonds and most essentially trust, and create the environment to constructively discuss and address the substantive issues in a conflict (Hardin, 2004, 153). In any conflict, successful mediation is often dependent on trusted third parties; here Traveller Education Services may provide an invaluable role. Elsewhere attempts to integrate Gypsies and Travellers have failed because change was imposed upon this group and they were given little say or input into policies that were supposed to benefit them; instead policies led to 'ghettoisation' and welfare dependence. The most effective educational inclusion policies will therefore be those that greatly involve Gypsies and Travellers in their design and implementation, and are based on their aspirations and genuinely reflect where they want to be as communities. This will hopefully reduce a growing desire for educational separation. It should be possible for an inclusive and flexible education system to offer effective learning programmes to a diverse range of groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, within the mainstream education system.

The process of deciding where they want to be will warrant debate amongst Gypsies and Travellers that acknowledges some of the present failings and 'cultural dead ends' and identification of what the barriers are. Thus discussion is needed that crosses gender and generational divides. To facilitate and articulate such debate and its conclusions the formation of new structures and networks may need to be considered and participation in

decision-making forums countenanced, which in the past have been shunned. There may also be a need for new forms of leadership to emerge that are more inclusive and versed in modern campaigning as opposed to the continuing predominance of a 'charismatic leadership'. Such ideological emancipation will necessitate a better understanding of how the structures of power oppress and exclude them, leading to the forging of alliances with other marginalised groups and thus averting the negativism of dual closure towards others at the margins but instead offer the possibility of broad coalitions of the excluded, that might form effective empowerment networks (Gilchrist, 2004). Thus 'magical resistance' (unfocused responses to exclusion) such as the conflict between a teacher and pupil, tension between minority groups, self-exclusion and non-participation and the other forms of resistance that anger and a sense of injustice can articulate but which fail to deliver meaningful change, will be transformed into actions that pose a greater challenge to the hegemony of dominant society.

An inclusive and flexible social policy regime will clearly have implications for Gypsy and Traveller identity. If unfettered by external restraint and pressure then Gypsies and Travellers will be free to make choices and adaptations that will enable them to retain what they consider to be the best of their culture in a way that maintains and enhances economic, cultural and social capital. Such a process will create a strong and viable form of identity which can effectively challenge and counter discrimination. For some Travellers, this ideal policy context would reflect traditional aspirations and bolster cultural practices such as self-employment, entrepreneurialism, nomadism and dwelling in caravans. At the same time, constructive and beneficial relations with the state and wider society will facilitate intercultural dialogue and partnership, creating an environment that is conducive for new and innovative forms of adaptation. This process would witness an ever greater number of Gypsies and Travellers access higher education and enter into professional occupations in a form that would enable them to retain their Gypsy and Traveller identity. If social policy moves in the opposite direction then the danger of assimilation will increase but also conflict and resistance leading for some to greater levels of distancing and the formation of rigid and 'persistent' identities.

The former Czech President and human rights campaigner Vaclav Havel described the treatment of Roma as a 'litmus test' for civil society and democracy (Guardian 7th June, 2000). This thesis suggests that educational and social policy in the UK is lacking when

matched against this test and the level of inclusion offered to those at the margins is a cause for great concern. The issue of Gypsies and Travellers has clearly climbed the political agenda for both positive and negative reasons and policy is in a state of flux. The coming years will present a critical challenge for Gypsies and Travellers. The importance of that challenge for society in educational terms has been captured in the comments of one member of Her Majesty's School Inspectorate "If they get it right for Travellers they will get it right for all children" (Waterson, 1997, 142). It is hoped that this thesis offers some valid insights into the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers that will inform future educational and social policy and help in some small way to deliver meaningful reform and change

Throughout the thesis it has been demonstrated that spatial exclusion combined with substandard accommodation were central factors contributing towards social exclusion. It is imperative, therefore, that the Government not only delivers on its pledge to provide the new sites that are needed but also ensures that they have the facilities, and enjoy locations, that facilitate inclusion. Delays in delivery, the opposition of councils, the media and wider community do not indicate the grounds for much optimism for these objectives being achieved (Richardson and Ryder, 2009).

Where Next for Gypsies and Travellers?

In light of the important conclusions that have arisen from this thesis I will reflect on emerging educational policy and its potential impact upon Gypsies and Travellers. Although the research was focused on a small sample of schools and Gypsies and Travellers, Gillborn is right to conclude that a micro-approach can highlight the effectiveness of macro-policy on schools (Gillborn, 1995, 94). The fieldwork was conducted during the period 2002 to 2003. Since this point a number of new policies and guidance on education that impact on Gypsies and Travellers have come to fruition. The following section seeks to determine their prospects for raising the educational inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in light of the research findings in this thesis.

