

The University of Hull

**Ethical Narratives in Contested
Landscapes:**

***The Implementation and Experience of
Public Policy Values for Traveller Caravan
Sites***

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by

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Abstract

This thesis presents an interdisciplinary approach to investigate decision-making in English local authorities, through an ethnographic, narrative framework. Based on fieldwork conducted between 2009 and 2010, the thesis explores several families' experiences of local government policymaking. The thesis provides a new perspective on the constructions of communities and identities through policy design and implementation. The research has also paid close attention to local government practitioners, the organisations they work within and the roles they have played in the lives of the aforementioned families. The thesis shows how the practitioners' decision-making creates an ethical narrative, which in itself can tell a story of how social and physical worlds are built.

The thesis contributes to the community-based perspectives in public administration literature through the analysis of narratives and community identity construction.

Employing the methodological approach of *Critical Discourse Analysis*, also involving aesthetic observations, the research shows how policymaking itself serves as a story-telling practice within local government. Making use of Traveller caravan sites as a stage, the research illustrates stories of building, managing and evicting sites, as a way to discuss localised power, citizenship and value-systems in present-day England.

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This thesis is dedicated to the families who opened their homes to me and told me their stories, and especially to Julie Brown for her friendship, wisdom and honesty.

Abbreviations

CCC: Cambridgeshire County Council
CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis
CHLG: Conservatives' Home Local Government
CRE: Commission for Racial Equality
CREDS: Cambridge Racial Equality and Diversity Service
DCLG: Department of Communities and Local Government
DoE: Department of the Environment
EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission
ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council
FDC: Fenland District Council
FFT: Friends, Families, and Travellers
HUBS: Hull University Business School
ITMB: Irish Traveller Movement in Britain
LA: Local Authority
MORI: Market and Opinion Research Institute
ODPM: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RSS: Regional Spatial Strategy
SCDC: South Cambridgeshire District Council
TLO: Traveller Liaison Officer
TLRP: Traveller Law Reform Project
TTO: Traveller Times Online
UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UKPGA: United Kingdom Public General Acts
VOR: Voice of Roma

Research Participants

In order to protect the anonymity of the research participants for this research, each has been given a pseudonym in the text, as shown below:

Aunty: Julia's aunt who owns and runs her own caravan sites.

Cathy: Resident of an unauthorised pitch.

Charlie: Resident of a LA pitch and Julia's father.

Craig: Resident of a private caravan site, Dennis' father and Julia's neighbour.

Dennis: Resident of a private caravan site and Julia's neighbour.

Educational Professional 1 (EP1): Educational liaison officer for an anti-racism organisation affiliated with a county council.

Educational Professional 2 (EP2): A young primary school teacher.

Educational Professional 3 (EP3): Educational liaison officer, for an anti-racism organisation affiliated with a county council.

Emma: Resident of a private caravan site, married to Dennis and Julia's neighbour.

Jake: Member of an advocacy group for Romani, Pavee and New Age communities.

Julia: Gatekeeper to caravan-dwelling families interviewed.

Local Councillor 1 (LC1): Head of a district council.

Local Councillor 2 (LC2): MP for one of the districts featured in fieldwork.

The Murphys: Married couple and residents of an unauthorised pitch.

Policy Writer 1 (PW1): Equality and diversity officer and policy drafter for a district council.

Policy Writer 2 (PW2): Community officer and policy drafter for a county council.

Ruby: Informant of Romani descent who grew up on caravan sites.

Shelly: Resident of a private caravan site and Julia's daughter.

Shirley: Shoe-shop owner.

Traveller Liaison Officer 1 (TLO 1): TLO for a district council.

Traveller Liaison Officer 2 (TLO 2): Head of a traveller liaison team for a district council.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Caravan Site

The first thing one notices as they enter an English caravan site is the concrete. This is the case for most local authority (LA) sites built for “Traveller Gypsy” families (see appendix a, figure 1), although not necessarily applicable to private sites reserved for holiday caravans often found at coastal resorts (see appendix a, figure 2), which are mostly viewed as politically unproblematic (Grayson 2010: 4). The concrete is also minimised to some extent on smaller private sites occupied by single-family units. However, LA sites are overwhelming grey. Many are hidden away down long and seemingly inaccessible lanes, behind rubbish tips, abandoned car yards or sewage sites, or amongst the hedgerows of busy bypasses (CRE 2006: 2).

The first time I visited a local authority caravan site was in the summer of 2007 when studying an Anthropology undergraduate degree. I had chosen to investigate something close to home and something I could relate to personally for my dissertation. The local caravan-dwelling community of the small rural town where I grew up, provoked both reactions of racism, nostalgia and ignorance from the majority population. I was made aware of the local site, but warned by friends that no “real Gypsies” lived there because they did not exist anymore, or that it would be dangerous to go on my own. I began walking towards the site on the narrow, uneven footpath along a busy bypass. On the other side of the road I could see a new housing estate backing onto the grounds of one of the local primary schools. The high fences and lack of footpath denied all access to the estate and school from the bypass. Walking on my side of the road was the only safe way to journey by foot along the bypass at all, and I would notice later on another trip that one could only walk as far as the site anyway, meaning a pedestrian cannot reach it from any other direction. Moreover, a pavement alone cannot protect individuals from the thunderous motion of lorries on their way to the factory at the other end of the bypass (see appendix a, figure 3).

On my right, there was a shallow ditch, strewn with litter, and through the bushes I could make out that I was passing a mass scrap-yard and wondered if it just happened to be next to a “Traveller” caravan site, or if the residents themselves were responsible for the pile of metal waste. I still remember my knees almost giving way as I turned the corner and saw the first caravans. Before me were two rows of six modestly sized plots, enclosed by a cul-de-sac of tall, thick bushes, hiding the site from peripheral view. The plots each had small, redbrick huts off to one side.

I would learn later they provide families with shower and toilet facilities. Every plot was occupied, several holding up to three caravans and several cars were parked in the road, which I remember made the place seem overpopulated, and there were a few trucks parked along the rough concrete road that lied between the two rows of plots. At the end of the site lay a large grass field with horses. It seemed to me – on that first trip - like a rather bleak place leading to what must be a grim existence for those living there.

This fieldwork scenario – as well as many others – were originally documented in the field notes made alongside my initial impressions and interpretations of English caravan sites during fieldwork for the aforementioned dissertation, where the research question asked if there are socio-cultural differences between a small Romani community living in a rural part of England and the rest of the local population. Through interviews and some participant observation, should any ‘socio-cultural differences’ be found, the objective of the project was to explore the origins of the differences. In retrospect the question seems quite superficial and achieved predictable conclusions, namely that there was not enough communication between the groups. However, by the time I had completed the dissertation I had new questions. Originally I had not considered how or if Romani culture needed to adjust to fit in with dominant cultural norms; I had not even asked what the norm was or if one even existed. If it did, who held it in place?

I continued pondering such questions in the months following submission of the dissertation, until it was decided that I should continue researching this topic area. However, the second phase of research would be conducted from a local government perspective, eventually developing into a study that would consider if anyone can still be thought of and treated like a true (or full) citizen if they refuse to share the same norms as those in (central and local) government positions. Local politicians and authorities guide us through life, so how does their guidance subtly tell us which ways of life are not acceptable? Also, how do local governments’ obligation to care for communities regardless of culture come into this dichotomy of how we should and should not live?

Over the years it has taken me to complete this thesis, I have been introduced to new disciplines such as public administration and its inherent preoccupation with how decisions are made, how decisions become policy initiatives and how managers and bureaucrats reconcile efficiency with personal and organisational values. Ethical justifications (i.e. discussion of what is right and wrong) can be used to construct a narrative, consisting of different voices from

various perspectives of the right way to live among others in society. Arguably, one of the purposes of public policy is to define how we *should* live - individually as well as with each other - along with guidance to achieve and encourage such a lifestyle for LA service providers (Fischer 2003: 11-12).

I familiarised myself with philosophical discussions of morality and virtues and considered the differences between organisational and personal values and how both value-systems become part of the policy process (cf. Handy 1994 and Van der Wal et al. 2011). Interpretive policy analysis guided me through local and central government texts to further understand how individual and organisational ethical arguments are weaved into strategies that would later be implemented into communities (cf. Yanow 2000 and Bevir 2006). Additionally, an insight of the policy area that would be inclusive of and yet go beyond office workers' experiences was found to be necessary. An absence of how policy processes end within communities in organisational ethical decision-making literature was apparent, despite the significant attention paid to evaluation stages of policy as well as the role values play in deliberative policymaking (cf. Fischer 1995; Flyvbjerg 2001; Schmidt 2006). For me, this is the fundamental point of policy practice - to read the values policymakers and bureaucrats have woven into strategy texts. Thus, I have been able, to investigate the effects of policy and grass roots interpretations of the policy processes families live through.

1.2 Research Question and Contributions to Academic Debates

The main questions tackled by this thesis are:

- 1. To what extent does local authority policy-making reflect a limited discourse that excludes other discourses particularly those of minority groups who do not conform or adhere to conventional notions of citizenship?*
- 2. How can we employ ethnographic research approaches to understand the divergent discourses that impact a contested arena of policy-making, such as local authority caravan-site decision-making?*
- 3. To what extent are public policy decisions, and their subsequent social consequences, interpreted through and into various discourses by policy-makers, and perhaps more importantly by those subject to the policy issue?*

Thus the focus of the research has been the interaction of public policy values with local communities – in this case caravan-dwelling communities, from the

perspective of members of this 'community'¹. It should be noted that although the families who participated in the research self-identified as either of Romani or Pavee descent, the contribution this thesis seeks to make is not concerned with providing a comprehensive overview of traveller cultures or lifestyle per se. The experience reflected here concerns only the families who participated in the research and were approached based on their accommodation status, in order to illustrate an example of how policies can be implemented and experienced at LA level and how local narratives are constructed through both shared and conflicting values (cf. Lynch 2006).

As much as shared meanings and values, which are trafficked through local or grass-roots narratives, inform political ideas and aspirations (Goodin et al. 2006: 6-7), the same can be said of the rumour or gossip mill within local communities, informing the construction or depictions of minority groups, who come to be viewed as oddities in society, potentially causing harm to others (Fine and Turner 2001: 16-17). An early concern for such research is that by working with such a specific and contextual topic, the conclusions may be restricted and inapplicable to wider society (Sadovnik 2007: 424). However, it can be argued certain policies are built upon the social construction of groups, who are targeted through strategies, giving the purpose behind the policies further substance (Hoppe 1993: 92; Schneider and Ingram 2007: 339-340). Consequently, our knowledge of how groups are constructed, ignored, rewarded and punished through public policy is expanded, whilst examining which and whose values make this process possible and the potential impact on the well-being of certain groups when another is in a position to manage their living space (cf. Lipsitz 2007).

An ethnographic approach has been employed to understand the experience of living through policy implementation by seeing it 'in the flesh' (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006: 389). This is an opportunity to contribute to existing academic debates on the nature of interpretive policymaking, while making a clearer association with ethical decision-making discourses within public administration literature and expand methodological approaches within both disciplines (Huby et al. 2011 and Haverland and Yanow 2012). The policy sciences have acknowledged all policies are ethically loaded, as they help governments construct notions of how we *should* live, thus evoking an ethical dilemma within policy practices

¹ 'Community' is used loosely paying attention to many groups (ethnic, national and religious) who are conflated, despite their diversity, as is often the case when talking about Britain's caravan-dwelling groups (Eriksen 2010: 175-176).

(Hawkesworth 2006: 153). Furthermore, policy research seeks to establish what is and is not implemented by bureaucrats, providing an incentive to investigate the material consequences of policy action within communities (Friedman 2006: 491). Therefore, this is an opportunity to expand how both aforementioned disciplines deal with the treatment of minority groups within public policy and services through examining personal narratives (cf. Pader 2006; McDowell and Wonders 2009; Silver 2010). Social research is increasingly concerned with ethical decision-making based upon organisational behaviour in wider social contexts, as well as participatory or collaborative governance (Lawton 1998 and Newman et al. 2004). However, there continues to be room to promote the relevance and necessity of voices of the general public and especially indigenous and/or minority groups into research methodologies (cf. Smith 2012), as well as interpretive, ethical policymaking and decision-making debates.

1.3 Why ‘Ethical Narratives in Contested Landscapes’?

The title of this thesis: “Ethical Narratives in Contested Landscapes: The Implementation and Experience of Public Policy Values for Traveller Caravan Sites” refers firstly to the topic of study (ethical narratives), and secondly to the example proposed (contested landscapes) for study. While definitions of ethics and narratives will be explained more extensively in the *Literature Review* chapter, here we will briefly consider the meaning of the title. “Ethical narratives” in this context simply refers to multiple constructed discourses that allow us to implicitly communicate ethics. This is relevant to public policy because policies themselves are human-made forms of discourse and also have implications for how we should live our lives. Dominant or *meta* narratives in particular have an important place in policy evaluation research as they are constructed by those holding socially and politically powerful positions and therefore become part of public policy decision-making (Lynch 2006: 294). “Contested landscapes” refers to conflicted notions and expressions of belonging, both within nations as well as more local communities, the social frictions that arise from this (cf. Bender 2001), as well as the contested landscape of public policy through conflicting values and social interests. Through exploring written and verbal narratives, this thesis highlights the confrontations inherent in a shared space that has been imbued with incompatible meanings, resulting in the literal construction of a contested landscape.

While the perspectives of policy drafters and bureaucrats are crucial to this research, the real interest is the lived experiences of policy implementation upon the contested land. Ethical narratives again play a role, although this time differently and perhaps more meaningfully, in analysing the ethical implications of this conflict

of priorities occupying local authority offices and officers. The problematic usage of power, definitions of citizenship and community life as well as the development of ethical frameworks, all upon which policy programs are built are the major themes of this thesis.

1.4 Plan of the Thesis

A traditional public administration thesis with each chapter dealing solely with literature, methods, results and so on is not presented here. The overlap and continual emergence of themes can be encountered throughout the thesis; thus the thesis is presented in a typically accepted ethnographic manner. Nevertheless, for those unfamiliar with these research traditions, attempts have been made to separate the various stages of research. The next chapter of the thesis is explanatory, beginning with a background on local government systems in England, followed by an introduction to the individuals who participated in the research. Elaborations are made on what it is meant by “traveller” – as caravan-dwellers are referred to within policy texts – for the benefit of understanding exactly which policy area has been evaluated and also to begin to comprehend how groups are socially constructed within policy based on ethnicity.

Following this is a *Literature Review*, which explores research focusing on the areas of narrative analysis, individualism within organisations, conflicting values and minority groups within social spaces. Due to the nature of the research that has been conducted here, more literature is introduced throughout the analysis of research findings, reflecting the continual emergence of new themes (and seeing existing themes in a different light) when researching policy as well as the continual re-direction and invention of policy itself.

The next chapter addresses methodological approaches and tools, the research philosophy, ethical considerations and reflexivity. The following two chapters provide an overview of the caravan sites visited during fieldwork (with some ethnographic reflection on the aesthetic observations), and the six policy documents that were analysed most extensively for the purpose of this research, with some commentary of how textual analysis was carried out.

Finally we explore the observations and arguments from the fieldwork, which are organised into themes of power, citizenship and values. Each of the themes have been used as analytical lenses, as is explained in more detail in the *Methodology* chapter. The themes are subsequently analysed with extensive use of the discourse material from interview transcripts and policy documents. Conclusions are drawn in the final chapter of the thesis, with a focus on ethical

narratives in English local authorities, and their real-life effects on caravan-dwelling families.

2. Background of Research Topics, Themes and Terms

Introduction

This chapter offers an explanatory insight into local government practices in England as well as caravan site policy practices and is useful to those unfamiliar with this policy area or studies of English local governments. Ideas of how public participation and democracy have become part of defining citizenship, as well as the implications this has had for certain groups is elaborated below. Also, this chapter handles the politics of self-identification with regards to the families featured in this research. Principle terms and their usage for caravan-dwelling communities are addressed here.

2.1 The Policy Sciences

The public or political sphere can be understood as distinctive or separate from the domestic or private sphere – were individuals ideally have complete autonomy to behave as they wish providing they do not cause harm to others, with policy acting as public laws which in turn protect civic privacy (Haldane 2000: 458-459 and Pesch 2005: 33-34), unfolding through texts of organisational and governmental frameworks (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 24). These public laws endorse adherence to the public will or common good (Young 1990: 119 and Pesch 2005: 34).

“Public policy” is also concerned with the conditions of disadvantaged groups and how more advantaged individuals can help (Barbalet 1988: 60 and Fischer 1995: 2- 3). Thus interactions between individuals - with the meaning of such interactions coming from values², norms³ and beliefs - are communicated through texts and other human artefacts (Yanow 2000: 14). In this sense, policies – like other written accounts – can be viewed as narratives, i.e. a ‘solution to [...] the problem of how to translate knowing into telling’ (White 1987: 1). From analysing policies and understanding the role they play between individuals and in power negotiations, it may be advisable for policies to be developed in contact with those that they will eventually affect, for the outcome to be socially productive rather than counter-productive. It may be the case that certain policy initiatives will introduce new problems rather than solving the existing ones (cf. Hoppe 1999 and Fox 2007).

² Values - which are established through personal morality - guide decision-making (Gortner 1994: 373 and Singer 1994: 10).

³ Norms – which are value-based rules or laws – also guide decision-making (Garrett 2000: 390).

Policy scientists should also utilise methodologies that are flexible enough to accommodate emerging features rather than fixed problems.

Policy research has been concerned with investigating and resolving problems (Hogswood and Gunn 1984: 29 and deLeon and Vogenbeck 2007: 4), in both flawed strategies or poor implementation (Friedman 2006: 482), as well as how policy can be employed to solve problems associated with behaviour, through ethical codes of conduct within the work-place (Hoeyer and Lynøe 2009: 391) or 'respect agendas' within the wider society (Cooper 2008: 134). However, this thesis is more concerned with the development and street-level implementation (cf. Lipsky 1980) of policy strategies and how these processes are determined throughout by the interactions between individuals (policymaker, bureaucrat, citizen). While Lasswellian policy science developed and flourished as a pragmatic and politicised discipline, with the administrator at the centre of contextual inquiry (Torgerson 2007: 16-17), in recent years social policy research has been increasingly focused around the effects they subsequently have on individuals within communities, since it is argued the study of policy cannot be separated from its imminent implementation⁴ (Borrow 2006: 573). Attempts have been made throughout the history of policy science to examine the various policy processes or stages separately, however this has been described as futile because policy rarely proceeds in a rational process (Jann and Wegrich 2007: 55-56). Thus, investigations can begin by regarding policy processes in their wholeness, as we address the values behind and within policy decisions (Alcock 2003: 3-4), using texts and buildings as artefacts of organisational practices (Yanow 2000: 16).

The Government and Social Policy

Social policies are based upon social principles, which may or may not have an ethical or moral meaning (Blakemore 1998: 16). The aims and objectives of recent Labour Governments (1997 – 2010) and their reforms seem to be imbued with principles that contradict and conflict with each other. For instance, governments have sought to illustrate a 'modern' Britain where gender, race, ability and class will not and should not limit one's options. Individuals are able to rely on the government of this 'New Britain' to provide new opportunities and to remove old prejudices. In addition, New Labour has sought to rid Britain of poverty, especially concerning its two most vulnerable groups: children and the elderly (Harker 2005: 266). The method of doing this has been to introduce more benefits for families with

⁴ Implementation in terms of fulfilling the aims of a policy (cf. Hill and Hupe 2001).

children and also invest more in citizen pension schemes (ibid). There have also been attempts to ensure that single-parent families - a previously financially vulnerable portion of the population - are able to provide the same quality of life as two-parent families for their children (ibid).