Education is a key tool for New Labour in raising social inclusion (Levitas, 1998). Thus it is not surprising that government policy perceives formal education as a central tool in assisting Gypsies and Travellers:

"Raising the achievement of Gypsy and Traveller pupils is the responsibility of everyone within the education system and a significant measure of the effectiveness of policies to combat educational and social exclusion." (DfES, 2003, 3)

The Labour Government has increased the pool of funds that Traveller Education Services can secure (Clark and Greenfields, 2006, 217). However, by placing funding in the Vulnerable Children's Grant the possibility is left open for Traveller Education Services' funding to be cut as local authorities might choose to prioritise other areas of work. Greater stability will be brought to service provision and planning if this grant is ring-fenced. The three Traveller Education Services within this study all complained of serious under-funding, which impeded their basic strategic work across boroughs. There are fears, though, concerning the very existence of Traveller Education Services. The Department for Children, Families and Schools is promoting a policy it refers to as 'mainstreaming', where Traveller Education Services are encouraged to withdraw from giving direct support to pupils and instead encourage and support mainstream school and local authority departments to include Travellers in the work that is focused towards other socially and educationally disadvantaged pupils.

In a recent discussion with a Traveller Education Service coordinator with twenty years' experience, the teacher expressed a fear that some local authorities may be over-zealous in mainstreaming and use it as a means to downgrade the funding and status of Traveller Education Services. The loss of expertise and understanding could, it was argued, lead to Gypsies and Travellers in fact being neglected in the mainstream. I would argue that involving Traveller Education Services at a more strategic level presents a better deployment of resources, and I believe the findings of my research present a strong case for the continued need for Traveller Education Services, as their expertise and ability to bridge divergent communities and cultures is much needed to help service providers understand a highly marginalised and much misunderstood minority. In contrast to this point, Traveller Education Services cannot, as they are in some cases, be perceived as having sole 'ownership' of this issue; responsibility has to be shared with the community itself but also schools and mainstream service providers.

The monitoring of attendance and participation for minorities such as Gypsies and

Travellers and the development of strategies to improve these variables are also viewed as central components of a policy to raise educational inclusion. The Government has proposed a number of targeted actions to address Gypsy and Traveller educational exclusion. To this end schools must analyse data on attendance and attainment and other variables and develop strategies to guide school policy (Schools Minister Stephen Twigg, MP, Speech to NATT, 2005, 4). These intentions with regards to Gypsies and Travellers were more clearly articulated in the 2003 Ofsted report 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils'. The report states:

> "Raising the profile of race equality within the school will lead to more effective practice for all Gypsy Travellers. Ethnic monitoring and data collection at school level is fundamental in providing the means for schools to analyse the impact of their policies and procedures on Gypsy Traveller pupils. This analysis enables resources to be targeted most effectively, raises expectations and ensures accountability. Successful implementation and monitoring of schools' Race Equality Policy will ensure that schools fulfil their duty to promote good race relations." (DfES, 2003, 6)

As is indicated at the end of this quote the requirement to gather and monitor data is bolstered by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which stipulates that public bodies, including schools, must ensure equality of provision, eliminate unlawful discrimination and carry out impact assessments on the effect of proposed policies and decisions that could have an impact for all ethnic minorities including Gypsies/Roma and Irish Travellers (CRE, 2006, 68).

One of the principal tools employed to ensure that schools collect and monitor data and correspondingly develop strategies to raise Gypsy and Traveller inclusion is through school inspections. Guidance for school inspection teams issued by Ofsted: 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion' (2000) declares that assessing educational inclusion for minorities such as Gypsies and Travellers is an important part of the general inspection process. Schools need to ensure pupils get a 'fair deal' and this relates to: the opportunity to learn without interference or disruption; the respect they have from teachers; attention given to their well being; whether they and their parents are happy with the school; whether any groups are over-represented in exclusion rates; and, where there are variations in behaviour, whether there are any pupils suffering from discrimination and racial harassment. To this end schools need to demonstrate that they understand how well

different groups are doing at school and take steps to ensure particular groups are not disadvantaged and that discrimination is addressed. (Ofsted, 2000) Inspection teams are instructed as follows:

"You must focus your enquiries on significant groups of pupils who may not be benefiting enough from their education. Find out all you can about them and their experiences of school. This means talking to these pupils, their teachers and, where possible, their parents as well as making full use of observational evidence and data." (Ofsted, 2000, 6).

Despite the serious breakdown in relations between South Forest School and Gypsies and Travellers in the catchment area, the alarming rate of school exclusion and the fact there had been serious disturbances in the school, South Forest School received praise in the Ofsted inspection report carried out in the school in 2001, in terms of its work with ethnic minorities. This appears to be because the inspection team had been impressed by tokenistic gestures such as a display case with bow-top wagons, but the inspection process had failed to probe more deeply into the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers within the school. In part because the school had not used collected data on attendance, exclusion and attainment to create a detailed profile of this group, and the inspection team had not sought this. The development of such a profile would have raised serious concerns by the inspection team.

It is a matter of concern that, as I have outlined already, the success of inspections detecting discrepancies is in part dependent on the accuracy of Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data. The PLASC records information such as attendance and attainment for Gypsies and Travellers and other minorities. The accuracy of PLASC can be seriously compromised by the failure of many Gypsies and Travellers to self-ascribe. In my survey, as many as three-quarters of the Gypsy and Traveller school intake were failing to self-ascribe. Finding means by which more Gypsies and Travellers can be encouraged to self-ascribe may therefore be imperative. Schools will have a role to play in this process in explaining the significance of this data when completing such forms and making participants feel confident and safe in revealing their ethnicity. Ultimately, greater tolerance and understanding in the wider community may be pivotal in increasing confidence and the desire to self-ascribe.

The danger of inspections and schools not being alerted to Gypsy and Traveller educational inclusion may be reduced by a new reform. The DCSF has introduced changes in the targets designed to raise attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4 for underperforming groups. The new targets will take effect for the tests and examinations taking place in summer 2010, for which Local Authorities had to set the targets by 31 January 2009. Seven underperforming groups have been identified including Gypsies/Roma and Irish Travellers. For Gypsy, Roma and Traveller of Irish heritage pupils, Local Authorities must set targets where there are 3 or more such pupils in the age cohort, across the Local Authority area. For all other groups, they need only set targets where there 30 or more such pupils. The smaller number fixed for Gypsies/Roma/Irish Travellers should help ensure that a failure to self ascribe does not lead to educational exclusion failing to be detected.

The Macpherson report (1999) and the amended Race Relations Act 2000 which was prompted by this report perhaps mark the high point of New Labour's record on race. According to some commentators the issue of race has become conspicuously absent in the mindset of New Labour. According to Gillborn, at the start of the Labour administration there was a 'naive multiculturalism' which has given way to an 'aggressive majoritarianism', namely strident support for integrationist and assimilatory policies (Gillborn, 2008, 75 - 81). This process could be accelerated by the proposed Single Equalities Act that will create one single equality duty that governs the various equalities strands, including race. Strong concern has been expressed at the draft proposals contained in the Discrimination Law Review. Critics argue that these will weaken existing duties by creating a duty that is proportionate (Fredman and Spencer, 2007; Gillborn, 2008, p 131-2). Concern has also been expressed over a failure to guarantee improved monitoring, guidance and enforcement - the lack of which has been one of the chief flaws of the existing Race Equality Duty (Ryder and Solly, 2007). Improved guidance, monitoring, and where necessary, enforcement would make race equality documents in many schools 'living documents' at the fore of school planning and reflection, and could encourage schools like North Hill, West Lake and South Forest to give greater consideration to vulnerable minorities like Gypsies and Travellers.

Recent initiatives also indicate a desire to improve dialogue with the parents of Gypsy and Traveller pupils and increase parental involvement in the affairs of school. The then

education minister Lord Adonis, in a letter to Lord Avebury stated:

> "Parents (Gypsy and Traveller) have an important role to play in supporting teachers and schools in providing a broadly-based education for their children. Parents should have high expectations for their children and motivate them to develop their range of intelligence and skills. We hope to encourage parents (Gypsy and Traveller) to become Community Learning Promoters. They will be in the best position to encourage other parents and children from all the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller communities to embrace education in school." (Letter from Lord Adonis to Lord Avebury, 14th August, 2006).