The Labour Party attempted to promote 'traditional' values normally associated with "Tory" ideals, such as the 'value of stable, two-parent families from child development to crime reduction' (Newman 2001: 156), implying children brought up in two-parent families are less likely to transgress into a life of crime. Alongside encouraging specific *good* ways of life, the above perception perpetuates stereotypes long since attributed to single-parent families and children from "broken" homes. Whilst promoting the value of two-parent families and stable homes, the Labour party also introduced policies for supporting 'lone' parent families (Moore 1988: 129 and Newman 2001: 153). Rodger argues a shift in focus from 'wider social and economic forces' to behaviour is due to the Conservative principles of independence and individualism influencing the Labour government (2008: 6). Consequently, it is arguable that poverty has increased for young, single adults due to an allocation of fewer financial benefits for them (Harker 2005: 266-267). Another criticism of these reforms is that Labour's idea of social inclusion only works if everyone participates (Newman 2001: 158). Despite a main goal of the Blair-Brown Labour administration being abolishing child poverty in the UK, 22 per cent of British children were still living below the poverty line in 2008⁵, thus the government were unable to halve child poverty by the end of their administration in 2010 (Jackson 2008: 2).

Whilst increased social and political inclusion seems like a favourable goal for parties to strive for, it is difficult to achieve in practice. For instance, Stewart states low election turn outs indicate a decline in political activity amongst the general public, which may lead to a 'democratic deficit', undermining relationships between LAs and their communities (2003: 53). This is counterproductive for the democracy of the country overall, especially from a communitarian point of view, whereby groups or individuals affected by certain policies should be involved in the initial decision-making process (Oliver 1999: 5). Consequently, those elected and responsible for policy may not represent the diverse views and values of the public, thereby challenging democratic legitimacy. The LA may become an 'enclosed organisation' (ibid), making their approachability to the public even more unlikely,

⁵ As of 2013, 30 per cent (nearly four million) of children are living in poverty (ECP 2013: 1).

raising issues of citizen participation, leading one to question: how this can be achieved?

This is further compounded as LAs seek to work in partnerships with other organisations to solve the “wicked issues” found in social and public policy. The attempts made by local governments to be more socially inclusive - by the introduction of local strategic partnerships - were intended to bring together different local public service organisations, although there is the risk here of being too inclusive by avoiding exclusivity altogether (Stewart 2003: 23). An additionally problematic point is that partnerships are rarely equal to each other and the more powerful individuals of society are able to promote their interests and values without difficulty (ibid: 25). When political parties choose not to support a policy viewed - in the eyes of majority populations - as morally wrong, cross-cultural policy implementation can become strained as values, beliefs and standards differ across cultures (CRE 1978: 8 and Cowley 2001: 213). In short, whose view is more important in these cross-cultural exchanges? The entire aim behind citizen participation in politics is to reiterate the belief that individuals should have the right in a democratic society to participate in government themselves rather than giving up that responsibility to others. As Oliver puts it: ‘giving effect to values rooted in the community rather than values imposed from above’ (1999: 6-7). Yet how is this possible when some members of society may be excluded from the political sphere? Nonetheless, it is often the case those most affected by the policy have the least say in how it is drafted or implemented, especially with regard to ethnic minority groups (Pader 2006: 168).

2.2 Recent Developments in Local Government Decision-Making

At the start of the twenty-first century, a new definition of governance was emerging – relating to the modern ‘interactionist requirements’ of local leadership, as well as the debated role of government within local communities (Sullivan 2001: 2). This interactionism can be understood in terms of the new relationship established between the public, private, community and voluntary sectors as well as a defining feature of *Third Way* governance (cf. Rummery 2006 and Sinclair 2011). At the same time, the local authority - or LA - continues to be the focal point for local citizens not least because local politicians can be held to account due to their accessibility within the community. Currently, local government is a three-tiered political system, established to provide services primarily at both county and district level, made up of democratically elected councillors who either represent political parties or stand as Independents, who are voted for at local level by local communities, at regular intervals (CCC 2011 and Edkins 2011). They – along with

paid professionals - work within the local community for an 'authority' - which is divided into departments, seeking to provide specific services, meeting the needs of the 'public' - that is: 'individuals, families and groups' residing within an area (Stewart 1970: 3). The public's difference in relationship with councillors and professionals undoubtedly stems from the former's presence within the community and the latter's position behind a desk, but it also may be to do with many local councillors representing the localities that they themselves grew up in and continue to reside with their families. In short, local communities are more likely to vote for a representative that is familiar to them, regardless of their actual political intentions or their capabilities to do a satisfactory job (Marquand 2004: 84). Having said this, there are arguments that councillors can become too involved within local communities, achieving a star quality that is not necessarily warranted based upon what they actually achieve behind closed office doors (Fenwick et al. 2009: 16). Employed officers on the other hand are hired specifically because of their experience and competency to fulfil a certain role within the LA, regardless of their connection to the community itself. Thus their professionalism and prioritisation of policy over people may threaten to increase the distance between strategies and social realities (Hill and Hupe 2001: 28 and Yanow 2004: 23). Whilst the public is often constructed as 'the nation' (Calhoun 1997: 91), the 'spaces and scales' through which the 'nation' is governed, is in a period of constant modification and growth, thus re-definition of 'who' or 'what' is being governed (e.g. region; locality; community) routinely takes place (Newman and Clarke 2009: 27).

The *Local Government Act* (2000) was a centralising piece of legislation introduced by New Labour, in a bid to make LAs more efficient and improve service delivery (Macaulay and Lawton 2006: 475). The act arguably replaced increased democracy with the improvement of LA management and leadership as its priority (Farrelly 2009: 388), by introducing compliant organisational cultures based on performance testing and monitoring via standards boards (Lawton and Macaulay 2004: 625 and Cowell et al. 2011: 434). Previous informal approaches made way for more definitive rules and regulations, attempting to fit in with continual changing expectations over public service ethics (Doig and Skelcher 2001: 87 and Van der Wal et al. 2011: 336). Despite council leaders' expectations being defined and regulated through lengthy rules and regulation documents and LA jobs being threatened with closer monitoring, it was still unclear to individuals what exactly effective leadership should be (Leach 2010: 324). Nevertheless, leaders and managers eventually lost their grip upon top-down approaches as the public is more individualistic, self-interested and as their participation becomes increasingly

reliant on a selective and consumerist approach to politics (Bang 2005: 159). It may be the most recent Labour administration aspired to prevent a supply and demand political climate. However, the increased autonomy of a single party leader as decision-maker as well as the magnified role of central government in local government practices suggests encouragement of a consumer approach to politics as well as resistance to political decentralisation, which is necessary for participatory governance to be truly realised (Marquand 2004: 86 and Newman 2005: 119).

Regardless of New Labour's best intentions, their plans for change were met with the criticism and concern of local politicians and academics, who feared a negative impact upon local democracy (Ashworth and Snape 2004: 539), in addition to an increased distance between policy makers and the affected communities (Watson 2000: 14). Some argued that political creativity and public participation was thwarted by 'privatisation and reduction' of mainstream public services (Fung and Wright 2003: 4). The criticism continued up until the final years of Labour's 13 year stint, with the declaration: 'local government system in England is a mess' (Leach 2009: 72); that the public has become increasingly 'unengaged and disenchanted with and distanced from' politics (Newman and Clarke 2009: 134); and with calls for serious reforms in public administration (Chisholm and Leach 2011: 40).

Active Welfare and the role of the Public

Local governments have made attempts in recent years to increase public participation (Barnes et al. 2003: 379) and also to decentralise leadership by making local governments more powerful and accountable to local communities rather than central government (Ashworth and Snape 2004: 538; Beecham 2006: 4; Demirkaya 2006: 55-56). The most recent and perhaps consequential government endeavour has been the *Localism Act* (2011) established to:

'[S]hift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils [...] because over time central government has become too big, too interfering, too controlling and too bureaucratic. This has undermined local democracy and individual responsibility, and stifled innovation and enterprise within public services' (DCLG 2011d).

Hence, there has been a fresh retreat from the attitude introduced by the Local Government Act; i.e. that local councils should be compliant and accountable to central government whilst their virtue of duty remains to their constituents

(Lawton and Macaulay 2006: 705). In other parts of Europe publics have become increasingly preoccupied with demanding more 'participatory governance' (cf. Fenwick et al. 2009; Geissel 2009; Lepine and Sullivan 2010), making the lack of political activity amongst the public in the UK noteworthy. If it continues to fall it may have a detrimental affect on representative democracy in this country (EHRC 2010: 578-580). An emphasis on the individual having control over their own expectations for their life (cf. MacIntyre 1985), as well as an appreciation for diversity between and within communities has led to LAs seeking to prioritise and handle the needs of their 'public' in their own particular way (Stewart 2000: 254). The argument that local communities should be granted the power to govern themselves in a manner befitting to their own specific needs adheres to interpretive notions of space (cf. Lefebvre 1991; Bender 2006; Pader 2006; Tilley 2006). For instance, some members of rural communities may agree that their needs differ significantly to those of more urban settings, whilst others may not see many differences between the needs that occur within urban and rural spaces (cf. Hay and Jessop 1995 and Hidding et al. 2000). It is because of this variety of potential views we subsequently develop preferences for certain types of governance and service delivery over others. However, when we do not, or are unable to participate in the electoral system, support our local political representatives as campaign aids or become directly involved in politics ourselves, we forfeit our citizen-based rights within the democratic process (Cunningham 2000: 41). Thus, our voices and perspectives become lost and go unheard.

Furthermore, a lack of active democracy could inevitably lead to social exclusion of certain groups (Taylor 2000: 159). Newman argues that one reason for social exclusion in British society is due to a lack of understanding and communication between those drafting policy and those involved in the implementation process (2001: 153). This argument was previously pursued by Page, whose idea of democracy involved 'representative bureaucracy', i.e. the representative reflection of the community in policymaking teams according to socio-economic and ethnic factors (1985: 163-164).

The relationship between policy formulation, implementation and participation is a complex one, raising issues of both democracy and the effectiveness of public policy (cf. Fung 2006). Reforms by recent Labour governments have called for individuals to become more independent and take more responsibility for themselves, and have less dependency on the government, than previous Labour administrations have encouraged (Harker 2005: 264-268). Therefore, the benefits proposed by New Labour for 'all' people or citizens only apply to 'all the useful people' (Jackson 2008:

6), i.e. those willing to become a part of mainstream working society (Newman 2001: 155). Additionally, those who become part of the mainstream labour force will attain socio-economic stability, putting them in a better position to become politically active – another factor that would warrant benefits from the government (Cunningham 2000: 41).

This 'active welfare' system is supposed to arouse a 'something for something' attitude amongst UK citizens – i.e. that if they are acquiring financial security through conventional participation in the labour market and, for example, establishing bank accounts, they receive a guaranteed minimum wage and for those out of work who are looking for work, benefits are available (Harker 2005: 265). Whilst abuse of this system is possible (one can pretend to look for work whilst on job seeker's allowance but still receive a minimum wage), its aim is to encourage people to work. The values expressed here could be seen as utilitarian since Bentham firmly believed that a policy should be based on supporting earned privilege (Blakemore 1998: 19). According to some political philosophers the ideals of liberty and equality are incompatible since the potential for inequalities of wealth, ownership and social standing within societies is what ensures our liberty and independence as citizens, living our lives with minimal interference from authorities. Tocqueville (1961) even went as far as to suggest imposing equality for all would lead to a loss of democracy.

From a Marxist perspective, individual liberty will forever maintain the class structures that aid some whilst hindering the social progress of others. Seemingly, in order for certain individuals to become socio-economically successful, the deprivation of others is required due to the scarcity of resources (Lukes 1991: 89). Whilst modern governments praise the politically active, allowing platforms in the name of democracy, they chastise those groups who do not take up their right to suffrage alongside other social or civic duties (Stivers 1994: 436). However, when disenfranchised sub-groups feel disregarded by their governments, they tend to become apathetic towards politics and cease to participate in local and general elections, convinced that their views no longer matter. Alternatively, they 'turn extreme' – i.e. distancing themselves from mainstream politics in favour of far left or right-wing groups, often becoming even more rigorously involved political movements that usually villainise the upper-classes or ethnic minority groups. As studies have taken place in England in order to assess the reasons behind lost faith in local councils and other public services (cf. MORI 2003a and 2003b), the results were easily summarised as: 'the public do not trust their local council to keep their promises, to listen to their views or to learn from their mistakes', and reforms to the

ethical culture of LA have done little to improve this situation (Macaulay and Lawton 2006: 474).

Equality between groups and the restriction of liberty of some groups' exploitation of others for their benefit need not remove social liberty all together. In fact, if inequalities that lead to social exclusions can influence the development of extremist groups, equality for all groups will also arguably maintain moderate politics and make the various groups in society – with differing priorities and value systems – less likely to conflict with each other. This is especially arguable if each group feels in control - to some extent – of the political decisions that are made within their community and will thus have an impact on their way of life. Having said this, feeling in control is not the same as being in control, and can be used by authorities as a mechanism to exert dominance or 'asymmetric power' over groups, by offering a selection of options and thus giving them the impression that they have more individual power than they actually do (Foucault 1980: 119 and Walkerdine et al. 2001: 178-179). Hayek argues that the concept of "social justice" is a primitive ideal, finding its appeal redundant within the "great" societies where people are free to make their own decisions based upon their own moral judgement (1976: 96-97). From this perspective, one could argue that members of minority and disenfranchised groups should demand their own rights and entitlements, ensuring their inclusion within political debates through their own participation in political processes. They should not – as a matter of principle – wait for political leaders to grant them their rights or social justices in order to improve their own quality of life. The Labour government have encouraged individual advancement that also accommodates the advancement for others for the good of all society (Jackson, 2008: 7) in order to restore 'public faith' (Rao 2000: 119 and Demirkaya 2006: 55). In this sense we may also call these values social contractarian (Rawls 1972 in Singer 1994: 362-363).

The discussion now moves to the introduction to the policy area of caravan site provision for "traveller" communities in England as well as the families who feature in this research and an explanation of the terms that will and will not be used when referring to the research participants throughout the thesis.

2.3 Terminologies and Categorisation of "Travelling" Folk

The many various groups making up a global network of *Gypsy* communities and are believed to share *Roma* roots, scarcely use the name "gypsy" collectively in reference for themselves, choosing to mark themselves off from other groups considered to be the same or even similar, across and within national boundaries (Liégeois 2005: 13). Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the politically correct way to refer to any

member of New Age, Roma(ni), Irish, showmen and the many other groups of this vast and yet diverse community was simply as “traveller” in the UK. This one ambiguous and misleading term became synonymous with any type of unconventional or transient way of life, even though not every “traveller” is nomadic (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 32-33).

The most offensive term currently in use against caravan-dwelling people is “pikey”, generally considered to be as offensive as other racial slurs in the English language such as *paki*, *nigger* or *cyp* (Lucassen 2005: 125), although some individuals following alternative ways of life have been known to use the term in a self-referential manner (Geoghegan 2008). Some of the older informants of Romani descent consider the term pikey to have quite an innocent origin, explaining it refers to Romani and other travelling groups who would wait by the turnpikes on the road, to either continue on their journey or attempt to earn the funds in order to pay for their passage through the highway barrier. One self-identifying Romani stated that ethnic minority groups should not be so quick to anger over terms such as “pikey” or “paki”, stating: “We used to assemble around the turnpike [...] so we’re called the pikies [...] you are who you are. I s’pose it’s like a Pakistani being called a Paki and then taking that as an insult. Well I don’t really think it is [sic].”

Social policy has in recent years taken to referring to diverse caravan-dwelling communities as ‘Gypsy and Traveller’, only defining whom they are referring to in a somewhat afterthought manner (see 7.2). Arguably, vague terms such as “traveller” and “gypsy” are used since the writers of policy do not know whom they are writing about and caravan-dwelling groups can at times be mixed. While the term “traveller” may speak for itself, typically “gypsy” is a term associated with a distinctive ethnic group in Britain self-identifying as “Romani”, who descend from a group of nomads originally called “Egyptians” upon arrival in the British Isles (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 19). Regardless of whether policymakers are in touch with the communities they write about, the mixed signals sent by the use of inconsistent language and terminologies over time and across policy areas have arguably manifested as emotions of confusion and frustration, no doubt causing further social tensions. One can witness such conditions in the case of the well-publicised dispute over Dale Farm, where members of the local council and national media alike referred to an entire Irish Traveller community as “gypsies” (Platell 2011). Similarly, tempers ran high within the Romani community over the Channel 4 series, *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, which unlike the titles suggests, featured only a small number of Romani families, instead focusing mainly on Irish Traveller families (TTO 2011: 2).

For some time there has been a policy-based distinction made between Showmen and other caravan-dwelling groups, due to the economical basis for their way of life and their distinctive needs and usage of living space (EERA 2008: 4). This recognition of diversity amongst certain caravan-dwelling groups culminated in the creation of the Showmen's Guild in 1889, an organisation founded in order to protect the interests of: 'travelling showmen who gain their livelihoods by attending funfairs' (Showmen's Guild Website 2007). The implied difference here between the lifestyle of Showmen and other caravan-dwelling groups is that theirs has mainly an economic basis rather than historic or cultural, a basis which has been utilised politically to compare them both favourably and unfavourably to Romani and Irish groups (Acton 1994: 39). Due to policy-based differences, members of the Showmen community are not included within this research, although it should be noted that Romani people also have a history of participation in fairs such as Epsom and Appleby (Acton 1974: 48 and 2007: 2-3).

Aside from the Showmen's Guild, there are numerous organisations bringing the various caravan-dwelling groups together such as: the *Gypsy Media Group* (TGMG), the *Irish Traveller Movement* (ITM), the *Irish Traveller Movement in Britain* (ITMB) and *Friends, Families and Travellers* (FFT). In addition to these organisations, the Joseph Rowntree foundation has also funded academic research projects to look into the conditions of accommodation and caravan site provision in England (cf. Richardson 2007b and Neale et al. 2008). The above campaign groups continue to work tirelessly to promote – primarily - Romani and Irish Traveller culture and fight against social discrimination, whilst Britain has recognised *Gypsy Roma Traveller Month* each year in June since 2008 (Bowers 2011: 1), and the European Union has acknowledged an *International Roma Day* each year in April, since 1990 in Poland (VOR 2011: 1).

Arguably, Romani people have been considered a thing of the past, viewed with both intrigue and romanticism and used as a tourist attraction (see appendix a, figure 4). For example, as the *Gypsy Caravan Holiday Breaks* website claims, one can: 'Stay and relax in a beautiful, fully restored, gypsy bow top wagon and sample a lifestyle almost lost to the modern world' (Gypsy Caravan Breaks 2013).

Despite self-identification, the ethnicity and cultural status of caravan-dwellers throughout British history has depended on the interpretation of others (Shuinear 1994: 73). It is thus believed that "true gypsies" no longer exist, that somehow their authentic culture evaporated with the coming of agricultural industrialisation, council estates and mixed marriage, regardless of their obvious maintenance of

traditional ways of life through remaining in caravans as well as other, nuanced cultural and morality-based traits that remain deep-rooted, even for those families now residing in conventional housing. Also, due to the high profile persecution of Eastern European Roma groups, namely from Romania (cf. Thorpe 2010 and Taylor 2013), a naïve association is made with the country as a place of origin for all Roma(ni) people, thus implying some sort of homogenous culture and tradition. This conclusion is also supported by the similarity in names, as it is often assumed that Roma people come from Romania; however there is no link between the two (Fonseca 1996: 100). In studies of mainland Europe references are frequently made to the United Kingdom and Ireland's treatment of caravan-dwelling communities, although it is often unclear whether or not authors consider Irish Travellers as contributing to the UN's figures of 'stateless people world-wide [...] upwards of 15 million and growing' (Berkeley 2009: 3); or if when discussing other European Roma groups, British Romani families are considered to be part of the 'ubiquitous underclass' who make up 'the largest ethnic minority on the continent' (Templer 2006: 137). Yet arguably both groups can be considered 'alienated citizens' whose culture and history have been systematically and institutionally marginalised (ibid and Spencer 2011: 8).

Folklore might suggest a romanticised image of sunny days, bow topped caravans drawn by horses and ladies with wavy dark hair, golden jewellery and full skirts reading cards or making stew (see appendix a, figure 5). Perhaps they will imagine their tall, swarthy husbands seasonally picking fruit or dancing and singing in the streets. Some will consider this with abhorrence and resentment, others with disillusionment and nostalgia for something they did not directly experience. Regardless, caravan-dwelling lifestyles in Britain, Ireland and other parts of Western Europe up until the mid-20th century were not as hedonistic as they seem (cf. Cunningham 1997; Price 2002; McKingley 2011). These were harsh lifestyles, built upon a long history of oppression and violence, exclusion and expulsion (cf. Puxon 1973 and Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995), although the romanticism of caravan-dwelling – in particular Roma – groups serves to both obscure this history, while demonising families in the present-day (Shuinear 1997: 27 and Richardson 2006b: 22).

Origins of travelling people in Britain and Ireland

Researchers have shown travelling people described as Gyptians⁶ first came to Britain at least as early as 1514 according to historical recordings (Liégeois 2005: 44). It is believed they were initially welcomed by the Scottish, however intrigue soon grew into distrust, leading to the persecution of this new, “exotic” community as early as the 1530s (Ward-Jackson and Harvey 1972: 20; Hawes and Perez 1995: 11; Alexander 2011: 4). Whilst it is widely accepted amongst commentators that Romani peoples, along with the many other Roma groups spread across Europe, are part of a northern-Indian Diaspora⁷, there is still some dispute over how this supposed mass exodus came about in the first place. It has been suggested ‘small bands of people’ left due to suffering the religious persecution of the time, perhaps being part of a lower caste group and thus subjected to extreme levels of poverty, as well as the proposition that they were exiled (cf. McLaughlin 1980). There have also been criticism of these theories by academics, who feel they unnecessarily exoticise an ordinary group of people (cf. Okely 1983).

Like the various Roma(ni) groups of Britain, continental Europe and North America, several suggestions have been put forward for the origin of Irish Travellers as a distinctive, nomadic and indigenous group in Ireland who were possibly exiled, refugees of famine or transient workers (Shuinear 1994 and Rozelle 2008). More recent academic claims have been that today’s Irish Travellers - who call themselves ‘Pavee’ or ‘Minceir’ - descend from pre-Celtic Cant/Gammon or Shelta speaking groups and were forced into nomadism and away from their native lands by Oliver Cromwell (Keys 2005: 1). The first groups of Irish Travellers or Pavee⁸ arriving in Britain as early as 1850 according to some, presumably looking for employment and seeking ‘better material conditions’ around the time of the Great Famine and again after the Second World War (Kenrick and Bakewell 1990: 10 and Lucassen 2005: 29), with others suggesting they have been a part of British society for several centuries (ITMB 2011a and 2011c). Throughout their time in the UK, those arriving

⁶ Or “Egyptians”, due to the initial presumption that the nomads originated from Egypt (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 19).

⁷ This conclusion was deduced based on a strong link made between the ancient Sanskrit language and the various dialects spoken by all Roma groups believed to be descended from this original band of nomads (McLaughlin 1980: 1; Seymour-Smith 1986: 133 and Fonseca 1996: 85-86 and 100-101).

⁸ Henceforth, this community is referred to in their self-referential manner throughout the thesis.

from Ireland have arguably been treated with resentment and discrimination, leading to extreme social exclusion with clusters of families sharing slum areas in big cities, notably Liverpool, Manchester and Dundee (Lucassen 2005: 31-33 and Winder 2005: 194-195).

Policy Issues and Caravan-Dwelling Communities

Unlike most other European states, which have openly targeted and managed their Roma populations, the UK has been more indirect. Since the 16th century, successive UK governments have outlawed and discouraged ways of living that are traditionally typical of Roma(ni) groups, rather than targeting the groups themselves (McLaughlin 1980: 2 and Taylor 2008: 53). A possibility for this could be a preoccupation with constructing a homogenous culture for the purpose of nation building, therefore leading to the singling out of non-conforming groups (Oommen 1997: 27). It was clear by the 19th century, whilst authorities did not fear caravan-dwelling individuals were at any specific health risk, this lifestyle was not consistent with developments of modern sanitary standards that the rest of the British population were gradually adopting. Since authorities are charged with managing potential threats to social stability of the collective through suppression of individuality, allowing one group to continue living in a manner increasingly thought to be unclean or unsafe by institutions could have detrimental effects on the progress of others, hereby giving 'just' cause for authorities to contain non-conforming groups and apply pressure on them to 'improve' (Taylor 2008: 58 and Lucassen 2010: 269-272). Whilst policies have been dressed up as intended to help caravan-dwellers, while working with them in order to aid their eventual integration, they can come across as paternalistic and intended for the benefit of the rest of society; for instance the *Caravan Sites Act* in 1968 (Puxon 1973). Additionally, policies intended to allocate more land for caravan-dwellers, which would grant them the space to continue their traditional cultural way of life are often overlooked by LAs, as Barbara Adams' et al. (1975) anthropological study shows, as well as a more recent study presented at the Romani Mobilities in Europe conference by Willers et al. (2010). Other European countries adopted different approaches to accommodating their caravan-dwelling communities. For instance, the Netherlands also introduced a *Caravan Sites Act* in 1968, aimed at their Roma population, but their implementation of this legislation was apparently far more rigorous than in the UK (Puxon 1973: 10). In Britain however, despite LAs being legally obligated to provide sites for different caravan-dwelling groups, they have failed to maintain the

demand for plots per caravan or family due to not implementing the legislation vigorously enough (cf. DCLG 2007; West Midlands RSS 2010; Willers et al. 2010).

Meanwhile in Ireland the government has taken a different approach with Pavee families, especially within an international context (cf. Moore 2004). The *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act* (2002) has had mainly negative implications for the accommodation status of Pavee families in Ireland, allowing the immediate eviction of families from land they do not have legitimate access to, seemingly without consideration for the fact that they may have nowhere else to go (Coats et al. 2008: 20). Whilst it is notable that large numbers of Irish Travellers along with immigrants from all over the world came to England's major cities in search of work after the Second World War (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 20 and Pavee Céilidh 2011: 1), it is also plausible that the harsh Pavee accommodation policies encouraged families to flee to the LA sites of the UK (Parnell-Berry 2010: 7).

On the other hand, the Irish policy approach to immediate eviction of illegal occupants from private and public lands shares features with the UK's *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act* (1994) and the more recent DCLG's *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (2012). This new policy framework follows in the footsteps of the *Criminal (Law Defence of Life and Property) Bill* (2007), currently in use in the Republic of Ireland (cf. case-studies by Hargreaves and Brindley 2011; ITMB 2011a and 2011b; Ryder et al. 2011).

Attempts were made to introduce *Regional Spatial Strategies* (RSS) in 2006, in order to set targets for and monitor the building of new sites around the country by LAs. In addition, *The Road Ahead* (2007) was published by the *Department for Communities and Local Government* (DCLG) acknowledging the need for more empathy within LAs regarding the social exclusion and deprivation faced by some caravan-dwelling families, which is directly linked to a lack of adequate provision by the document. However, in 2010 with the election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, plans were drawn up to abolish the RSS and implement a *Localism Act* (2011) in its place, granting more authority to local governments over their own development schemes as well as eradicating 'retrospective planning permission' for caravan-dwelling families who have already begun work on building their own sites in areas where LA provision was and remains scarce. Amongst other things, the Localism Act is intended to strengthen LA powers to evict families from land they do not have planning permission to live on, without applying centralised pressure to local governments to create more caravan accommodation (Grayson 2010: 2). The decision to remove RSS targets was overturned as part of the outcome of a court-case with large house developer Cala

Homes, which rules the abolition as 'wrongful' and 'discretionary' (Ryder et al. 2011: 14-15). However, the government remains determined to find a way to abolish the RSS, whilst the nearest they are willing to step towards a more beneficial method of site planning and provision, is by offering council tax breaks - as part of the *New Homes Bonus Scheme* (2011) and the *National Affordable Housing Programme* (2011-15) - for each new caravan site that is built (DCLG 2011: 12). Arguably, this is a progressive and positive step towards official acknowledgement of caravans as legitimate accommodation for local communities, taking the stance LAs should accept all members of their communities by helping them to establish affordable housing, although this is assuming LAs will accept caravan-dwellers as part of their communities in the first place.

It seems that there is a constant struggle within LAs regarding the accommodation issue, in deliberating who these policies are actually supposed to benefit. Since LAs themselves are conglomerates of different departments, each with their own style, agenda and values, it is understandable that such a struggle takes place as organisational priorities conflict with each other (Stewart, 2003: 23). A common theme throughout this process is public opposition to site building, claiming that a new caravan site will incur vandalism, violence and petty crime to the area, destroy the local infrastructure and disrupt local conservation projects. This opposition feeds into the local political influence of authorities, and usually, councillors are less willing to do something that will anger their constituents. Recently for instance, the Conservatives made the rather ambiguous statement that: 'Law-abiding citizens [...] jump through many hoops to build in rural areas' and that 'it's wrong that certain groups [...] by-pass those rules and concrete over the Green Belt' (CHLG 2010: 1). In reference to British planning laws they make the distinction between the 'law-abiding citizen' with few rights and the 'certain groups' who apparently have the right to break the law, implying throughout the blog post that if brought back to government, the Conservatives will restore 'fair play for all' (ibid). However, based upon the phrasing of this piece, it is clear that the writer feels that caravan-dwellers are not law abiders, and that law abiding citizens deserve more rights than the non-law abiding, regardless of how they break the law or even within what context, as this is not explored.

What appears to be missing from current political rhetoric is that regardless of the problems and disruptions caravan-dwellers may bring with them, the fact remains all families need somewhere to live. A lack of planning permission prevents many from living on their own land (Willers, et al. 2010: 1). The removal of *common land* has meant when caravan-dwelling families stop on land not allocated for

camping use by the local council, the site becomes an unauthorised encampment (cf. Adams et al. 1975). Studies show that people of Pavee and Romani descent currently have the poorest health of all ethnic groups in the UK, which has been directly linked to their living conditions as well as only seven per cent of Romani and 8.4 per cent of Pavee children receiving five or more A* - C grades at GCSE level, compared to 45.5 per cent in the rest of the population (West Midlands RSS 2010: 2). However, a recent report drafted by the West Midlands faction of the ITMB states that unless living conditions change with the provision of more sites, especially of a higher standard than is currently being experienced by most caravan-dwelling families, this group will continue to experience poverty, illiteracy and poor health (2010: 2).

A shortage of authorised placements means thousands in England and Wales still live on illegal encampments despite regular monitoring and counts for how many caravan plots are required through the RSS up until 2010. Members of Pavee and Romani communities suggest the LAs do not want to help caravan-dwellers and therefore do not prioritise building sites and do not grant planning permission to caravan-dwelling families who have bought their own land (Mistiaen 2010: 3). However, can it be this simple?

This argument does indeed ignore the fact that implementation of legislation obliging LAs to build sites is delayed due to not wanting to upset house-dwelling communities who do not want to live amongst Pavee and Romani families. Those from house-dwelling backgrounds may have, depending on the part of the country, presented numerous reasons for not wanting to have caravan sites built within their community. For instance, members of the existing community sometimes link caravan-dwelling groups with the aforementioned forms of street crime (Havergal 2009: 1). Or in other cases, they feel that building or approving a new site will bring many new residents to the area, putting a strain on local infrastructure (Malvern Gazette 2009: 1).

Communities are not necessarily geographical or physical entities; they are groups of families drawn together based upon symbolic characteristics they have in common (Cohen 1985: 108-109). These characteristics can also be used to keep others out, restricting access to the community due to fear of the unknown (ibid). Loader and Walker argue that when the citizen is afraid of something, generally unknown, he or she seeks safety from authority (2007: 8). So one could argue local communities seek reassurance of their security from their LAs, who have an obligation to their safety. Perhaps a way in which local governments have sought to provide this security is through systematic policies targeting caravan-dwelling groups in order to manage their way of life for the benefit and reassurance of others.

The Research Subjects

To clarify, the families interviewed for this thesis are self-identifying Pavee and English Romani families who live in caravans⁹. The purpose of approaching caravan-dwellers was to be able to study a specific aspect of policy and public service delivery rather than Romani or Pavee cultures. The fact that the families who eventually agreed to participate in the research each self-identified as either Romani or Pavee caravan-dwellers, is in this case purely incidental¹⁰ as this policy area does not necessarily only relate to families of Romani or Pavee descent (DCLG 2012: 8). However, the average British house-dweller is somehow led to believe that English Romanis (as expressed in folklore) have truly died out or been “watered down” through inter-marrying, viewing the current caravan-dwelling community as hippies, benefit-fraudsters and the Irish (Keys 2005: 1), although self-identification still allows individuals to claim either Romani or Pavee roots.

Academics continue to claim that Pavee and Romani families are politically powerless and are more often than not excluded from the decision-making processes impacting directly on their quality of life (cf. O’Connell 2006; Richardson 2006b; ITMB 2011a). On the other hand, the existence of organisations such as the *Gypsy Council* (GCECWCR) and the *Traveller Law Reform Project* (TLRP) stands to discredit such a perception. GCECWCR and TLRP fight for the human and civil rights of Romani and Pavee families by contesting perceived unfair government policies that have negative effects on their cultural way of life. This indicates criticisms from within Pavee and Romani groups of an experience of social and political inequality as well as forms of activism from a group usually described as passive in such matters. Such activism illustrates the actuality and validity of distinct ethnic, if not social groups and calls to attention their role within local political decision-making processes.

Anyone can become an activist of any cause, regardless of his or her ethnic background, which is why ethnicity is not specifically the issue here. What is relevant is how individuals and groups become part of and excluded from the public debates surrounding the maintenance and delivery of services they are entitled to and furthermore, what the ethical implications are according to LAs of such

⁹ The majority of the English Romani community now reside in their own houses (ITMB 2011: 13-14).

¹⁰ Due to the self-identification of the research participants, the thesis does pay attention to the role racial discrimination plays in the policy process as well as identity construction.

inclusions and exclusions. That people who call themselves and are called by others “Pavee” and “Romani” are currently involved in a similar debate as citizens through these forms of activism is interesting. There are no two English Romani groups completely alike, as there are no two Pavee groups completely alike; whilst numerous differences and parallels undoubtedly exist between these two seemingly separate groups. The fact is Pavee and Romani families live side by side, merging culturally and linguistically along the way, thus distancing their ways of life from other “authentic” Gypsy groups in continental Europe, for instance Spain, Hungary and Romania. This has offered some the opportunity to state since caravan-dwellers are not “real” Gypsies after all, they should not be entitled to land rights that account for an alternative lifestyle (Acton 1974: 19 and 56 and Richardson 2006b: 20).

Although defining these two groups is relevant since policies are implemented based on identifying individuals or families as either “non-Traveller”, “Traveller” or “Gypsy” and thus what they are entitled to (Taylor 2008: 4), it is maintained in this thesis that identifying and constructing individuals into oversimplified groups is not ethical and cannot (on its own) help to solve social problems. Additionally, this thesis is not about Pavee or Romani experiences and cultures and so the families will specifically be referred to as caravan-dwelling and the terms “Romani” and “Pavee” will be used to refer to the wider communities affected by this policy area and specific incidences of cultural relevance. Rather, it is interesting to explore how values operate in the construction of identity, narratives and policy, especially when it comes to deciding how we should live within our communities.

Throughout this thesis, as an ethnographic experience is presented, the reader may remember the above statements and find them contradictory, as the cultural traits and religious beliefs that render Pavee and Romani communities distinctive become illuminated, as well as the motivations for them to continue living as they do, in spite of violating planning laws at times. Of course, these traits and beliefs are relevant as they inform value-systems. Nonetheless, intellectualism does not need to be based in ethnic or cultural distinctiveness, as when it does, cultures can become exaggerated through the imagination of the researcher (Said 1995: 150), exacerbating the potential discrimination against socio-cultural differences one perhaps seeks to eliminate (Carter 2010: 38). Furthermore, ethnicity should not be used to glorify, nor discredit lifestyles or values-systems within any discourse - be it academic, media-based or political.

This thesis values the right to diversity and the reality and complexities of lived experience through an interpretive methodology and the role interviewing and

observation have played as research tools in this policy analysis. By focusing on more than the written language to be found in policy documents, it has been possible to provide a fuller image of the research topic – i.e. ethical narratives and contested landscapes (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000: 461).

2.4 Summary

The passages above provide a socio-political backdrop for the discourses to come throughout the thesis. Thus far, a definition of public policy has been established in addition to how social principles and ethical values are used in policy processes to control contested spaces and motivate active citizenship. A brief insight into the role that local governments play in Britain in maintaining public community life and a welfare state has been presented as well as local government's relationship to central government. Also, we have examined how individualistic leadership and the privatisation of public services could negatively affect local democracy and communities' accessibility to services, especially minority groups. The necessity for local communities to feature more predominantly in policy research has been highlighted along with the recognition that there is a need to look to more flexible research methodologies to follow unpredictable, contextualised policy scenarios.

Additionally, a history of Pavee and Romani groups in Britain and a brief exploration of how these two groups are managed and represented through policy and in the media has been presented. It is highlighted that numerous "traveller" initiated organisations are working to instil a sense of identity for Romani and Pavee communities as well as a historical awareness for society at large of issues affecting caravan-dwelling families. The need for a better understanding of the role of policies in the lives of Romani and Pavee communities is pointed out and following this an explanation of the selection of the research subjects who participated in the project.

In order to establish an intellectual basis for this research, the following chapter presents a literature review. Here we can explore the themes of cultural and moralistic narratives; individualism and individual decision-making; ethical decision-making and contested values on organisational settings; and constructions of group identity and social spaces. The literature review explores how other relevant academic discourses have endeavoured to answer similar questions about policymaking in local governments, public participation in decision-making and public policy values, and strengthen a comprehension of how this research can contribute to these works.