Greater parental engagement and participation in formal schooling will in part be influenced by how thorough and extensive consultation is in developing new policies and profiles of the educational aims and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers and for emerging policies to match those aspirations. To date, consultation between the Department for Children, Families and Schools, and Gypsy and Traveller groups, has tended to be low-key and has relied on informal and ad hoc meetings with community members, as opposed to a more formalised debate including Gypsy and Traveller representative groups. This is in contrast to the dialogue that has taken place between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), now Communities and Local Government (CLG), over the issue of accommodation. This consultation and dialogue between the ODPM/CLG and Gypsies and Travellers has involved a series of regular meetings and discussion and opportunities to input into the formulation of new policies, consultation which has enabled the leadership of the Gypsy and Traveller community to understand new reforms. In the opinion of a number of campaigners, it has facilitated a greater sense of ownership and support for new accommodation policies. There are indication though that the DCSF will increase it dialogue with Gypsies and Travellers. In a debate in the Lords on the 21st July 2008 on the Education and Skills Bill the then minister at the DCSF Lord Adonis stated in an exchange with Lord Avebury:

> "........... officials from my department are working to set up a group drawn from these communities that will meet to discuss ongoing and future education policy and to ensure that specific challenges that may be encountered by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in these areas are addressed. It is envisaged that this group will meet twice yearly and will work to inform policy so that ascription and attainment among these pupils will be raised. It will also seek to institutionalise the kind of regular discussions that the noble Lord and I have had in recent years which have led to worthwhile improvements, although it is

important that these improvements are embedded in the normal machinery of my department and local authorities". (Lords Hansard 21 July 2008 : Column 1633)

Clearly there is trepidation on the part of Gypsy and Traveller pupils about the degree of trust they are prepared to invest in secondary schools. This thesis suggests that the development of trust and involvement in decision-making processes could be a long and difficult process where extreme levels of hostility and mistrust exist between school and home. This was illustrated dramatically in the case of South Forest School where poor relations resulted in three major disturbances in the school and high levels of pupil exclusion. The fieldwork also showed that taking up roles within the school could be fraught with danger as was demonstrated in the case of South Forest School when staff expressed anxiety about a Classroom Assistant from the Gypsy community possibly overhearing staff discuss Gypsy and Traveller pupils in the classroom. This anxiety caused tensions in the operation of this innovative educational initiative. Another impediment to greater engagement with Gypsy and Traveller parents is that for many, formal meetings and educational reports and the other paraphernalia of being a school governor or on the school council is something that would be strange and alien, a factor aggravated by the poor literacy levels of many Gypsy and Traveller parents. Thus the Government's desire to see a greater sense of Gypsy and Traveller pupil and parent involvement in formal schooling may be a difficult goal to achieve.

Improved communication could be a vital component in reducing conflict and tension as my fieldwork indicated that these problems often arose because of mutual misunderstandings, and people reaching the wrong conclusions as a consequence of these misconceptions. However, schools may prefer to adopt more authoritarian measures in their contacts with Gypsy and Traveller parents, resorting to the use of parenting orders and other sanctions increasingly available to tackle pupil misbehaviour and non-attendance. Such measures have been heavily promoted as part of the Government's 'Respect Agenda' designed to tackle, in school and the wider community, what is considered deviant and anti-social behaviour (Home Office, 2006). Within the schools that I observed there was a high level use of punitive sanctions against Gypsy and Traveller pupils for perceived misbehaviour. Two of the local authorities in my survey were also moving towards a more robust policy of prosecution of Gypsy and Traveller parents for

non-attendance. The adoption of such measures may fail to address the deeper causes of Gypsy and Traveller pupil exclusion and do no more than intensify existing tensions. The perception of some of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils and parents, in particular the 'resisters', was that such measures were unfairly directed against them, and this reinforced perceptions of unfairness and exclusion at the hands of the school authorities.

The Government's most recent initiatives to raise Gypsy and Traveller educational inclusion have centred on a number of pilot projects to identify and disseminate good practice. One initiative involves five local authorities, funded by the Department for Education and Skills, holding seminars on good practice on ethnic monitoring data regarding Gypsies and Travellers that will feed into good practice guidance. The Government is currently using data gathered from a range of initiatives in a national pilot project that commenced in 2003 and has subsequently been used to develop a national programme of work to support local authorities and schools with large numbers of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. This was launched in thirteen local authorities, and fifty schools, from autumn 2006. The programme is being coordinated by two national advisers, within the primary and secondary national strategies. Furthermore, schools are being encouraged to develop quality distance learning opportunities for children who travel through the e-learning and mobility project ELAMP4. In 2006/7 the Department for Education will work with 26 local authorities to provide laptops and data-cards for travelling pupils (Letter from Andrew Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, to Lord Avebury 14th August, 2006).