3. Literature Review

Introduction

Research on ethnic minority communities' experiences of policy, presence within policy texts as well as their political participation at local and central levels of government is a blossoming body of literature (cf. Cole 1986; Young 1990; Gilroy 2002; Tierney 2007). Additionally, whilst the literature on Romani and Pavee groups (especially the Eastern European Roma) has become immense; more specifically the historical and ethnographic research on 'Traveller Gypsy' relations with the state has been steadily increasing since the late 1960s (cf. Acton 1974; Kenrick and Bakewell 1991; McCann et al. 1994; Mayall 1995; Fraser 1995; Crowe 1995; Lucassen et al. 1998; Fonseca 1996; Taylor 2008). One can easily gain an insight into the various legislative policies put into action for the purpose of accommodating caravan-dwelling lifestyles, as well as the discourses surrounding strategies meant for containing such communities from Puxon (1973), Adams et al. (1975), Hawes and Perez (1995), Liégeois (2005) and most recently, extensive work by Richardson (2006a; 2006b; 2007a; 2007b). These works range from attempts to tell an objective story to an academic audience about an under-researched group, to activist literature campaigning for the rights of – as the activists see it – a marginalised and persecuted group. At times when studying and writing about minority politics it can be difficult not to frame one's arguments within an activist rhetoric, or even simply show both sides of the story, especially when the discussion revolves around an ethical narrative in terms of the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the state to the citizen and vice versa – as this discussion does. However Joanna Richardson in particular is an academic striving to show not only the lived experiences of caravan site policy, but the professional experience of drafting and implementing such texts as well.

Arguably, an ethical outlook is impossible to avoid when discussing the rights of subordinate and minority groups and the responsibilities of the state to look after groups facing social problems. However, none of the above discourses reflect the ethical experience or narrative that accompanies policymakers and bureaucrats throughout the policy process. Likewise, whilst the discipline of public administration features an expansive model-based literature concerning influences of ethical decision-making (cf. Glover et al. 1997; Lawton 1998; Loe et al. 2000), as well as the incorporation of personal values into organisational spheres (cf. James 2000 and White and Lam 2000), much of this research fails to focus on the experience of those whom the services are meant for. Lipsky's pioneering *Street Level Bureaucracy* (1980) delivered new insights into the discretionary powers of

police officers and social workers, but did little to enlighten audiences when it comes to understanding citizens' points of view of their usage of, or access to public services. Especially considering special services that are designed specifically for minority groups - who may have a differing ethical outlook to that which guides the policy process - individual values help to shape the outcome of such policy endeavours. Thus the ethical journey of the practitioner, the personal and outside¹¹ factors affecting them should also be taken into account (cf. Friedman 2006 and Osborne and Redfern 2006).

In order to address the research questions (see 1.2), we will explore a narrative approach to policy analysis, policymaking and implementation as well as the role of narratives in making sense of lived experiences (of implemented policies) within local communities. Below there will be a discussion of the social function of narratives and some initial ideas of how policies themselves are dominant narratives. Further along we look at the role individualism plays in ethical decision-making within organisations, before finally exploring social inclusion and exclusion in local communities and the use of social spaces to maintain boundaries and construct identity. The review of literature in the thesis will not be confined to this chapter alone. Due to the changing nature of policy and also the emergence of new themes throughout the process of ethnographic research, it is necessary to include new literature throughout the thesis to analyse issues as they arise.

3.1 Narratives Analysis of Policymaking and Ethical Discourses

Defining Narratives

Narrative is a complicated device used in all human societies, to communicate a sequence of events (Scholes 1980: 205 and Bruner 1990: 43), or to relate and make sense of social events and actions that are thought to have occurred (Mattingly and Garro 1994: 771; Yanow 2000: 58; Cunliffe et al. 2004: 263). In short, narratives communicate the 'meaning of experience' (Cortazzi 2007: 385b) and explain the motives underpinning actions based upon a network of beliefs and desires (Bevir 2006: 284). Narrative analysis has and continues to become increasingly essential within the social sciences due to the natural presence of narratives within human interactions (White 1987: 5 and Sandelowski 1991: 161a). A term often used

¹¹ By 'personal' factors upbringing, education, religion, class, gender, age and ethnicity are suggested; and by 'outside' factors geographical location and the demographic of the area, profession and ethical culture at work, dominant political ideologies and the level of [minority] public participation in policy processes (Stewart 2000: 254).

interchangeably with 'story-telling', narrative gives shape to a 'real' social world (Bruner 2003: 8), and can therefore be used by the researcher to 'cultivate' and translate 'illusions of reality' (ibid: 11). Additionally, narratives can tell us something about identity construction through experience, from the perspective of the narrator (Lawler 2008: 11); i.e. how the person identifies themselves within a narrative and therefore within society, giving themselves a meaning in life.

Ethnographic research designs in particular draw upon strategies of narration, not only by using research subjects' narratives to understand human activity, but also in order to communicate their findings as researchers to other academics (Coffey 1999: 128). According to Barthes, narratives are ubiquitous elements of everyday life, which translate knowing into telling (1982: 252, see also Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 117). Mattingly and Lawlor sustain this claim, adding that due to the natural presence of stories throughout our social interactions, story-telling or the practice of narrative are difficult to define (2000: 6).

This has not prevented many scholars from making an attempt to understand how narratives function, how they are useful to social researchers as well as how narratives can be used by the researcher to present findings (cf. Coffey 1999: 128-129). For instance it is arguable that one can learn more from narratives than merely 'how humans do things in the world' (Mattingly and Lawlor 2000: 7). We can also learn about the various and intricate motives that compel social actors to do one thing rather than another (ibid). In addition to this, as Bruner argues, narrative can be viewed as the 'dialectic' between social and ethical norms or expectations and what actually occurs (2003: 15). In other words, researchers can utilise narratives to inform them of forms of social guidance and warnings that are part of a wider cultural script, showing individuals what can happen when norms are not followed (Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 121). As Amsterdam and Bruner explain, narratives communicate an experience using a conventional plot of a beginning (the socio-cultural context), middle (the divergence of predictable or acceptable social behaviour) and an end (resolving the divergence in order to return to normality), providing those involved in the narrative with a cultural script as well as cultural solidarity (2000: 117). This 'culturally acquired' understanding relates to actions that take place within certain social settings and involve certain kinds of members of society, who perform specific roles (Silver 2010: 276). Thus, one learns about his or her place in society and arguably about right and wrong actions through narrative-based moral reasoning (Brody 1999: 46 and Mattingly 2008: 147).

The study of narratives has developed alongside analysis of the ‘relational self’, facilitating a grasping of ‘social interactions and situations through which self-understanding develops’ (Gubrium and Holstein 2008: 243b). In short, investigating the way narrative operates within human societies and cultures, one can reveal how those telling the story identify with their everyday lives and social surroundings. In terms of policy, we might be able to understand how drafters relate to the social issues they decipher as well as the individuals on the receiving end of policy actions. According to Gubrium and Holstein, this tradition of seeking the relational self through narrative analysis began with George Herbert Mead’s lectures on ‘mind, self and society’ at the University of Chicago in the 1930s, going on to encourage a new angle of ethnographic inquiry, with scholars focusing upon urban-dwelling sub-groups instead of far-away “native” groups (2008: 243b).

Narratives in Policy

As stated in the *Background* chapter, policy texts are designed to offer solutions for social problems (Fischer 1995: 3) and therefore a further implication is made that there is a right way to handle a certain issue. Politically powerful members of society are in an apt position to influence public policies based upon how they feel lives should be led (Lynch 2006: 294). This ‘net of implied morals’ weaves its way throughout everyday life, often going unnoticed as we go about our usual business (Mattingly and Lawlor 2000: 8). Narratives similarly only occur when something out of the ordinary has happened, or an event with unusual cultural factors presents itself, leading humans to reflect on the social event, what went wrong, how it was dealt with and how one should deal with it in the future (White 1987: 1; Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 121; Cortazzi 2007: 385a).

Through culturally constructed *moralistic*¹² tales we learn good examples to live our lives by as well as examples of lifestyles and social habits to be resisted, although the lesson one is supposed to learn from a story can also be dependent on how the story is told as well as to whom or by whom (Sandelowski 1991: 162b). These ‘storied ways of knowing’ (Cortazzi 2007: 384a) can be ‘seen, heard and read’ in a variety of formats apart from policy documents, such as music and fictional literature or through legal documents (Sandelowski 1991: 162b). In recent times, the utilisation of narratives by researchers to understand humanity (cf. White 1987), has been expanded in order gain in depth knowledge concerning

¹² *Moralistic* here is used convey how we learn ethical values through the ‘morals’ of stories.

organisational processes such as policymaking as well as other decision-making practices (Cunliffe et al. 2004: 263).

'Narrative theory' developed in academic fields such as psychology, nursing, history and education among others (Yanow 2000: 57), and has been used to explore the interpretations of others, especially with regards to 'significant incidents in people's lives' (Cortazzi 2007: 384b). Each individual in society may experience or be affected differently by any kind of out-of-the-ordinary social incident, therefore many different narratives may emerge in order to respond and make sense of a specific episode. However, in the event that conflicting narratives emerge, meta narratives, which reflect a dominant and coherent world-view are the most accessible. As it is difficult to learn from and act on inconsistent narratives, in cases where individuals within a group disagree on their interpretations of an unexpected event there is the human urge to seek out a resolution in order to give the narrative a solid ending, fitting within existing social scripts.

From an ethnographic perspective, Stevens argues that evidence-based policy documents serve the purpose of controlling and containing uncertain information in order to correlate with existing dominant narratives, thereby usually favouring the perspective of those in power (2011: 243 and 245). In other words, by using a concept of narratives that is concerned with conflicting stories as well as complete stories, we can build part of a theoretical framework within which one can interpret policy documents as narratives of sequenced events in themselves (Sandelowski 1991: 163a). Through Steven's work there is the implied notion that organisations need strategies and policies in order to have some level of certainty for the future (cf. Samra-Fredericks 2003), however there is also an inclination of a certain way a story should be told and therefore a single way to proceed with a policy or strategy based upon the dominant interpretation of so-called evidence. According to Boje (1995), researchers should pay more attention to the unconventional or alternative narratives that we usually ignore while taking for granted the stories we learn from presiding authorities. By channelling the 'excluded voices' in research, we are able to gain access to the alternative narratives verbalised off stage as well as the view of the stage from behind the scenes, with potentially different moralistic perspectives (Boje 1995: 998). Lynch sustains this by offering a critical interpretation approach to policy and narrative analysis, intended to explore the construction of dominant narratives and their inconsistencies in order to seek out alternative narratives (2006 295). Also, through the investigation of narratives, researchers can come to terms with the negotiations that take place within pluralistic societies, where values and beliefs of various groups appear to be

incompatible and therefore the compromises made between groups are weaved into the narrative as the solution to conflict, leading to a desirable and peaceful 'communal life' (Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 117 and Mattingly 2008: 147).

Finding the Narrative

Researchers of narrative are able to understand the potential constructions and characterisations of social roles for various members of society. Lauren Silver argues that in order for members of certain minority groups, to become visible and helpable in a public administrative setting, they are required first to live up to recognisable characteristics that have already been attributed to them by dominant narratives, which in turn are a part of policies (2010: 291).

Post-modern scholars have approached narrative research by deconstructing dominant or conventional narrative traditions and authorities, focusing more closely on how narratives privilege some while excluding others (Cunliffe et al. 2004: 264). For instance, narrative analysis can attempt to reveal the disjointedness between 'the story' and 'the experience' in order to focus on discourse, rather than conducting comparative discourse research, which studies 'informational content' and assumes close correlations between telling and experience (Sandelowski 1991: 162a). In other words, if we are examining the extent to which dominant political discourses exclude minority discourses (thereby creating a gulf between narrative and experience), the comparison of two or more policy documents is somewhat obsolete, by continuing to focus on the dominate discourses, further ignoring minority discourses as well as disregarding lived experience, instead of utilising the opportunity to reconcile it with narrative. In Silver's case, she reconciles (policy-based) narrative and lived experience by firstly giving the research subject a prominent voice in order to share their interpretations of their own experiences in her written work. This in turn becomes a narrative and validates the claim that we each see the world differently, depending on our social backgrounds and circumstances. This also has a fundamental impact on how we make sense of and construct a narrative around our personal experiences.

Additionally, the conclusions we draw over what should be done are likely to conflict with those who do not share our place within society and by association our sense of reality. Furthermore, by demonstrating clearly her interviewee's interpretation of the way 'identity' is implied and constructed in policies, through an explicit discussion on class, race, age and gender, Silver allows readers a glimpse into the 'relational self' (as is discussed above). Her informant does not see herself the same way dominant narratives claim she is and yet in order to be recognised at

all, she realises she needs to play a role in order to be viewed as a deserving client of welfare services (Silver 2010: 281). If narrative is *knowing into telling*, and yet some of us experience another type of knowing, how do we control what is told? In the case of social policy, the fact that a reality and normality not all of us can relate to is communicated as written text is problematic, due to the potential harm that can befall those who do not identify with the moralistic nature of dominant narratives. Social policies, their material consequences and the variety of interpretations of those consequences are each crucial topics of study.

However, the written document or spoken word is not the only location of study for narratives. Yanow has described built spaces such as museums, organisation offices and homes as part of stories that communicate 'values, beliefs and feelings' to those living and working within their walls as well as visitors (1998: 215a). While human artefacts such as buildings do not necessarily narrate on their own, we can view them as the manifestations of social events. Margot Winer (2001) conducted social archaeological research in South Africa and determined that the colonial architecture in many cities and villages, reflects the history of imperialism and socio-economic exploitation. For instance, the urbanisation of certain areas literally illustrates the forced exile of groups indigenous to the region (Winer 2001: 264).

According to Scholes, we research narrative as follows: there is a social event, which is narrated through texts, speech or other man-made artefacts, and an interpretation follows, thereby completing a 'semiotic cycle' (1980: 206 and Sandelowski 1991: 161b). For example, we learn about the horrors of World War II (1939-1945 - the event) via video clips and written documents preserved from the time and the buildings made into museums since the era. From this we interpret the meaning of these socio-historical artefacts, i.e. what can they tell us about our lives today? Of course, there are clear-cut moralistic lessons that we have learned since the end of the Second World War, religious and social oppression is wrong, fascism undesirable and genocide abhorrent. On the other hand, the "lessons" we learn from narratives are not necessarily universally applicable, as the world continues to witness mass genocides, such as in the wars in Bosnia and Rwanda, both taking place in the mid-1990s.

How we go on to interpret verbal recollections of an event through interviews takes on a mind reading quality, described by Cheryl Mattingly as: '[T]hat practical capability of inferring rightly or wrongly the motives that precipitate and underlie the actions of another' (2008: 137). In what Mattingly describes as a 'cultural borderland' presumed shared meanings in language are utilised by the

researcher to interpret vague language (such as “you know” or “kind of”), which hints not only at the motives behind certain actions, but also the moralistic meaning behind the event (2008: 141, see also Bruner 1986: 16). Brody also provides us with a concept of ‘virtual narratives’, i.e. the researcher interprets the social event based upon the surrounding narrative, picturing our own versions of characters and settings in the place of any gaps or inconsistencies (1999: 48).

Summary

This thesis uses narratives to explore how families make sense of their accommodation circumstances – which are regulated heavily via LA policy strategies – through the communication of their life stories as well as how narratives can be ‘read’ in home-making. Furthermore, the thesis examines the way and reasons why individuals working in LAs make policy choices, notably choices that will have (at macro level) ramifications for local communities and (at micro level) an impact on the lived experiences and well-being of families who have very little say in this decision-making process. These decisions range from where the families can live and for how long, to kind of conditions they will continue to live in. The space made for minority groups within societies and the issue of value conflict in organisations and policy will be discussed below, however we will first revisit the notion of ‘self’ by paying attention to the role of the ‘individual’ in society. Due to the importance of the role that the individual plays in this process – be it in setting policy agendas, drafting policy or carrying out policy implementation – the next section of the literature review will pay special attention to texts that have dealt with definitions of the ‘individual’ and his or her role in organisation.

3.2 Individualism within Organisations

The Workforce

In the early 1980s, Michael Lipsky warned fellow researchers not to be complacent about the obedience of lower level workers within public administration organisations, observing when objectives between managers and bureaucrats clashed, personal discretion often became part and parcel of decision-making processes (1980: 16-17). Alongside recognition of autonomy among low-level workers, here was also recognition of the presence of the individual within the organisation. In the new millennium, Kirton and Greene asserted that by the late 1990s the world of organisations had witnessed a shift in the way workforces are conceptualised (2000: 266). For instance, once viewed as homogenous, workforces are increasingly perceived and thus treated by managers as more diverse (Nkomo and Cox 1996: 339). Whilst Handy argued that individuality within organisational

spheres can lead to ‘unnecessary trauma and personal anxiety’, the fact that individual identity is acknowledged by managers among their teams warrants reason to study to what extent such identities guide professional decision-making (1994: 17). The management of LAs has also recently been forced to respond to increased diversity within the organisation as well as the community, thus also catching the attention of public management scholars (cf. Tierney 2007 and Fenwick et al. 2009).

What is Individualism?

Individualism can be defined as having a distinctive story or narrative, setting one apart from other members within the same social group (cf. Warren 1997), although it is the uniqueness of individual contributions that makes the whole or common narrative of a society (Currie 2000: 273). Additionally, the idea of the ‘individual’ - according to Alexis de Tocqueville - is merely a more modern and ‘moderate’ take on egoism (Bellah 1987: 366). Bellah uses Tocqueville’s (1961) theory of the ‘isolated man’ to help illustrate his point that people become self-interested members of societies and communities, imagining themselves existing in solitude and thus making decisions that they themselves alone will benefit from, without much regard for their impact on others (ibid). Lukes on the other hand, quotes Maistre’s (1884-87) comments on individualism in its earlier days of acknowledgement and analysis, calling it a: ‘frightening division of minds’ – perhaps implying that members of the same society should think the same way (1991: 71).

Psychological Egoism is a widely accepted concept, suggesting that each human will instinctively act in favour of their own interests before the interests of others regardless of any notion of morality, telling us what we should do (Rachels 1999: 70). However, it is also arguable that one’s concept of ‘self’ develops from experience of the social world around us rather than independently from an ‘inner essence’ and thus self-interest can only be understood in relation to and conjunction with other ‘selves’ (Bruner 1990: 42 and Yanow 2005: 83). There have been many associations made between enforced and fictitious homogenous identities and imperialism (cf. Cole 1986; Young 1990 Oommen 1997; Gilroy 2002; Tilley 2006; Fenwick et al. 2009; Newman and Clarke 2009), and claims that individuals begin to question and re-create a prescribed identity in times of social and spatial uncertainty (Bauman 1996: 19 and Denzin 1997: 38). This gives reason to believe that governments and managers find ‘homogenous’ identities easier to contain as states and organisations can function and implement policy smoothly this way (Friedman 2006: 487).

Throughout life, the decisions we make in both our personal and professional lives shape not necessarily the person we are nor even the person we will be, but how we will be remembered by others; in short it is both necessary for us to be individuals and also individuals who make the right decisions (Svensson 1997: 92 and Prentice 2007: 17). We decide how to make the right decisions at work and in our personal lives based on the values we are taught, most of which we learn from the implicit moral code of our upbringings within a family and in many cases a specific community (Douglas 1972: 539; Maclagan 1998: 10; Hoppe 2002: 307). These values are expressed and become tangible through norms, for instance formally written into policy texts, and informally acted out in customs. Essentially, ethics are 'ways of thinking' and ethical systems bind values and norms together (Singer 1994: 4-5). Thus, ethics can be viewed as a consciousness for each area of our lives, relative to different societies, guiding decision-making practices; hence an ethical narrative. We will return to the discussion of ethical narratives as part of decision-making within organisations in part 3.3 of this chapter.

Organisational Individualism

In an organisational context, individualism has certainly been an issue of resistance concerning managers since the time of Max Weber (1864-1920), who argued that decisions might be made and policies set but subsequent performance may not match initial intentions due to various interpretations of the meaning of and/or motivation behind a policy or initiative (Secher 2000: 18). Hence, workers have always expressed their individuality one way or another within the organisational setting, however acceptance of diverse identities amongst organisational teams is arguably recent. Additionally, certain scholars have discussed the surfacing of local councillors as the 'new kind of public person' in the Victorian era (Marquand 2004: 41 and Lepine and Sullivan 2010: 91-93), whose professional success and satisfaction depended on how well they played the 'role of a public person' (Lee 1963: 211). In other words, this suggests councillors were expected to become a certain kind of public leader, rather than being strictly themselves, although personality no doubt has an influence on popularity.

Whilst officers' and councillors' professional requirements differ significantly, as does their place within the LA, the necessity to steer their professional (and in the particular case of councillors, public), behaviour is apparent for both managers and the communities respectively, for the manifestation of desired policy outcomes. Strong individual leadership has been highly valued within some political discourses (cf. Leach 2010). To ensure discipline and adherence to

policy agendas set by managers, Blau and Scott described the ideal bureaucratic system as one in which personal likes or dislikes do not influence an officer's impersonal attitude towards his or her duties, henceforth increasing 'subordination of officials to policy directives' (1962: 32-33). Having said this, acceptance of individualism can aid managers to tap into their workers' 'internal drives' and use their personal 'ethical sensitivity' as professional motivation (cf. James 2000). The rise of various ethical codes of conduct defining 'acceptable conduct' (Plant 1994: 221) within organisational settings, illustrates an element of discouragement of individualistic discretion within the workplace (cf. Delaney and Sockell 1992 and Ianinska and Garcia-Zamor 2006).

Organisational Cultures

There are strong indicators that whilst organisations are clearly made up of individuals whose self-identity may experience high or low levels of subordination, organisational cultures also grow and develop. According to Mary E. Guy (1990) and Charles Handy (1994), organisations are reflections of society, which is made up of different groups with contrasting interests. Just as within societies where characters are bound together to some extent by a culture of shared 'values, beliefs and feelings, together with the artefacts of their expression and transmission', workers within organisations are bound together by their shared objectives and methods to organise and deliver services (Cook and Yanow 1993: 379). For successes or peace in within societies, it is logistically necessary for different groups to take each other's interests into account before acting. The same is true within the organisation. There are rules and codes of conduct to constrain and influence behaviour within organisations, just as there are laws to prohibit certain actions in wider society, thus viewing organisational structures through a socio-cultural lens can help us to understand how individuals both learn and become influenced by their social environment (cf. Weick and Westley 1996; Paolilli and Vitell 2002; Yanow 2005).

Handy encourages those of us studying behaviour within organisations to think of them as though they are small communities, for they resemble the structure of human society. For instance, each organisation has its own 'culture' and values (Handy 1994: 180-181). As in societies, organisations have their own individual aims and objectives, which encourage workers to behave in a certain manner and engage in particular activities in order to meet those goals (Haring 1970: 13-14 and James 2000: 44). Also, the nature of the organisation and the targets it stands to achieve will have an effect on the roles of the members of the organisation and how

they each relate to each other – much the same as within communities and/or societies (Handy 1994: 61-63). Organisations can be studied in the same manner as societies – using ‘ethnographic methodologies’ to see the ‘story’ of the organisation and the individuals working within it (cf. Yanow 1998 and 2004). This has informed the choice of methodology for this research (see *Methodology* chapter).

Individual Integrity

From the actions we are freely permitted to undertake according our society’s legal system, we have to decide what is the *right* thing to do: this is an ethical decision, requiring integrity (Guy 1990: 4). However much integrity we may be imbued with or we may lack, at times we are unable to make the right decision based upon our choices due to circumstances outside of our control. As a manager within an organisation or corporation, one is required to follow certain policies as part of their job; this demonstrates they have integrity (Harrison 2000: 131). Their integrity is further illustrated when they are faced with a dilemma that is not covered in the policy and they have a range of options where they must choose the right one. If they choose the wrong one this does not necessarily make them an unethical or bad person and if they choose the right one this does not necessarily make them a good or ethical person, although they may be morally judged in this manner by observers of the action. Additionally, making the right decision coincides with the person’s level of professionalism and professionalism does not necessarily coincide with ethical behaviour (Cox et al. 2003: 103). Wyld and Jones acknowledge the subjective nature of decision-making within the workplace, in that problems are solved to some extent depending on individual bureaucrats’ perception of ‘the ethical work climate’ (1997: 469).

Detert et al. (2008) refer to Bandura, Underwood and Fromson’s (1975) work, to argue that individuals morally defend their actions based upon their own subjective ethical standards and that when they know something may be considered socially unacceptable, they are able to morally rationalise their actions by these standards, so that they do not take personal responsibility for the consequences (Bandura et al. 1975: 254). Additionally, in order to deflect blame from themselves, workers can blame their colleagues or even their employers for their wrongdoings through ‘division of labour, division of decision-making and collective action’ (ibid: 255 and Detert et al. 2008: 375).

For instance, in the case of LA members working within a traveller liaison team, it is not their job to draft policies relating to the standard of living for those in caravan-dwelling communities. This role lies with those in central and local government,

who pass down new legislations for local authorities to interpret and implement (Williamson 1995: 79). It could be possible in this instance, for those working within LAs to interpret policies in a manner that may inflict harm on members of the community, but actually blame those who wrote the policies in the first place, stating that they merely follow the policy or guideline document. Therefore, one could maintain that ethics - according to employees of the LA - is illustrated based on the obligations a practitioner feels he or she has to their profession, rather than by the ethical values within the community in question. Conversely, it has been argued that personal values are only part of the decision-making process for individuals within organisations, as when they are to take responsibility for their own actions, they are held accountable for them (cf. Brief et al. 1991 and Glover et al. 1997). Hence, when practitioners know someone else will take responsibility for their performance at work they are more likely to follow instructions, regardless of their own personal ethical values, as they are not the ones who will be held accountable.

In the past it has been suggested that training programmes and check-lists are needed in order to guide ethical behaviour within the work-place with researchers detailing organisational reluctance to move beyond codes of conduct in order to ensure that employees make the right decisions (cf. Hyman et al. 1990; Delaney and Sockell 1992; White and Lam 2000). Others have argued that guidelines set out in this format over-simplify the nature of decision-making. Thus we cannot only rely on theoretical frameworks in order to devise ethical codes of conduct, to make ethical decisions or teach business and management students about ethics within the workplace, as these models do not take into account the complex nature of ethical decision-making in the real world, despite often being initiated or designed in a reactionary nature (cf. Ireland 1991; Cyriac 1992; Osborne and Redferne 2006; Hoeyer and Lynøe 2009).

Summary

Theoretical models undermine the fact that in real life situations, each ethical dilemma is context-based and unique with many different variables affecting the nature of the scenario, the options for the decision maker, as well as the outcomes and consequences of such actions. In real life, for example, people may not be thinking clearly enough to follow a checklist or remember a set of guidelines in order to make the right decision. Also, they may not have the time or they may not find the guidelines applicable to the situation. Therefore if we can acknowledge that this is not the best way for individuals to make decisions in their everyday lives, we

can assume it is also inappropriate for decision-making processes in the work-place to be construed in this manner. Despite needing rules and guidelines for things to run smoothly, each dilemma will be different – occur at a different time, under different circumstances and most importantly dealt with by people perhaps unknown to the policymaker. The behaviour of bureaucrats is not easy to predict and prepare for and even in cases where they are known well to policymakers, they will implement policies during phases of varying moods, interacting with other individuals with varying professional experience as well as fluctuating understandings of the dilemma itself. At this stage one could firstly argue there is no straightforward way for individual bureaucrats to make a decision at work by relying on codes of conduct imbued with organisation values. Secondly, individuals cannot help deciding on the ‘right’ decisions to make based on their own personal value systems.

Managers may attempt to use policymaking as a mechanism of control over street-level bureaucrats, however they cannot escape the fact that individuals and groups within the organisational structure may not always agree with their endeavours and due to their positioning within local communities they have substantial discretion in the way policy is implemented (Lipsky 1980: 13). Thus they must seek out methods to ensure bureaucrats will adhere to their policy designs (cf. Light 1973). However, this can lead to a conflict in values for bureaucrats, as is explored next.

3.3 Conflicting Values in the Organisational Sphere

How Morality Operates

Morality and ethical decision-making in business and organisational management literature is traditionally concerned with the governance of actions that affect others and their well-being (Lawton 2009: 41) and also, as Kant argues, those decisions that will affect your own well-being (Lafollette 2006: 4). Most of the literature regarding ethical decision-making in organisations and the codes of conduct proposed to combat unethical behaviour as well as contested decision-making, is based upon why workers make morally ‘wrong’ decision – i.e. doing something that they know is wrong and seeking a way to deflect blame or knowingly breaking the rules for their own benefit (Bandura et al. 1975: 254). As Maclagan puts it, the literature revolves around issues of motivation and effectiveness rather than ‘beliefs, attitudes, priorities, thinking and orientations’ which are each related to values (1998: 9).

Ethical decision-making can also be concerned with weighing up various options that each seem valid, but cannot work in conjunction with each other, thus deliberating based on the moral intensity of each option and its potential outcome resulting in an ethical narrative (cf. Jones 1991 and Gortner 1994). On the other hand, ethical decision-making involves intentions – i.e. a worker or manager may have intended to do what they thought was right, but their own ethical ideas conflict with the well-being of the people their decision will ultimately affect (Pesch 2005: 164). Bruner argues that we should try to understand an individual's experiences and actions through their intentions (1990: 33). Although we may have the best of intentions when trying to deliberate on a certain matter, we should also pay attention to the circumstances we find ourselves in. Even if we would choose the most moral option and would always do the best for others it is arguable the options we are presented with depends on the situation itself, not our personalities, personal values nor professional protocols (Prentice 2007: 17).

Ethical Decision-Making

There is a recent history of unethical conduct in English local government. For example, in 1972, the discovery of a major bribery scandal involving John Poulson and the Freemasons would have a long lasting effect on the monitoring of local government, due to the influence Poulson had within public sector building and planning contracts. Subsequently, the Prime Minister's Committee on Local Government Rules of Conduct (1974) and the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life (1976) were drafted and brought into action in order to try and encourage a new culture of 'honesty' to meet the shift in values and expectations of the public (cf. Plant 1994 and Cowell et al. 2011). Subsequent scandals have led to the creation of the Standards Board for England and a national code of conduct for local councillors (cf. Lawton and Macaulay 2004).

However, whilst it was clear at the time that 'rules of conduct cannot create honesty', it was no more clear then than it is now, how and when it is appropriate for central government to decide what is right or wrong for local government (Doig and Skelcher 2001: 90-91). Michael Walzer (1973) gives an account of the supposed *Problem of Dirty Hands*, which according to him primarily concerns politicians who are attempting to attain power, employing tactics that keep their morality and integrity in one piece. This is thought to be difficult since it is perceived as necessary to lie, cheat and deceive people in order to win elections and maintain power, thus one gets their hands 'dirty' (cf. Haring 1970). However, this is not simply because those that wish to obtain political power or become leaders of their communities are

inherently bad people; individuals are inclined to get their hands 'dirty' during the balancing act of promoting their own personal values in addition to those of the community they work within as a service provider (Pesch 2005: 164-165). Ideally, those in power or those who have leading positions within organisations have a 'stable set of values and norms' and should attempt to maintain their integrity throughout their careers (Kolthoff 2007: 40). However, researchers might wonder whether or not the issue of 'dirty hands' is a question of ethics at all. For instance, should the way one chooses to conduct their professional life be considered a moral issue since it could be argued that these actions are only made for one's personal career motives? Then again since these actions within public services often involve and affect other people (cf. Cowell et al. 2011), we could also argue it is indeed an ethical issue (cf. Jones 1991).

Whilst individuals are regularly confronted with scenes of personal deliberation they also attempt to compromise with those needs and wants of others as well as the multiple choices available to themselves (Gauthier 1963: 123). This case of deliberation becomes ethical when individuals are in a position to choose the right option rather than the wrong option (Tarrant 2000: 144 and Ianinska and Garcia-Zamor 2006: 5). In these cases, the individual or group must make a decision based upon their own ethical standards or morality, striving to turn a situation from 'how it is' into 'how it ought to be' (Bennett 2000: 364). Being equipped to make such a decision requires a certain impartiality to the interests of the individuals involved, good intentions and also a considerable insight of the situation (Rachels 1999: 15 and Prentice 2007: 17 and 20). We also have the presence of our social peers and professional colleagues to keep us obedient and ensure that we only consider moral or valid options in our moments of ethical deliberation (Detert et al. 2008: 375), thus veering us away from the possibility of moral disengagement (cf. Bandura 1986).

It may seem necessary for individuals to feel socially pressured into acting according to certain rules and regulations, from one communal set of compatible values or virtues in order to survive and avoid social chaos (Milne 1972: 34; Rachels 1999: 178 and Blears 2005: 13). However, there are calls for a post-modern 'laissez faire' attitude, valuing diverse ethical approaches (Fox 1994: 100). The latter approach is problematic because individuals are given the opportunity to commit immoral deeds whilst morally justifying their actions to themselves and not necessarily being held to account by anyone else (cf. Bandura et al. 1975). In addition, deviation from one core set of values and priorities may not secure efficient outcomes, especially within organisational contexts (Haring 1970: 24). It is

debatable whether there ever exists one single set of values to be adhered to within any community or organisation (Hoppe 2002).

Value Conflict in Organisational Decision-Making

Whilst professional decision-making can be at once unpredictable, it can also become incoherent as bureaucrats attempt to implement various policies simultaneously that are either unrelated or contradict each other due to their inherent irreconcilable value systems (Jochim and May 2010 and Liu et al. 2010). It is particularly difficult to make clear-headed decisions in a busy work environment with ever changing circumstances, when the outcome is unknown to the deliberator and yet no less an important factor to consider (Goodwin 1972: 103-104 and Miller et al. 1996: 293). The result does not only consist of tangible products or policy implementation success – it is also about the values that are upheld based on the decision made. Individuals become emotionally involved in debates concerning values due to their subjectivity, as well as them being such a fundamental part of who we are and what we live for in our personal lives (Hoppe 2002: 310). Therefore which values should be upheld is a contentious and lengthy process to partake in.

For example, whilst both liberty and equality are honourable virtues to strive for within an organisation or community (Pesch 2005: 33-34 and Rutgers 2008: 94-95), there is a clear argument within political philosophy that the two cannot co-exist in one policy initiative (cf. Nozick 1974; Hayek 1976; Friedman and Friedman 1980). Whilst there are some who would argue it is unfair to give opportunities to the less fortunate and potentially restrict the opportunities of the more fortunate (Young 1990: 192), there are also those who question how fair it is for the prosperous to ignore the rights, needs and aspirations of disadvantaged peoples, as we should all have an equal share of the world's resources (Allen 2000: 23 and Singer 2002: 36-37). Arguably, if a government should order an affluent neighbourhood to share its resources and wealth with a destitute neighbourhood in order to uphold policies of equality, they could be accused of depriving the former neighbourhood their liberty to continue to be affluent as well as using their wealth as they choose (Lukes 1991: 46-47). However, we still have not solved our problem of how to aid the less fortunate. Thus we are in an ethical dilemma due to our own value-based obligations conflicting with each other (cf. Gauthier 1963).

Another example may be an individual – let us call her Bobbi - who is offered a lucrative job contract that will enable her to financially look after her family. However, Bobbi does not agree with the values of the job description, as the job

involves the direct abuse and exploitation of others. Bobbi has to make a decision to either stand by her obligations and prioritise the well-being of her family or stand by her values and prioritise the well-being of the group potentially at risk (cf. Williams 1994). Evidently it is not a decision to be taken lightly, but according to Bandura's et al. model of moral disengagement, Bobbi is free to take the job regardless of the group's suffering if she can find way to justify her choice, if only to herself (1975: 225). Or else, she must be able to explain to her family why she cares more about the suffering of people she does not know than theirs. Once she figures out her puzzle, the action Bobbi chooses could be deemed either good or bad depending on whether or not she is able to bring about the most happiness possible with her decision from a utilitarian perspective (Sidgwick 1973: 314 and Jackson 2000: 583).

Employees regularly face the task of following instructions and policies at work that deviate from their own value systems and thus have to seek out ways to reconcile how they would prefer to behave, with how their employer or manager expects them to act in order to fulfil professional obligations and keep their job (Prentice 2007: 18). This can cultivate a "group think" mentality within work places as individuals within teams are coerced to tow-the-professional-party-line (ibid: 19 and Grosenick 1994: 183), which is awkward and daunting to break out of (Rieman 2008: 93-96). At times such as these there is a pressure within organisational settings to put ethical differences aside and collaborate with others for optimum efficiency (Longoria 2005: 128). However, there may be cases in organisations where work loads are allocated to a number of individuals - who do not necessarily share the same values - in order to get a project finished on time. In such cases - especially where employee discretion might be key to getting the job done - organisational cultures and ethical codes cannot completely control the ethical standards, norms or goals of the individual and therefore - as in society settings - we witness conflicts in the workplace (Miller et al. 1996: 296). Conflicts are resolved by the maintenance of some values and not others, arguably subtly reflecting the values that will be pushed through in public service policy (cf. Newman and Clarke 2009). Therefore, consumers of the services at the end of policy implementation become concerned about the decisions being made on their behalf. Codes of ethics, which attempt to regulate individualism within the work place, attempt to ensure that discretion is guided and individuals work together to achieve common goals, whilst upholding common values, may help (Plant 1994: 236 and Ianinska and Garcia-Zamor 2006: 3).

Summary

We have established that professional ethical decision-making can be aided and hindered by ethical codes of conduct and that individuals are struck with ethical dilemmas due to their own internalised conflicting values, their personal values conflicting with the values of the organisational setting, as well as with other individuals working within it. Furthermore, LAs attempt to uphold certain values through their policy initiatives, however the values of these policies may conflict with the values of those charged with implementing them (undoubtedly affecting the policy process), in addition to conflicting with the values of other policy initiatives. Thus paying attention to conflict in LAs, which is at times caused by differing values, can help us gain an insight into not only ethical narratives of policy processes, but also how these values are remade during implementation and therefore how we as researchers can identify these narratives in the lived experiences of local communities.