This statement, though, does not indicate any desire for a more fundamental review of the curriculum. This is a cause of concern as the investigation outlined in this thesis found evidence of widespread disillusionment with what was a largely static, teacher-centred and exam-focused syllabus and curriculum; disenchantment that resulted in poor behaviour and attendance and the conclusion that traditional in-family socialisation practices were superior. A more vocational and discovery orientated curriculum is still a major desire of Gypsy and Traveller parents for their children at the onset of adolescence. In spite of this, it would appear that the prospects of vocationalism beyond the limited opportunities currently on offer in Key Stage Four remain bleak. The Education and Skills Act (2008) indicates that a vocational component of the curriculum will continue to commence only at

the start of Key Stage Four, when pupils are aged fourteen.

The late opportunities for vocationalism will continue to be to the disadvantage of Gypsies and Travellers as many are 'dropping out' of school at the start of Key Stage Three because of their disengagement with the curriculum. These conclusions were confirmed by the observations of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in my investigation. Hope of curricular reform, though, is evident in a series of recent statements by Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Education, who has indicated that a quarter of the school day could be freed up in a curriculum that is less prescriptive and creates greater independence, personalised teaching and flexibility (Hansard, col 1321, 10th July, 2007; see also TES, 13th July [editorial]). These reforms could create a syllabus and learning experience that Gypsies and Travellers are more willing to subscribe to. However, Balls has indicated that those pupils who are having difficulty with English and Maths should spend the extra time on these subjects. On account of the large proportion of Gypsy and Traveller pupils with special educational needs, it is likely that many will receive this extra tuition. If such classes utilise static and unimaginative approaches, they will fail to achieve their goal, as was the case with the special literacy and numeracy class at South Forest School unless sufficient resources and skilled staff are made available.

It may be the case that other central features of the Government's educational reforms further alienate and disengage Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It could be to the detriment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils that the Government in its 2005 White Paper 'Higher Standards for Schools' continues to advocate and encourage streaming by academic ability (HM Government, 2005, 4.36). The investigation described in this thesis discovered that streaming could produce 'sink classes' at the bottom of the streaming system where motivation and support for the curriculum were low and, as a consequence, noise levels and challenges to staff were high. Some teachers tried to exert control through the use of formal and static teaching methods which in turn created further educational alienation. The investigation found many Gypsy and Traveller pupils to be located in such classes.

Further problems could be created by the Government's Academy programme. These schemes provide schools and their governing bodies with greater autonomy and virtual independence from local authorities' strategic management (Chapter Three). These

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schemes were intended for failing schools yet such has been the government's determination in the promotion of these reforms that schools such as West Lake School and South Forest School, which had received positive Ofsted reports, were proposed for academy status by the local authorities. As this thesis demonstrates, the impact of this proposed reform, and resistance by the management of the South Forest School, who championed their own academy plans for a citizenship academy, rather than a faith academy, which the local authority favoured, created a serious diversion of attention away from fundamental problems that the school was suffering in terms of its relationship with Gypsies and Travellers. A race equality impact assessment was conducted by South Forest Council into the impact that this proposal would have on Gypsies and Travellers. The assessment concluded that some pupils might have to travel greater distances in future, implying that some would not be attracted to the new academy. The assessment declared that the closure would not discriminate against any minorities but there were some areas that warranted sensitive action. Point 10.2 of the assessment states:

> "The impact of the changes on the local Traveller community in (South Forest)should be monitored carefully and additional support made available to ensure that, if longer journeys are necessary for individual students, this does not lead to a problem of attendance."

Given the faith academy was to be largely Anglican and that many of the Gypsies subscribed to evangelical Christianity, it was likely that attendance at the new academy could be fraught with tension. Moreover, if the new management regime at this school, and others like them, inherit the perceived negative attitudes to Gypsies and Travellers that the previous headteacher displayed, Gypsies and Travellers may find it more difficult to gain admission to such schools given the greater freedom of manoeuvre schools will enjoy in the selection process (National Union of Teachers, 2007). Furthermore, academy schools are said to have an exclusion rate three times that of neighbouring schools (Guardian, 'Academy Exclusion is Selection by Backdoor', 10th July 2007). Again this could have negative implications for vulnerable minorities like Gypsies and Travellers who are over-represented in school exclusions. A key safeguard against these dangers would be to ensure parental and local authority representation and input into the governance and coordination of academy schools.

The Government has recommended reference be made to Gypsy and Traveller culture within the curriculum (Ofsted, 1999; 2003). Such measures may be no more than tokenistic half-measures indicative of a superficial and culturally essentialist form of multiculturalism. Not so much 'somosas and sarees' but 'bow-top wagons and Gypsy campfires'. In 2008 Lord Adonis announced that June would be Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (Traveller Times, 2008). The month, like Black History Month, will promote Gypsy and Traveller culture in schools. This may provide a valuable opportunity for all pupils to explore this culture in a meaningful sense. More generally the curriculum is still largely mono-cultural and inflexible to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, as demonstrated by the continual promotion of a largely academic national curriculum that is driven by academic targets and league tables (Cullingford and Oliver, 2001, 3). It is also a curriculum that at present offers limited opportunities for vocational study. Conformity to this curriculum could be imposed on Gypsy and Traveller families through sanctions and threats of prosecution as opposed to persuasion.

The coercive trend outlined may be accelerated as a result of further reform that is being proposed. The Government intends to increase the education leaving age to eighteen, and to see all adolescents engaged in academic educational training or vocational apprenticeships (Hansard, 26th July, 2007 vol 1036). This programme will be obligatory and non-compliance could lead to prosecution. This reform could cause further dissension between Gypsies and Travellers and the authorities as it could be at odds with traditional Gypsy and Traveller adolescent socialisation practices that practice in-family learning, training and employment experiences. Furthermore, within the Gypsy and Traveller community there are still many that marry in their teens, probably necessitating the need for higher income levels than might be derived from government-sponsored apprenticeships. One option would be to formalise traditional in-family work experiences so that they can be classified as officially sanctioned training courses. An obstacle to this is the informality of some Traveller economic practices that operate in the 'informal economy'. In my research, attempts to transfer extended work experience in Key Stage Four to Traveller family businesses met this stumbling block, as any organisation offering recognised work experience must be a registered and a bone fide concern. As Robert Hill has noted, the essential ingredient is devising the right curriculum that motivates learners to participate, therefore raising the education leaving age to 18 together with an element of

compulsion could be unworkable and an irrelevance (Times Educational Supplement, 'Vital Diploma Programme Must not be Allowed to Fail', 27th July, 2007).

The research field in this thesis and a survey of government reforms could lead the observer to conclude that school policy continues to present a series of contradictions in which policies designed to increase inclusion and flexibility and to tackle discrimination are undermined by policies that have the opposite effect. For many Gypsies and Travellers, school is becoming increasingly inflexible, and for those who have not been persuaded to embrace the ethos of school, the future seems to offer little hope due to the greater prospect of sanction and prosecution, which could further strain relations. The chances of challenging such a pessimistic assessment of the policy drive, and implications of Labour's educational policy agenda for Gypsies and Travellers, are tied to the wider social policy debate on society, multiculturalism and social inclusion.

Chapter Two described how Trevor Phillips attacked multiculturalism by claiming it created cultural enclaves which in fact nurtured racial discontent and challenges to society's central values. Instead, Phillips has promoted the 'integration agenda', which advocates that all minorities should subscribe and adhere to a set of central values and beliefs, which are at the core of our society.

A diverse and plural society should provide recognition and space for minorities to practise their culture within the rule of law. There will be occasions within that society when there is criticism of values and practices of minorities and the host nation's culture but such debate should preclude prescription and emotive exhortations to conform to notions of 'Britishness'. Core values need to be founded upon universal values such as equality and freedom of speech; these values should apply to all cultures. These are broad and abstract notions; a more measurable framework is needed to provide a point of reference to such debates. That framework is provided in the European Convention for Human Rights, which has been transferred into the UK legal system through the 1998 Human Rights Act. In a pluralistic society there is unity and diversity in public life; communities and identities overlap and are interdependent and even develop common features. In a pluralistic society the rights and freedoms in the private and public sphere are protected and dialogue is promoted so that in the words of the landmark Parekh Report a 'community of

communities' is created (Richardson, 2000, 44). This is preferable to a liberal model of diversity where a mono-cultural public realm holds the danger of undermining the latter and diminishing intercultural debate. A public realm where minorities can achieve a sense of ownership and recognition from society's central institutions such as school can create the unity and cohesion that society requires.

Attempts, though, to distil core values into a rigid codex that governs in an authoritarian manner all forms of thought and action, should be resisted, as should claims that some cultures have more of a monopoly over perceived core values than others. Such action will be especially counter-productive if claims are made that certain traits and values should be adhered to because they are those of the indigenous majority. This will do no more than alienate minorities and stifle intercultural debate and the formation of consensus. A diverse society will undoubtedly produce points of tension and actions and situations that can be problematic but rather than pathologise or attribute these factors to cultural traits, sight should not be lost of many of the primary causes. Increased asylum is caused by economic exclusion, persecution and war, and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism has been fuelled by western interventionist policies in the Middle East. Unauthorised developments and encampments and rejection of secondary school and inter-ethnic strife by Gypsies and Travellers, like those in South Forest, are not the consequence of inherent anti-social traits or criminality, but a product of state policies of marginalisation and the profound racism that exists within mainstream society towards this minority. Rather than teaching 'British values' in schools, or promoting oaths of allegiance, a prerequisite of a successful diverse society is dialogue, and reasoned analysis of tension and a body of law that enshrines and protects basic equalities and freedoms.