3.4 The Location of Minority Groups within Dominant Narratives

Cultural Belonging

The way that we interact with the physical world around us is highly personal and subjective, as well as dependent on other numerous circumstances, which can render each of our individual experiences - within the same space - unique (Haring 1970: 23 and Bender 2006: 303). Therefore, it is fair to assume that an individual may at times feel confused or conflicted about a place (Bender 2006: 303) and furthermore groups of individuals may also disagree about a place, its meaning and its purpose (cf. Pader 2006). This can also apply to who belongs within a community and who does not and depending on how authentic their claim to membership is, since authenticity itself is a subjective, personal and uncompromising part of identity rather than reality (Marquand 2004: 82). A shared sense of authenticity (for example through shared language, skin colour or faith) can be used to unite groups and create imagined communities and also shut others out (Gilroy 2002: 54-55; Anderson 2006: 144-145; Essed and Trienekens 2008: 60-61). These methods of social inclusion and exclusion are effective in keeping some groups in a dominant and ruling position. It is rarely the case that everyone agrees with the decisions made and values held by majority groups, therefore causing friction, leading to emotionally charged debates, especially where social policy relates to the way of life of a minority group (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010: 4).

In accordance with perceptions over the meaning of 'social' space, social policy shifts and evolves with changing public attitudes (Leach 1995: 35), and time

and again communities and governments in Britain have demonstrated that their attitudes cannot accommodate the “gypsy” lifestyle (Hawes and Perez 1995: 129). Arguably, the state merely ‘tolerates’ the way of life of caravan-dwelling Pavee and Romani families, expecting their lifestyles to eventually change and become more ‘conventional’, and more manageable for LAs (Hawes and Perez 1995: 128). This is supported by the fact that ‘Gypsies’ were the only group targeted by the Caravans Sites Act (1968), insinuating Romani lifestyles are problematic, needing to be dealt with vigorously and systematically by policy, to suit the rest of the population (Hyman 1989: 23).

Often, minority groups that are or have been oppressed become insular in order to form a collective identity and maintain their cultural traits in defiance of outside suppressive groups (Sarup 1994: 95). Pavee and Romani groups are no exception to this practice. It has been a recurring expectation, by historians, gypsologists and policymakers alike that Romani and Pavee communities will make attempts to be different from other groups for the two purposes offered above: (i) to maintain a culturally symbolic boundary between themselves and others (Liégeois 2005: 54), and (ii) in order to maintain their own cultural identities (Cohen 1982: 6). It has been noted in the past by anthropologists that the English Romani and Spanish Gitano have a very strong sense of race as a part of their identity, setting themselves apart from *Gorgers* and *Payos* respectively¹³. Being part of the Gypsy ‘race’ relies almost entirely on descent and appropriate upbringing, therefore making access for outsiders very difficult (Okely 1983: 67 and Gay Y Blasco 1999: 175). From the dominant society’s point of view, those groups who become or remain culturally remote are viewed as strangers who do not belong. Therefore, as is the case with skin colour, culture and language, which also become borders for permanent social exclusion (Sarup 1994: 101-102).

The *Race Relations Act* (1976) protects our legal right not to be discriminated against based upon our race; this legislation was later enforced for those authorities and organisations that provide a public service (UKPGA 2000b). In addition, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) states that: ‘[E]very individual [...] of society [...] shall strive [...] to promote respect for these rights and freedoms [...] to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance,’ (UDHR 1948). By these ‘rights’, the statement above is referring to every individual’s birth-right to freedom, equality and dignity regardless of ‘race, colour, sex, language,

¹³ ‘Gorger’ is the British-Romani name for outsider or non-Gypsy (Smith and Marsh 2009: 8); ‘Payo’ is the Gitano name for non-Gypsy (Gay Y Blasco 1999: 3).

religion, political, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' (UDHR 1948: Article 2).

From a deontological point of view, one must follow these policies unquestionably in order to preserve the freedom and welfare of all people. On the other hand, from a utilitarian or consequentialist standpoint, as long as a policy is implemented in a manner that gives the majority of people concerned happiness, it is the ethical thing to do (Singer 2002: 38-40). Thus, in the face of the ultimate dichotomy – equality versus efficiency - efficiently providing to a majority will always be chosen by bureaucrats if under pressure to spend less time and money (cf. Okun 1974). Nonetheless, policies between and within central and local governments will be interpreted by individuals who subjectively decide what is right or wrong, depending upon how the bureaucrat relates to the community in question (Gauthier 1986: 21; Hawkesworth 1988: 146; Yanow 1996: 24).

However, deontological and consequentialist viewpoints are not the only perspectives to be considered when we are discussing societies. Tim Scanlon argues that within “Western” human societies we are all locked into a ‘social contract’, i.e. a perceived ‘reasonably’ appropriate way of behaving in order to uphold common values that will benefit all and maintain social cohesion (1998: 191). In the case of public policy implementation within communities, the future is uncertain for all of us, thus we should work well together and attempt to ensure each other’s welfare as it may impact upon our own (Pestieau 2006: 7). Therefore, for each dilemma we face there is a straightforward way of deliberating what we should or should not do and how to weigh up our different options in the ‘proper’ manner. One could assume that we should never actually be in an ethical dilemma since we should always ultimately know what to do. The social contract theory as it is today was proposed by Thomas Hobbes (1969). He argued that in order for human society to develop from a barbarous state to a civilised state (i.e. living together and helping each other), people needed to be able to depend on each other and trust each other (Hobbes 1969: 31). Therefore, we needed to have basic rules in place (aside from legal constraints), which would govern, how we make day-to-day choices. We needed to come out of the state of making decisions purely based on self-interest and learn to make decisions bearing others in mind and at times even put their needs ahead of our own should their need be greater. Arguably, this is where our sense of social morals is derived from.

Sharing Social Spaces

Brunt defines 'community' as a collection of people who share the same 'interests, sentiments, behaviour and objects by virtue of membership' (2007: 80). They have numerous factors in common binding them to the group, including shared aims and values that they presumably need to work together in order to achieve. According to this definition anyone should be able to become a member if his or her interests and sentiments fit the norm. Gautier (1994) has argued that as humans we rarely help others¹⁴ unless there is some shared benefit. When we co-operate and collaborate with each other there are advantages for all. Having said this, should we be "anti-social" – i.e. act out of pure self-interest or socially disruptively - we will each become disadvantaged. Furthermore, those who refuse to take a positively collaborative role within society fail to benefit from what society can offer.

Philosophical literature on the social contract theory can help explain findings within interpretive policy analysis literature. For instance, some of the literature suggests the way policymakers write strategies, which are later interpreted and implemented by bureaucrats, can be related to their own motivations and perceptions of their place within society (Handy 1994: 29-30; Miller et al. 1996: 296; James 2000: 44b). Moreover, as already discussed above, individual ideas of values, norms and ethics as well as perceptions of social space can also affect the way one moves within their community and their work-place. Therefore how policy related issues might affect one's community may also affect their ethical outlook on the situation.

As Douglas argued, whilst social rules include social morals, they also involve other rules (1973: 540). Social rules are 'criteria' that 'normal' members of society are expected to follow and take considerable note of whilst making decisions. Morals like values, on the other hand, apply to and are 'imposed' upon all members of society and therefore are viewed as something that 'binds' us all together when we adhere to them (ibid). This complies with the social contract theory discussed above. Robert Solomon discusses the Aristotelian theory that 'our self-interest is [...] identical to the larger interests of the group' (1997: 214). In other words, how we feel about many things, including the kind of morals we have depends somewhat on the community that we live in and the things in life that we yearn for are a product of what society wants as a whole (ibid). This may imply that mainstream society indirectly dictates the way that stakeholders interpret policy documents on specific cases. Furthermore, in a utilitarian sense, they may be more concerned with what the wider community thinks is fair rather than what may be

¹⁴ By 'others' it is meant here either those outside of our kinship circle or local community.

best for the individuals involved. Whilst it should be noted that the ethical ideologies underlying policy texts do not manifest themselves as well formed in real life, by studying the outcomes of policy implementation we can uncover who benefits from community decision-making (Polsby 1980: 113). Additionally, by studying the language used in the documents, we are able to investigate what influences policy change, thus making 'power and ideological forces' supporting the policies more transparent (Kinney 2006: 252).

Dvora Yanow (2004) has conducted research to show that organisations and corporations would do better if they took advice from experienced 'local' agents rather than leaving all decision-making to educated managers. In this case she is arguing that managers in businesses and organisations have little respect for the views and knowledge of labourers and other local employees, despite the enriching potential 'local knowledge' may have for their work (Yanow 2004: 10). This is due to the perception that training and education outweighs practical and knowledge, specific to 'local contexts' (ibid: 11b-12a). Ball sustains this argument by proposing that: 'addressing the local dimension generates a user view-point' (1995: 86). In other words, by acknowledging local issues that may affect policy-making and implementation as well as accepting local influence and advice, the policy actually reflects the needs of those it is supposed to aid when implemented. Some would argue this should be the overall aim of public policy initiatives.

In the policy area examined in this thesis, having a knowledge of the people, their history and their needs - especially from their point of view - is certainly an argument presented time and time again, by so-called gypsologists (Fonseca 1996: 100), social historians (Adams et al. 1975; Taylor 2008; Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995) and anthropologists (Okely 1983 and 1996) as well as prominent members from the Romani and Pavee communities themselves for example Gloria Buckley NBE, of Romani descent who manages her own three caravan sites and Tony Price, a writer also of Romani descent who has worked alongside primary schools in order to teach children about Romani culture and history.

Williamson argues in the past there were substantial changes in policy goals with the change of central government from Labour to Conservative (1995: 79). In this time of policy change, privatisation and ownership of property was encouraged; due to this LA policy-making was curtailed to some degree (ibid). Additionally, Ball states that the attitudes that LAs have towards policies has not been documented very much and asks: what do LAs think about regional policy and more interestingly, does it matter what they think (1995: 86)? Understanding local views of national policy can aid in establishing and maintaining central-local relationships and also

aid when it comes to implementing these policies at the local level since a knowledge as been gained through local agencies of what appeals to local communities (ibid). How much policymakers and implementers are able to relate to those who the policy will ultimately affect, will in turn influence the way they feel about the policy and whether they view it as a moral issue or not (Jones 1991: 373).

Summary

It is clear that although personal ethical values are influenced by communities and a fundamental part of being ethical is the ability to relate to those around us, stakeholders may relate better to those whom they share a sense of right and wrong with, therefore constructing a form of community membership through shared 'interests and sentiments' (Solomon 1997: 214 and Brunt 2007: 80). It seems that there are more attempts not to relate to minority communities, illustrating a potential lack of concern for the ethical implications of the work that they do, as well as a lack of association between policy implementation and ethical behaviour. However, ethics is subjective and the way each individual allows ethical values to impact on their decisions is unique from person to person.

3.5 Summary of the Literature Review

In this literature review, we have explored themes of narrative, individuality, ethical decision-making and value conflict as well as the role played by minority groups within pluralistic societies. Further themes will be explored below in chapters seven, eight and nine as they emerge through the analysis of the research findings. These themes overlap and therefore provide the opportunity to investigate the extent to which value-laden, cultural scripts and social narratives, shape organisational culture and policies in one way, and individuals and families within society in another. The back and forth process of influence through the life-lessons inherent in narrative is insightful in learning about value conflict. If narratives are to be consistent so that ethical lessons can be learned within society, and these narratives play their way into policy, what are the results? What is left unsaid in these "official" narratives? Who is allowed to tell the story and who is rendered voiceless in this process? And what are the material consequences of dominant narratives becoming a part of a policy that will affect the well-being of minority voices?

The following chapter will examine the methodological approaches (interpretive critical discourse analysis) applied to contribute to the literary interval left by the scholars reviewed throughout this chapter in order to answer the research questions. The notion of an ethnographic research process is also revisited

in the second half of the *Methodology* chapter to reflexively scrutinise the role of the researcher during fieldwork.

4. Methodological Approaches

Introduction

At this stage in the thesis it is worth a reminder that this study is not about Pavee or Romani lifestyles specifically, or about *being* Pavee or Romani and the various aspects of their respective cultures, how such cultures inform traditions or kinship structures or how such cultures render Pavee and Romani families distinctive from other groups. Rather, this thesis presents an examination of a specific policy area, which is directed at particular social groups (caravan-dwellers) in order to learn more generally about how families experience certain mainstream services - against the backdrop of a perceived dominant social and ethical commentary - which seek to accommodate, yet simultaneously correct their difference. However, what makes these families different from other caravan-dwelling groups (i.e. being Romani or Pavee) is not necessarily relevant, especially when we take into account that no two families are the same regardless of their ethnicity or cultural background. By focusing on Pavee and Romani families as being Pavee and Romani rather than just families living in England, we run the risk of creating grand generalisations about the two groups rather than treating the individuals (who took part in the research and happened to be of Romani and Pavee heritage), with respect for their individuality and the various and diverse experiences between families within these two minority groups (Yuval-Davis 1999: 118).

Thus we should pay more attention to the subjects who participated in the research as caravan-dwelling individuals, regardless of their ethnic background (Warren 1997). The only separation that can be attempted from here is between those who worked in organisations and LAs (and thus have an active decision-making role within policy processes) and those on the receiving end of such policy endeavours. The subjects of this research came from a variety of backgrounds and those who gave accounts of the experiences of caravan site policy implementation, did not always self-identify as Pavee or Romani, while at times, those who gave accounts of organisational decision-making self-identified Romani or Pavee. This illustrates how the neat lines academics attempt to draw between policy implementation and experience become blurred in reality.

This chapter will discuss the methods chosen to carry out fieldwork, how analysis was undertaken, the ethical considerations as well as outlining how limitations to the research project were overcome during fieldwork and access gained to the various communities and LA organisations.

4.1 Methodological Approaches to Research

The title for this research is: *Ethical Narratives in Contested Landscapes: the Implementation and Experience of Public Policy Values for Traveller Caravan Sites*. The focus is not only how the values and priorities change at different policy stages but also how the policy itself changes as a result, according to who is involved and the ethical narrative they interpret throughout the process. It became the trend within the policy sciences to construct and dissect the numerous stages of the policy process (e.g. agenda setting, formulation, implementation and evaluation), or to analyse policy processes prior to decision making (ex-ante), during implementation (ongoing), and/or once the policy exercise is complete (ex-post) to see if any changes are required (Hoppe 1993: 82-83 and Wollmann 2007: 393-394). The 'policy cycle' was later criticised for over-simplifying the complex nature of policy processes, since they cannot be divided so easily. For example: agenda setting and formulation could be described as the same thing (Jann and Wegrich 2007: 56). Furthermore, presenting policy processes in such a top-down format in order for analysts to make better sense of them, removes the real-world meanings, interpretations and actions from the equation rather than showing the processes for how they are viewed by bureaucrats and citizens (ibid). It is understood that implementation is not a stand-alone stage in policy, but consists of nuanced overlaps between stages. As noted above, the experience of implementation and the implementation itself, overlap too extensively to be studied separately.

Research that deals with narratives (in this case ethical narratives) can also be presented in a story-like fashion (cf. Cortazzi 2007). Bevir claims: 'We can explain the practice of governance in different states by means of narratives that unpack them by reference to beliefs that arose against the background of distinct traditions' (2006: 282). In other words, we can use the everyday anecdotes and life stories of councillors, bureaucrats and policymakers as evidence of personal and professional events that showcase their ethical beliefs, which in turn illustrates to researchers how the aforementioned characters, both perceive problems and make policy decisions (Forester 1993: 192 and Clarke 2007: 451). Cunliffe et al. also claim that studies of narratives have aided scholars to comprehend organisational practices such as policymaking (2004: 263).

Therefore, we should return to the three research questions:

1. To what extent does local authority policy-making reflect a limited discourse that excludes other discourses particularly those of minority groups who do not conform or adhere to conventional notions of citizenship?

2. How can we employ ethnographic research approaches to understand the divergent discourses that impact a contested arena of policy-making, such as local authority caravan-site decision-making?

3. To what extent are public policy decisions, and their subsequent social consequences, interpreted through and into various discourses by policy-makers, and perhaps more importantly by those subject to the policy issue?

As we have seen in the previous chapters, these questions have in part been answered through an extensive examination of literature, cutting across various disciplines. However, previous studies on policy, community and organisational ethics can only tell us so much, especially considering the limited supply of literature concerning ethical policy processes beyond the realm of healthcare facilities (cf. Brody 1999). The implications of the public or social policy examined here also have roots in ideas on citizenship and property rights. This thesis engages with the writers of such policies, those implementing the policies and those most affected by the policy to fully understand the journey of the policy itself and how its meaning has been re-interpreted by the various individuals coming into contact with it.

Scholes states that we employ narratives to learn about social events and meanings by examining and subsequently interpreting the artefacts of a narration, thereby completing a 'semiotic cycle' (1980: 206). In order to answer the three questions and explore the various dimensions of ethical narratives within the policy process, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological approach has been chosen, with the additional use of the following methodical tools:

1. Textual Analysis of policy documents, local and national media sources and interview transcripts, in order to examine how power is written into documents and verbalised by practitioners, through what is said, but also more importantly what is not said.

2. Semi-structured Interviews with LA practitioners; with various stakeholders of this policy area about their own personal approaches to their work and at caravan sites; with residents about how policies affect their well-being.

3. Aesthetic Observations at caravan sites to see how people lived and to understand or 'feel' the use of this public space.

Although three methods have been used, it is not for the purpose of triangulation since the objective of the research has not been to test a theory or results (Clarke 2007: 449). Rather, the approach is ethnographic. Ethnography tends to utilise a variety of methods in order to gain an in depth – almost native – perspective on the ‘web of associations’ and ‘social poetics’ binding individuals together within communities and organisations (cf. Handy 1994; Mattingly and Lawlor, 2000; Cunliffe 2002; Huby et al. 2011). Moreover, in order to come to see for oneself the ‘implicit moral meanings’ of an organisation or community one arguably should be part of it and can through certain approaches such as participant observation (Douglas 1973: 539). In the case of LAs, one must take into account the relationship and communication between the organisation and local communities in order to understand the intentions behind policy initiatives (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 21 and Yanow 2000: 14). Researchers are able to gain this knowledge from ‘being there’ and understanding the everyday, local nuances that are taken for granted by policymakers and bureaucrats as well as residents of the local community (Ybema et al. 2009: 1 and Huby et al. 2011: 211). In order to get to know these research settings intimately, it is wise for the researcher to limit her scope of cases, this way enabling herself to focus more intensively than in large sample research (Gerring 2007: 20).

The fieldwork came together over two district areas, each located in the same rural, English county, where it was possible to gain access to several LA organisations, who had prominent roles in the drafting and implementation of caravan site policy. It was also possible to access several families living on local caravan sites who each turned out to be of Pavee and Romani descent. As fieldwork within organisations and on caravan sites got underway, it became possible to select appropriate policy documents for textual analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

One of the main purposes of this research is to understand how stakeholders of LAs articulate ethics through their policymaking. In other words, to explore whether or not it is possible to learn about the ethical viewpoints or narratives of individuals working within LAs by reading and analysing the policies they write, as well as reading and analysing the outcomes of those policies, i.e. caravan sites. Policy documents are subjectively defined by the individuals involved in their development and therefore those who choose to study their processes should be aware of the interpretive nature of policy analysis (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 23).