Appendix

Tables Relating To South Forest School And Gypsy Pupils (2003)

Table 1 -Breakdown by Gender

Percentage of Attendance	Boys	Girls
90% +	0	4
80 – 90%	3	3
70 – 80%	2	2
60 – 70%	0	0
50 – 60%	1	1
40 – 50%	0	0
30 – 40 %	0	0
Non-Attenders	8	6

Table 2- Attendance Amongst Gypsy Pupils – in Housing and the Traveller Site

Attendance Percentage	Housed Gypsies	Gypsies on Traveller Site
90 – 100 %	4	0
80 – 90 %	4	1
70 – 80 %	2	3
60 – 70 %	0	0
50 – 60 %	0	0
40 – 50 %	0	0
Below 40%	0	0
Non-Attendance	3	13

Table 3 - A Breakdown Of Other Variables

S = Special Educational Needs Statement (Profound learning difficulties)

SEN = Moderate to Major Learning Difficulties

B/S = Behavioural and Social Difficulties

HOU = Housed

SITE = Local Authority Traveller Site Occupancy

GYP = Declared ethnicity as Gypsy on school monitoring formatting

WB = Declared ethnicity on ethnic minority forms as White British

EXC = Excluded from school on a fixed term period (suspension)

F/M = Free school meal

U/M = Unknown meal status

S/P = Single parent

G = Girl

B = Boy

	S	SEN	B/S	HOU	SITE	GYP	WB	EXC	F/M	U/M	S/P
Total	1	18	8	14	18	8	24	36	16	10	12
Girls		6G	2G			4G		14 G			
Boys	1B	12B	6B			4B		22B			

Table 4 - The Number of Exclusions Amongst Gypsy Pupils and Reasons

Total = 36

Aggression	Assault on Staff	Unacceptable Behaviour	Insolence	Disobedience
27 Total	1 Total	2 Total	2 Total	4 Total
20 B	1 B	1 B		2 B
7 G		1 G	2 G	2 G

Aggression = Threatening/bullying behaviour/emotional outbursts of anger to staff
Pupil Assault = A physical attack on a staff member
Unacceptable Behaviour = Disruptive and unruly behaviour in lessons and around the school
Insolence = Rudeness towards staff and failure to follow instructions.
Disobedience = Refusal to follow instructions
G = Girl
B = Boy

Many of the incidents that have led to exclusion have involved more than one misdemeanour, aggression has been accompanied by acts such as swearing, insolence or unacceptable behaviour. In the above table I have tried to indicate the primary reason for exclusion.

Table 5 - The Number of Recorded Incidents in the Conduct Log for Poor Behaviour and Types of Misbehaviour Allegedly Demonstrated

Total = 160

U/B = Unacceptable behaviour, which can involve disruptive and unruly behaviour in lessons and around the school.
SWE = Swearing
R/INS = Rude and Insolent Behaviour
N/U = No school uniform
L = Late
V = Vandalism
AG/T = Aggression to a teacher
AGG/FI = Fighting and aggression to other pupils
RAC = Racism
G = Girl
B = Boy

	U/B	SWE	R/INS	N/U	L	V	AG/T	AGG/FI	RAC
Total	72	8	9	4	6	1	13	41	4
Boys	51 B	2 B	6 B	2 B	3 B	1 B	9 B	32 B	2 B
Girls	21 G	6 G	3 G	2 G	3 G		4 G	9 G	2 G

Table 6 - South Forest School Pupils

Year Group and Gender M/F	Attendance	Learning Status	Declared Ethnicity	Exclusions and serious disciplinary incidents	Accommodation	Adopted Strategy
1F Y7	N A	SEN	WB	-	House	R
2M Y7	76%	SEN	WB	1 E 3 SDI	House	R
3M Y7	52%	SEN Statemented	WB	-	Site	S A
4F Y7	72%	-	G/I	2 E	Site	R
5F Y7	82%	-	G/I	4 E 3SDI	Site	R
6M Y7	NA*	SEN	G/I	-	Site	R
7M Y8	83%	SEN	WB	1SDI	Site	S A
8M Y8	NA	SEN	WB	1 SDI 1 E	Site	R
9M Y8	NA*	SEN	WB	2 SDI	Site	R
10M Y8	79%	SEN	WB	E 2 SDI 8	House	R
11F Y9	NA	SEN	G/I	E 4 SDI 16	House	R
12F Y9	86%	-	WB	-	House	M
13F Y9	96%	SEN	WB	1SDI	House	M
14F	92%	-	WB	-	House	M

Year Group and Gender M/F	Attendance	Learning Status	Declared Ethnicity	Exclusions and serious disciplinary incidents	Accommodation	Adopted Strategy
Y9						
15M Y9	NA *	SEN	G/I	E 4 3 SDI	Site	R
16F Y9	87%	-	WB	-	House	M
17M Y9	NA		WB	E4 23 SDI	Site	M
18M Y9	NA*	SEN	WB	3 SDI	House	M
19F Y9	95%	-	WB	-	House	M
20F Y9	55%	-	G/I	4 SDI	Site	R
21F Y9	NA	SEN	WB	-	Site	R
22F Y9	NA	SEN	WB	E 1	Site	R
23F Y10	NA	-	WB	E 3 SDI 8	House	R
24M Y10	NA	-	G/I	E 1 SDI 4	Site	R
25M Y10	87%	SEN	WB	SDI 2	House	A
26M Y10	NA	SEN	WB	E 4 SDI 37	Site	R
27M Y10	NA	SEN	WB	SDI 16	Site	R
28M Y10	89%	-	WB	-	House	SA

Year Group and Gender M/F	Attendance	Learning Status	Declared Ethnicity	Exclusions and serious disciplinary incidents	Accommodation	Adopted Strategy
29M Y11	NA	SEN	G/I	E 5 SDI 4	Site	R
30 M Y11	NA	SEN	WB	E 1 SDI 1	Site	R
31F Y11	92%	-	WB	-	House	M
32F Y11	78%	-	WB	-	Site	M

NA* = Had stopped attending mainstream lessons but were attending (intermittently) special numeracy and literacy classes.

F – Female

M - Male

Table 7 - West Lake School Pupils

Year Group and Gender M/F	Attendance	Learning Status	Declared Ethnicity	Exclusions and Serious Disciplinary Incidents	Accommodation	Adopted Strategy
1M Y7	BA	SEN	G/I	6 SDI 1 E	House	R
2M Y8	BA	SEN	WB	5 SDI	House	SA
3M Y8	Good	-	WB	1 SDI	House	M
4M Y8	BA	SEN	WB	12 SDI 1 E	House	R
5M Y9	BA	SEN	WB	16 SDI 3 E	House	SA
6M Y9	BA	SEN	G/I	6 SDI 1 E	House	R
7F Y11	Good	SEN	WB	2 SDI	House	M

Table 8 - North Hill School Pupils

Year Group and Gender M/F	Attendance	Learning Status	Declared Ethnicity	Exclusion and Serious Disciplinary Incidents	Accommodation	Adopted Strategy
1F Y7	BA	SEN	WB	-	House	M
2M Y8	BA	SEN	G/I	9 SDI 2 E	House	R
3M Y9	BA	SEN	G/I	5 SDI 1 E	House	R
4F Y9	BA	-	WB	-	House	M
5M Y10	BA	-	WB	-	House	M
6M Y10	BA	SEN	WB	2 SDI	House	M

Key

SEN = Special Educational Needs
WB = White British
I = Irish
G/I = Gypsy/Irish Traveller
BA = Below Average
NA = Non-attender
E = Excluded
SDI = Serious Disciplinary Incident

Table 9 - Department of Education and Skills Performance Tables 2003 for South Forest, North Hill and West Lake Schools

South Forest School

Number of pupils	872
Special educational needs (not statemented)	34.2% - 298
Statemented special educational needs	2.4% - 21
Percentage of half days lost due to authorised absence	8.6%
Percentage of half days lost due to unauthorised absence	6.3%
GCSE results (5+ A-C)	25% Borough = 36% National = 53%

North Hill School

Number of pupils	1,275
Special educational needs (not statemented)	36.3% - 463
Statemented special educational needs	2.1% - 27
Percentage of half days lost due to authorised absence	6%
Percentage of half days lost due to unauthorised absence	3.7%
GCSE results	37% Borough = 39% National = 53%

West Lake School

Number of pupils	953
Special educational needs (not statemented)	22.6% - 215
Statemented special educational needs	2.3% - 22
Percentage of half days lost due to authorised absence	6.4%
Percentage of half days lost due to unauthorised absence	4.2%
GCSE results	11% Borough = 39% National = 53%

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