The methodological and theoretical approach *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) can be used to analyse verbal and written language and semiotics as a means to explain broader social processes (Fairclough 2001: 121). CDA as a methodology is not considered to be any specific tool or technique in itself, but is instead a 'way of knowing' informing the methods that are actually used to carry out research (Haverland and Yanow 2012: 401b). This methodological approach is used by policy researchers to investigate documents and other texts in order to understand experience, thereby deciphering the 'relation between language and the world of things' (White 1987: 189). CDA is also useful in narrative analysis, as the approach does not only apply to written discourses. Narrative discourses for instance, are 'seen, heard and read' through various forms of media, for example through novels, paintings, buildings and films (Sandelowski 1991: 162b), as well as in conversations (cf. Mattingly and Lawlor 2000). Therefore, since CDA can aid us to understand social meaning-making through discourses, we can use various platforms of research to make these interpretations, thereby widening our methodological horizons.

CDA is also employed to discover the location of power in relation to the use of written and spoken language through what is said and also not said (Wodak 2001: 2 and Friedman 2006: 491). Interpretations can be made by the reader or listener of a particular narrative, who has to 'fill in the blanks' when certain details are left out, creating a 'virtual narrative' (Brody 1999: 48). Additionally, CDA can be utilised by researchers to achieve socio-cultural and political equality by transforming social realities into something more beneficial to all people, rather than just those in power (Blommaert and Bulcan 2000: 447 and Van Dijk 2001: 96). In the study of narratives, taking a post-modern approach to analysis, it can be argued that one should seek to deconstruct dominant or conventional narrative traditions in order to highlight the ways in which narratives privilege some, while excluding others (Cunliffe et al. 2004: 264). Researchers can promote various interpretations of and contributions to the numerous streams within a given narrative, by those individuals who are usually not heard and are thought to be passive listeners of a discourse, rather than advancing the coherent, existing narratives by those already in power (ibid).

CDA is used here to study the language of written policies relating to caravan site provision and other services by LAs for caravan-dwelling communities, as well as the spoken language of practitioners and families, to uncover the meaning of this language and the values it is imbued with (Bevir and Rhodes 2005: 178 and Yanow 2000: 16). Used in an interpretive manner, this approach will also help analyse how

organisations and local governments use metaphorical and ethical language whilst indirectly illustrating their political agendas and demonstrating their own ideas of public values for others to follow. According to Yanow: 'An interpretive approach to policy analysis [...] is one that focuses on the meanings of policies, on the values, feelings or beliefs they express, and on the processes by which those meanings are communicated to and "read" by various audiences' (2000:14).

As each individual reads the same text, they take something different away from it, unknowingly reading into the text their own meaning based on 'values and beliefs' they can relate to (Osborne and Redfern 2006: 126). Therefore, CDA can be used to study how individuals working within organisations relate personally to policy texts and what kind of values, feelings or beliefs they read into the text and thus how a certain text is affected by personal interpretation in implementation (cf. Lynch 2006). By making use of caravan sites as the human artefacts of policy implementation, one can also use CDA to relate to built structures, which are symbolic of the implicit meanings offered by (spoken and written) organisation language (Yanow 1998: 216a).

4.1.1 Textual Analysis

The text of a small selection of policy documents related to LA caravan site provision and management in England has been analysed. The point of making this selection was not to compare the documents either to each other or to housing documents, in order to make claims on how policies in different accommodation areas contrast, as this would presume a connection between the texts and lived experiences of both forms of document (Sandelowski 1991: 162a). Also, to conduct a comparative policy analysis would be to assume a positivistic stance (cf. Lodge 2007), which would conflict with the over all epistemology of this research project (cf. Haverland and Yanow 2012). Furthermore, comparing policy documents with each other in an exchange and contrast of information runs the risk of making the policy narratives abstract, rather than using an interpretivist approach to connect the various expressions and lessons of ethics found in policy narratives to the experience in caravan sites (cf. Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 115 and Yanow 2000: 90). A more comprehensive list of the six main documents analysed can be found in chapter six.

What is Textual Analysis?

Reading and analysing documents and other written texts can aid researchers to understand how practitioners within LAs and other public service organisations

give meaning to policy designs, as well as validating some of the technical details gained from interviews (Yanow 2007: 411). Discourse analysis can include the analysis of conversations known as narrative analysis (ibid: 412), as well as the textual analysis of policy and organisational documents and media prints (Mossholder et al. 1995: 336). It is important to note that the two terms and concepts 'discourse' analysis and 'narrative' analysis are not necessarily interchangeable as discourses narrate – and in this instance, this is a study of how ethics are narrated through the occurrence of policy discourses (White 1987: 3).

The type of policy documents used for analysis were those detailing - in accordance with central government legislation - local government sanctioned guidelines for caravan site planning and management as well as 'integration' and 'community cohesion' strategies. Policy documents were usually easily available for viewing and/or downloading via the websites or online archives of county and district councils or central government departments. Additionally, making contacts and acquaintances within caravan site planning departments proved beneficial, as they were able to send new material as it was drafted or published.

As is explained more extensively later in this chapter, the choice was made to interview the individuals who had written or worked with the documents analysed to get to know them better as people and talk to them about their work and how they related to the communities. As a result, there was a need to ensure the policies that would be discussed during the interview would be policies that they would use and would be relevant to the work that they do within their organisation. While many policy documents have been referenced throughout this thesis, only six - from an original selection of 16 documents - were analysed closely. The original selection of documents gathered mainly range from over the past 20 years, excluding particularly older documents such as *Caravan Sites Act 1968*. In some cases little had changed within the local communities that were visited for fieldwork, with regards to provision since the early 1990s, in spite of the strategies for provision throughout that period. Therefore, it was felt that this factor was interesting in questioning how a policy's meaning is developed and/or manipulated throughout the implementation process, along with how policies are interpreted by their drafters to relate to actual needs and social developments within the community. It is arguable that ethical values, norms and priorities have changed throughout this 20 year period, therefore researchers of ethical decision-making in LAs should ask how are these values reapplied within modern-day social scenarios and, and how do policy drafters relate texts to real life settings? Also, how can obsolete policy documents, which are based on dated research findings, be at all

compatible with more recently drafted documents, not to mention the communities that they refer to?

Any arbitrary policy document about caravan sites or Pavee and Romani communities found on the Internet would not have been sufficient for close analysis (Gerring 2007: 87). Apart from being written mostly in reference to English caravan-dwelling families, each of the policies selected for this project shared one major overlapping concept. They are designed to guide one group of individuals in their decision-making over how another group of individuals (or families) should live. Also, it was necessary to carefully choose policies for analysis in order to understand the construction of dominant narratives and how they play out across multiple policy strategies (cf. Richardson 2006b) as well as develop an awareness for the 'inconsistencies and contradictions', which themselves can reveal the meaning of texts by way of what is absent (Stern 1996: 64).

The policies were written and enacted by those from one side of a community - house-dwellers - who seemed to share many common ethical values and ways of viewing the world. Whilst it is fair to state that most human beings, wherever and however they live share many ethical values, it is also fair to state they act out these values differently in everyday life (Rachels 2010: 22-24). Thus, the policy documents often reflect the views house-dwellers have of caravan-dwelling families and how they should be living, and it is interesting to explore the linguistic relationship between the six main policy documents and their reference to caravan-dwelling families. The views of the individuals living with the end result of policy implementation are not given a pivotal position within this policy area, either on paper or off. This policy issue has been addressed methodologically by this thesis and will be discussed later in this chapter.

An attempt was made to identify and analyse the presence of ethical narratives within policy documents, in order to decipher whether or not there are inequalities within the decision and policymaking practices of local organisations, who are in regular contact with caravan sites, especially with reference to the treatment of ethnic minorities in public and/or meta discourses (Van Dijk 2001: 96).

Analysing the Documents

While it was established early on in the research process that policy documents relating to caravan sites should be analysed to gain an insight into how LA decision-making affects families residing on certain sites, it was not immediately clear which documents would be most appropriate. For instance, it was not clear whether access could be gained to each different kind of plot (private, transit; local authority,

unauthorised encampment and illegal development). It was also uncertain in the beginning of the research whether or not the fieldwork would take place nationally or locally.

If there had been a problem gaining access to sites, the research would have comprised of a comparison between older and newer policy documents in this area in order to try and decipher implementation related issues. Some initial interviews conducted with one large family and their contacts in the first year of research revealed that it would be wiser to follow one small community living within one county in England so that a socio-political context could be maintained. Choosing which county to continue conducting fieldwork in, relied upon gaining sufficient access to one or more LAs. Due to links that had been forged (both within LAs and local communities), within one county in particular a decision was made with fieldwork (i.e. interviews and observations) underway one year after the commencement of the research project. From there, it became possible to focus on very specific issues within a policy setting and thus the selection and analysis of policy documents could commence.

Due to the original objective of the research to contribute to the existing academic discourses on ethical decision-making in organisations, seeking out implicit notions towards ethical values in conversation and later policy documents would be a key component in analysis. In doing so attention was paid to the way notions of fairness, equality and welfare were conceptualised in the language of the policy documents (see chapter nine). While ethical values would always be an important feature in the research, other potential themes were left to emerge from the field as interviews took place. Preliminary analysis of early interview transcripts revealed several interesting themes for further investigation, notably power and citizenship (see chapters seven and eight). As fieldwork got underway, policy documents drafted at both national and local level were selected for analysis (see chapter six). The themes that surfaced from interviews with LA professionals and residents of caravan sites had a direct influence on how the documents would later be analysed.

Language to refer to caravan-dwelling families in a particular manner from document to document was a primary concern, as well as whether or not phrases were used to juxtapose these families from “non-Traveller” families. The various definitions of a “Traveller” or “Gypsy” as used in each document were examined alongside each other, as this illustrates how or if various LA practitioners, working within numerous organisations and yet within the same county identified with Pavee and Romani communities differently. How a discourse of power and/or

citizenship was interpreted through both vague and explicit language throughout each document would help the researcher understand the stories from both the caravan sites and the council offices (see appendix b, figure 1). These patterns were also sought after in the semi-structured interviews occurring throughout the fieldwork process, providing a framework through which interpretive policy document analysis could operate. This approach differs from Yin's explanation of the usage of document analysis in case-study research, where he suggests data gained from documents can further rectify the notions emerging from the interviews and/or observations of multi-method research (2009: 103). Of course it was possible to use the documents in order to learn more about the number of caravan sites in an area or the names of responsible practitioners for a particular district. However, in interpretive research one cannot identify or cross-check the emerging claims and themes learned by using methodological tools (e.g. interviews) with the data sourced from another (e.g. policy documents). To suggest that policy document texts were used in this research project in the manner Yin suggests - to rectify the ideas culminated from statements made in interviews - would be to confuse two ontological perspectives (Haverland and Yanow 2012: 403a).

Additionally, this research was not carried out in a systematic manner. Since the 1980s, the use of computer software to process texts (for instance NU*DIST and Atlas-Ti), has become popular, aiding researchers to save time and improve the handling of data (Carmel 1999: 145 and Yanow 2007: 407). However, the decision was made not to use software programs to categorise or order the texts used for analysis or the transcriptions from interviews in this research. While a coding system was in place in order to identify and categorise the main emerging themes in the texts (and verbal discourses), a colour-coding method was employed to differentiate between the themes in the text. This method was quite similar to colour coding techniques used in programmes such as NVivo where the researcher is able to use colouring to distinguish what has been coded and what has not been, taking the rest of the analysis from there (Basit 2003: 149). In the case of this research, after the codes were established, elaborate charts and mind maps of these categories were made to explore the relationship and overlaps between themes. Since observations and interviews had already begun, certain themes were already prevalent - such as citizenship and power - as mediums to understand policy rhetoric.

Fielding has criticised ethnographers' wariness of data analysis programmes, stating that it is merely "fear" of the unknown that keeps certain researchers from making use of a highly effective way to process immense amounts of data (2007: 453). In

this case the researcher was aware of how the use of certain software programmes could help organise the texts, however they cannot help a researcher link the meanings, beliefs and values inherent in the texts with the meanings, beliefs and values illustrated through verbal stories and built structures. There was a need to understand the narratives of citizenship and power in the wider context of an ethical narrative by tapping back into interview transcripts. Simply put, computers have no intuition and the subjects of this research had not interacted with any of this software in order to participate in the fieldwork. Thus, it made no sense to use computer software to interpret the meanings and concepts the researcher was being exposed to. While on one hand, some use of the software in earlier stages to facilitate ordering the language of the texts may have been useful, the risk was too great that segments - rendered more relevant later on as concepts continued to emerge - would have been initially lost or disregarded through the usage of software.

Furthermore, the use of software would have required the continuous use of a fixed 'dictionary' of terms or phrases related to ethical values, citizenship and power, or any other mediums that may have arisen in fieldwork later (Mossholder 1995: 339). Policy documents do not always use explicit language to demonstrate power dynamics, modes of citizenship and highly regarded values. A thorough examination of the texts combined with an intimate knowledge of the nuances used in the dialects spoken during interviews helped to bring meanings together and make sense of a narrative. CDA seeks to establish a relationship between language and power (Wodak 2000: 2), making 'interconnections' visible through a critique of what has been said or written, but also - and perhaps more importantly - what has been left unsaid or unwritten (Fairclough 1985: 747). This interpretivist methodological approach demonstrates the aforementioned interconnections by employing various tools, which in turn are applied in an interpretive manner. Therefore, while document analysis (and other textual analytical research) can often be carried out in a standardised order, due to the approach and philosophy behind this research project (see 4.1.4), a more flexible technique was needed in retrieving data from the policy documents.

4.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Analysing the ethical language of guidance policy documents about the design and management of LA caravan sites can begin to tell researchers many things about a community. Implications may be drawn about attitudes towards the construction of public or social space, the location of political power within this space, the

management of social inequalities, civic duties and rights, as well as the discourse of ethical values and how they should or should not be applied. However, by only looking at the policy documents, we are assuming the meanings behind these stories of power and ethics. Arguably, due to the level of interpretation of researchers themselves in studies of the social, innumerable conclusions could be based upon assumptions. The most we can do to strengthen the foundations of our findings is to verify the essence and significance of what we think we might have discovered by interaction within the authors of the texts.

Thus, semi-structured interviews were utilised in speaking with elected members and employees of LAs to gain a perspective of the ethical culture of the organisations they work in. This led to an increased understanding into why the LAs make the decisions they do, how these decisions lead to policy implementation and how well informed they are of the affects (both positive and negative) these policies will have on caravan-dwelling communities. Also, this line of inquiry led to more meaningful answers about how certain organisational understandings of caravan site related policies conflict with other organisational understandings, and how those multiple understandings in turn conflict or overlap with the understandings of the families subjected to the policy practice (Sandelowski 1991: 163a). In total, 32 interviewees participated in this research, with 17 working within LA organisations and 15 being residents on caravan sites. Not all of the accounts gathered from semi-structured interviews have been included in the thesis.

The term 'semi-structured' – when used here - implies some initial open-ended questions prepared in advance of each interview depending on who the interview was with and what their role within the LA was. It is important, when engaging in ethnographic research, to acknowledge the role the researcher has in influencing the social setting she is observing, and how our own values and personal understandings of the world affects the way we interpret the social events we study (cf. Davies 2008).

Another significant point for ethnographic research, are the various characters of the ethnographic narrative. Likewise, when analysing the narrative of policy texts, characters emerge and understanding their roles correctly is essential in order to decipher the story that the policy is portraying (cf. Goodall 2000). Thus, meeting the individuals who are active participants in the progress of the policy process helped to establish the characters featuring in policy documents. An attempt was made to learn more about the individuals being interviewed as people rather than only as employees within the organisation they worked for or as representatives of their local government. In this way it was possible to gain an

insight into their personal ideas of justice, citizenship, political authority and how a sense of duty becomes linked to these concepts. They explained their professional relationships within the local communities they represented and how their personal feelings impacted their professional lives. The interviewees were encouraged to share their personal and professional stories, thereby setting up a narrative framework (cf. Sandelowski 1991 and Mattingly and Lawlor 2000) to learn about policy processes, how they become imbued with ethics through the use of language, as well as how the meaning of a policy changes based upon who is confronted with explaining its objectives. As each interviewee gave their own narrative of how they came to do the job they do and explained what it means to them, they voluntarily divulged other details; for instance, if they had a family, what other jobs had they done, whether or not they themselves had worked with caravan-dwelling families before or if they felt the policies they worked with were effective and fair. Allowing individuals to speak openly rather than with closed or fixed, predetermined questions gives them the opportunity to offer spontaneous answers rather than the scripted replies more typical of organisation workers (Gabriel and Griffiths 2004: 115). Additionally, members of the organisation presumably want to give a good impression of their LA, as it is more likely to imply that their own work is successful, with all the best intentions and ethical.

In previous experiences of conducting social research on issues related to Romani and Pavee communities, caravan site provision has usually been considered to be a taboo topic even for those working within the area, making it difficult for both researcher and informant to talk openly and frankly about the subject. For example, upon meeting a *traveller liaison officer* (TLO¹⁵) for the first time, she warned she would not discuss issues concerning specific families, when the officer realised the researcher had already been in touch with several of the families she worked with. Therefore, it was difficult at times to ask very direct questions and more vague questions were chosen such as: "So tell me about the kind of work that you do," or: "How do you feel about the policies you are currently working with?" Based upon the ensuing work related narratives the interviewee would engage in, close attention could be paid to how their language related to their 'motives, beliefs and emotions' in an effort to gain an insight into what was in their 'mind and heart' (Mattingly 2008: 138).

¹⁵ A full list of *Research Participants* with their allocated code names or synonyms can be found on pages viii and ix.

Originally, these interviews with councillors, traveller liaison officers, planning officials and policy drafters took place in various locations across England, until it was decided that the pursuit of one single case-study across one rural English county could be more beneficial and meaningful. Planning is a very localised topic; therefore in order to study the many aspects of the policy process in detail, it was considered best to focus on one geographical location. As explained in part 4.1.1, this influenced the choice in documents that were analysed, since in order for the policy narrative to be coherent, it was necessary to speak to individuals that were a part of the texts analysed later. It also limited the organisations and LAs that could be contacted and led to a lot of political and professional overlap in the individuals who were approached for interviews as they all worked together in some way or another. However, finding this line of commonality between the organisational interviewees proved interesting since it was possible to trace similar cultural and ethical traits and meaning making through language, and therefore this technique was repeated in the review of the policy documents (see 4.1.1). It was possible to examine how these individuals made sense of their worlds as they related their understandings of ethics (cf. Mattingly 2008: 147), as well as what they felt their role was in enabling other families to live the right way. Narrative analysis can reveal many discontinuities between the conventional or accepted social storylines, and the actual experience, by paying close attention to discourses that reveal the ways lives are understood and shaped by narratives. Therefore, using a narrative framework in analysing interviews parallels the way individuals naturally inquire about experience (Sandelowski 1991: 162a).

All of the interviews – apart from shorter conversations over the phone and in cases where consent was declined – were recorded by use of a Dictaphone machine in order to refer back to the verbal exchanges later. Each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim later by the researcher. This minimised the risk of misquoting informants or taking comments out of context from memory whilst transcribing (Weiss 1994: 53). A disadvantage of transcribing in this way is that it took several frustrating weeks and a lot of patience to type out hours of dialogue (Powdermaker 1966: 94-95).

The Analysis of Interviews with Local Authority Officials and Families

Due to the research agenda, it cannot be claimed that conversation-based interviews were conducted during fieldwork since not enough time was actually spent in the field in order to build up the rapports usually experienced in participant observation. Due to time constraints, the researcher needed to make the most of the

opportunity to discuss the thesis topic, limiting the points of discussion, and therefore the interviews were semi-structured (Yin 2009: 102). However, attempts were made to keep the meeting informal by putting forward open-ended questions with little pressure being applied to the interviewee, allowing participants to take control of the direction of the interview, so that they were comfortable telling their [personal or professional] stories (Forester 1993: 197). We can learn about decision-making from narratives because, as Bevir puts it: 'Action X was done because the agent held beliefs Y according to which doing X would fulfil a desire Z' (2006: 286). In other words, our beliefs – which relate to our value systems – inform the actions we should make, to get desirable outcomes. In story-telling we learn what the desirable outcomes are, as well as the individual's beliefs. The actions are outlined in the policy texts and embodied in the caravan sites.

The interview transcripts (see appendix b, figure 2) were analysed in a similar way to the policy texts (see 4.1.1), however, unlike the policy documents where fixed codes were utilised to differentiate between the themes of power, citizenship and values, in the interview transcripts the codes varied from interview to interview, since the topics discussed and subsequent emerging themes were not always the same (cf. Goodall 2000). The kind of language used in each interview could vary and an understanding of local dialect was essential - particularly in the interviews with families - to understand the full meaning in a phrase or reference. Similarly, a growing knowledge of technical policy language helped when discussing certain topics with LA officials. References to a concept of good decision-making, equality and fairness were important starting points during interviews due to the initial preoccupation with ethical decision-making. However, informants also referred to community membership, belonging and citizenship, authority, control and local power relations as well as expressing ideas of social duty, rights and integrity (see chapters seven, eight and nine). Explicit language was not always used to discuss these themes; for instance informants did not always state plainly: "X is good and Y is bad" or "I believe in Z." Due to shared cultural scripts and local socio-political understandings between the informants and the researcher, in addition to the interpretive approach to conducting research, it was possible to apply 'narrative mind reading' – which comes naturally during conversations when there is the possibility to place acts and motives 'within the context of an unfolding story' (Mattingly 2008: 137).

The analysis of the emerging themes from interviews was combined with the analysis of observations of interactions of stakeholders in organisation or LA meetings, which illustrated how they dealt with policy texts by incorporating their

own interpretations on how implementation would or should be carried out. Here one could see how meanings of reality were both shared and conflicted in organisations, how this sharing of meanings could re-shape policy goals, and how these meanings were explored in personal interviews with individual bureaucrats and councillors (Soss 2006: 139).

4.1.3 Aesthetic Approach

The first question in this research is concerned with how policy allows LAs and governments to relate to local communities, namely through the implementation of the policy. In the cases of minority groups (e.g. Romani or Pavee groups), it is interesting to see how organisations relate through policy to cultural and ethical norms that do not seem compatible with their own. Furthermore, a main objective of the research is to explore if and how caravan-dwelling families see themselves and their homes as related to policy-based identity constructions, as well as examining how the families negotiated these identities in order to relate to their physical and social environments (Silver 2010: 281-282). In order to understand these perspectives, a researcher would need to see what the research subject sees. Therefore an analysis of how a public space has been transformed by policy into a social space¹⁶ was conducted by observations of the day-to-day lived experiences within English LA caravan sites through experiential, rather than cognitive means (Strati 2003: 53). This approach is known as the aesthetic approach and one engages in it as a participant of a social or organisational setting, cultivating their five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch and taste), to experience the tangible aspects of the organisational or social space being studied (Gagliardi 1996: 566) and decipher the story of these spaces (cf. Yanow 1998).

In discourse analysis it is common-place for researchers to become preoccupied with language, thereby neglecting 'the non-linguistic dimensions of semiosis' (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000: 461). In short, meaning is expressed in many ways other than written text or speech. Researchers such as Antonio Strati or Dvora Yanow, apply the aesthetic approach to the study of organisations. It is employed in this thesis slightly differently to Strati and Yanow, reversing the approach to focus more on the homes of the communities subjected to the implementation of the policies. Most of the homes were the direct result of the implementation of the policies analysed. Therefore in order to get a sense of how

¹⁶ 'Public space' refers to spaces open to the public or owned and used by LAs for local communities; 'social space' refers to spaces where social events take place.

policy is transferred from paper to land, and how ethical values are reinterpreted throughout this process, the need to observe the end product of this practice is fundamental. As the end product of a policy process (and in some cases the continued location of policy implementation where heavy management is utilised), the caravan sites occupied by families are still - in essence - organisational spaces.

The aesthetic approach enables the researcher to enter, leave and re-enter the research setting as needed and in this case, record each visit as an individual account, to gain a 'sense' of what it is like to live on a LA caravan site. It was important to gain some idea of what the ethical values of the residents were in order to understand if they feel the way the LAs deal with them and their homes is ethical or not, as well as gaining an understanding of what an ethical policy would be if the families themselves had more control over the process. This topic was investigated through spending some time in caravans and meeting different families in order to get a better idea of how families play an organisational role by being part of the policy process.

The point of this approach is to use the experiences and senses one has when entering a space, so that one can imagine the everyday experiences being described in interviews with tangibility. Within ethnography, studying 'material culture' is the notion that 'humanly produced artefacts' can communicate in a manner that is beyond words, relating to each of our five senses (Tilley 2007: 258-259). From this perspective, one can regard the caravan site as an artefact of organisational processes and study it or them as if it is an object. Yanow explains that organisational buildings are a manifestation of organisational stories being told, as they communicate 'values, beliefs and feelings' (1998: 215a). Winer demonstrates how Dutch and British-style buildings in South Africa reveal the identity construction of a colonial history and brutality as well as how this lived experience is at odds with the mythical 'white South African consciousness' that the settlers originally intended their properties to reflect (2001: 258). Tilley has followed by arguing that objects are 'personalised' by their role in the actions of 'social agents' (2007: 260). With this in mind, by observing caravan sites, a study of the role that organisations play in the day-to-day lifestyle of caravan-dwelling communities was also being performed.

Observing the Aesthetics

The first stage of fieldwork to get fully underway was the aesthetic observations of caravan sites, beginning in May 2009 and continuing throughout the summer, with the first LA representatives being interviewed the following March. This stage of

fieldwork would inform the other two methods of collecting various texts and also the topics presented in discussions with bureaucrats and councillors. While a significant amount of time was spent within one of the communities over the summer of 2009, traditional ethnographic research would have called for the researcher to live within the community and amongst the research subjects in order to gain an *emic* perspective of experiencing the effects of the policy (Sadovnik 2007: 421). However, as will be discussed in more depth in 4.2, living on a caravan site was not possible.

However, living in a town with prominent caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee populations for summer and Easter holidays, was useful to understand the direct and indirect affects of the aforementioned policies on the community as a whole, as well as having access to the built spaces of caravan sites (cf. Yanow 2006). The researcher was able to allow social issues and concepts to emerge, rather than arriving at the fieldwork setting with very fixed ideas or a hypothesis to test out, as is more typical of non-ethnographic case-studies (Sadovnik 2007: 421-422). Field notes were kept from the visits and conversations had with site residents as a reminder of the first social exchanges and impressions, which would help to dissect and analyse the masses of organisational data that would be collected later.

As the research progressed, close contact had been established with several families for over two years as a fellow inhabitant of the county, as well as coming to understand the local political environment and how the management of caravan sites fitted into local [ethical] narratives, depending on who was narrating. Arguably, very little meaning is exchanged through verbal communication, other sources – such as material artefacts need to be investigated alongside the use of oral stories (Yanow 2006: 352 and Tilley 2007: 259). As concepts of meaning-making emerged from the confines and concrete of caravan sites, the researcher was able to consider the pre-textual stories or narratives of LAs and how the meanings bureaucrats and councillors applied to the management and building of caravan sites differed from the lived experiences.

4.1.4 *Ontology and Epistemology*

The philosophy behind an interpretive approach to research, allows us to study human artefacts as material cultures, which are symbolic of human meaning making (Yanow 1998: 216a and Tilley 2006: 24). Phenomenology is the idea that reality is ‘a projection of human imagination’ and as an approach within the social sciences it is opposed to the more established research paradigm positivism, which represents the claim that reality is ‘a concrete structure’ (Hussey and Hussey 1997: 51). In other words, the former approach relies on understanding that people live in

'constructed' social worlds and senses of reality depend on their cultural background. Alongside this understanding of the world, researchers are able to understand this interpretation of reality from the point of view of the people being studied (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 11). This 'insider' interpretation or view is called the *emic* view, while the view or perspective of outsiders is called the *etic* view (Sadovnik 2007: 421). Positivism relies on objectivity: i.e. distancing from the data and "empirical" evidence to obtain the 'true' results and is usually concerned with the natural world (Hussey and Hussey 1997: 51-52). Although this paradigm was previously the primary theory within the social sciences, it is now considered to be a 'term of abuse among social scientists' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 3), due to the lack of acknowledgement allowed to individual subjectivity (Hussey and Hussey 1997: 52). Phenomenologists on the other hand do not restrict themselves to either complete certainty or uncertainty whilst in the field, allowing themselves to maintain an open mind when experiencing the social 'phenomena' emerging around them, whilst placing it into a wider social context (Hughes 1990: 90 and Maso 2007: 138).

In policy research positivists would perhaps focus on identifying deductive, causal references for how decisions are made fitting with rational choice models (Griggs 2007: 174), rather than looking for the meaning-making inherent in beliefs, desires and motives (Bevir 2006: 284-285). Thus, an interpretivist approach is the appropriate ontological stance for this research to be established in, since the inquiry (or analysis) of policy is, according to one author, riddled with the inconsistent application of ideology, making studies from a positivist stance inadequate (Paris and Reynolds 1983: 48). For example, a positivist might argue that the policy texts should have been presented in the thesis as they are written, rather than interpreting their meaning, or that more quantitative methods could have been used in examining the policy texts to cross-examine the language and ethical narratives. However, interpretivists would counter-argue these approaches merely remove the data from one interpretive environment to another, as the reader will inevitably re-interpret the meanings of the language his or herself (Fish 1980: 353). Also, the bond between text and context is so strong that personal interpretations and intentions of the researcher become clear, based on which sections of policy are chosen to feature in the thesis, in addition to how the thesis is edited as well as how inclusion of certain sections of policy are framed within the thesis (White 1987: 186). In keeping with this interpretive research tradition, one must acknowledge that the researcher's epistemological stance within the research and their interpretations of the data will be subjective. In order for the reader to be

able see the research as it is, rather than just the researcher's view of it, attempts should be made to be reflexive (as is explored in 4.2.1). Reflexivity questions our relationship with our social world and aids us in understanding for ourselves and explaining to others how and what we experience (Cunliffe 2003: 985).

From one's sense of reality (ontology) and way of knowing (epistemology), which need to complement each other in order to establish presuppositions upon which a research question can be built, the researcher may choose their methodology and finally their methods accordingly (cf. Jun 1994 and Haverland and Yanow 2012). In this sense, as shown above, due to the interpretive nature of policy drafting and implementation, an interpretive approach is needed to study these processes. Ethnography is an ideal methodological approach to this thesis' investigation of narratives due to a shared emphasis on 'the meaning of [human] experience' (Cortazzi 2007: 385b). Qualitative methods have been employed in this research to go along with a phenomenological study of the articulation of ethics in decision-making practices and interpretation of policy by stakeholders in local authorities.

4.2 Ethnographic Reflections

For the rest of this chapter, due to the nature of reflexivity in ethnographic writing, the following passages will be written in the first person, from my own personal perspective (Van Maanen 1988: 75). Intentions to illuminate how voices are excluded voices in discourse - and the subsequent lived experience of policy - have long been of interest in ethnographic research (cf. Silver 2010), especially with regards to the usage of space (cf. Bender 2001 and Pader 2006). The use of the ethnographer's voice, while coming across as anecdotal rather than 'academic' is thought to play a fundamental role in illustrating the 'ethnographic life' (Goodall 2000: 25), which is essentially how fieldwork is conducted (Coffey 1999: 129). In short, providing a confessional account in the first person allows the reader to understand more directly how the research has been established and negotiated through a reliance on contact with research participants. It also provides the opportunity to relate to research participants and settings through the medium of the researcher's personal narrative (Pader 2006: 163). The 'close relationship' mentioned here that I shared with the fieldwork setting and informants (especially the gate-keeper¹⁷), has been witnessed in many other ethnographies due to the long

¹⁷ Gate-keepers are an initial fieldwork contact who 'control access to research sites' (Powdermaker 1966: 58-60; Weiss 1994: 34; Davies 2008: 54).

amounts of time spent in the field. The validity of the accounts gained through these intimate and long-term methodological approaches often needs to be challenged by putting them under intense scrutiny. This scrutiny should not merely begin when analysis of research begins; in fact, there is the argument that management over the entire research process should occur in order to ensure that our ethnographies – the written, end product of research (Davies 2008: 4-5) – present the most meaningful results possible (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 180 - 181).

4.2.1. Reflexivity

What is Reflexivity?

Reflexivity is the notion of ‘turning back on oneself’ in order to comprehend the way that the ‘products’ of research (i.e. the findings) are corrupted by the researcher(s) and methods at any stage of the research process (Davies 2008: 4). To avoid taking ‘truth claims’ for granted, as well as our own assumptions and notions of reality, researchers strive to reveal the constant re-developments of knowledge due to its inconsistencies and insecurities (Denzin 1997: 266 and Cunliffe 2003: 984). The written account of this ‘turning back’ is a continuous narrative, expressing the researcher’s own self-awareness within the field as well as their recognition of the connection they share with the fieldwork setting and the people living within it (Coffey 1999: 132 and Davies 2008: 7). By taking this into account, researchers also acknowledge that they actually contribute towards the data that they collect as they participate in the field by forming relationships with those living in the social setting being studied (Davies 2008: 5), not to mention the moral and political implications of affecting the outcomes of research to such a degree (ibid; Okely 1992: 24; Herzfeld 1997: 169). In the past, anthropologists have been found guilty of inserting their own political and ethical views into the raw data of their research findings. For example, detailing the ‘murders’ of baby girls in Inuit groups as immoral based on “Western”¹⁸ ethical and cultural standards (Rachels 2010: 22). However, as natural as it is for us to be shocked by some of the new things we learn whilst encountering different cultures, as researchers we need to be able to get passed these initial traumas in order to understand the meanings that are developing within the appropriate cultural context and develop the raw accounts into representative ethnographic text (Herzfeld 1997: 171).

The notion of reflexive analytical approaches to social research - particularly in anthropological circles - has transpired at least since the 1970s, arguably due to

¹⁸ “Western” used here in a political rather than geographical sense.

the development of post-modern and feminist discourses within the discipline (Callaway 1992: 33). At this time, auto-biographical ethnographic texts were expanding in the discipline and clearly reflecting the researcher's sense of dislocation and at times turmoil from spending extended periods of time in close proximity night and day to their research subjects (Reed-Danahay 1997: 124 and Gibb 2005: 225). Due to the aforementioned nature of participant observation, researchers have long since encountered difficulties in maintaining the balance of being both 'in and out of research' – i.e. maintaining a necessary connection to the field in order to research it in depth, but also the distance to continue being a researcher and not going "native" (Powdermaker 1966: 19). However, even though 'crossing-over' is a constant threat interfering with the so-called smooth-running of data-collection, self-narration of our experiences from start to finish aids us to trace the path taken from cynical researcher to tunnel-visioned participant (Herzfeld 1997: 169).

As anthropological texts became increasingly narrative-based, the analytical practices of reflexivity also developed to aid ethnographers express themselves and their personal connections to their research (Lincoln and Denzin 1994: 559 and Goodall 2000: 23). This became necessary, especially in social scenarios inevitably evoking strong emotions from the researcher and potentially affecting the relationship between researcher and informant, such as empathy, anger or envy (Walkerdine et al. 2001: 83-84). Iris Marion Young has argued on the other hand, that she cannot 'speak for' research subjects of a different ethnicity or class to herself, as she cannot relate directly to the experiences from sociological or anthropological investigations (1990: 14). In any case, the researcher may still be moved emotionally by a research experience, requiring them to find some distancing from the field in order to reflect effectively (cf. Gibb 2005).

Racial Privilege in Research

Researchers of *Critical Race Theory* have discussed the notion of white privilege and guilt for several decades now (cf. Leonardo 2004 and Ahmed 2005), while sociologists such as Walkerdine et al. argue by studying class-systems, reflexive researchers should acknowledge their own class-based privilege and how this may affect relationships between researcher and subject (2001: 83). A straightforward definition of white privilege relates to the unearned advantages white individuals uncritically have access to and make use of (Leonardo 2004: 137). Leonardo goes on to argue that within academia, un-reflexive white educators address an imagined white audience with uncritical analysis, which 'refuses certain truths about race

relations' (2004: 141) such as racial privilege. Therefore, 'racial understanding' is achieved through research and teaching at a 'snail's pace' (ibid). Peggy McIntosh is credited for being one of the earliest white academics to point out - based upon her experiences with learning resources from Women's Studies - privileged members of society are unconsciously oppressive and as is the case in male-female relationships, white individuals are taught not to acknowledge or recognise their privilege (1988: 4). She went on to encourage other white academics to identify how whiteness contributes to the many facets of their lives in order to claim their privilege, deal with it and attempt to prevent their own oppressive behaviour (ibid).

In my own case, I am not white and I am a woman, and so from an intersectional position my social disadvantages are two-fold (cf. McIntosh 1988). However, with regards to caravan site provision, I should acknowledge and claim my own relevant privileges. All my life I have lived in privately owned or rented houses, therefore I am constructed in caravan site policy as a member of the house-dwelling or "settled" community (see chapter six). In other words, I have accommodation privilege and the subsequent ability to move between bricks and motor and establish homes within them. History has taught us of the difficulties non-whites have and continue to face in Britain, in attempting to become part of local communities. However, with my class and educational background I am less likely to become homeless or face the difficulties in finding a home or being accepted as a full citizen as discussed in interviews (see *Citizenship* chapter).

At times, interviewees gave the impression that I could relate to them through the shared experience of having a "minority identity" and therefore an assumed shared experience of discrimination (cf. Carter 2010). Once it was pointed out to me by an individual of Romani descent that: "Your culture and our culture was [treated] the same [...] like slaves [sic]", while another claimed she remembered: "[Y]ou was the only coloured girl in the school [sic]." However, there were other times when I was told very directly that life for black and Romani families is very different, and my privilege was pointed out for me. For example, a Romani interviewee commented once: "[T]hey¹⁹ can't do it to black people [...] but they can to the Gypsies."

I lived in a fairly middle-class part of town with my parents (my mother and my white step-father), whilst conducting fieldwork, a fact I became quite embarrassed about when research subjects would ask where in town I was staying

¹⁹ The "they" being referred to here by the informant is the white, non-Romani, house-dwelling majority of the county.

(Walkerdine et al. 2001: 84). On one occasion, the gatekeeper wanted to drop off a disposable camera so that I could develop it for her and use the photographs for my research. I was dreading the moment when she would see our four-bedroom house with a big extension on the back and challenge me about this notable privilege in a later interview. Also, due to the way I often heard the gatekeeper (and other women of Romani descent) talk about “loose” non-Romani women, I avoided discussing my personal life in any way. Amanda Coffey describes the difficulty fieldworkers experience in appearing ‘natural, comfortable, engaged and welcoming’ while attempting to negotiate our physical presence within fieldwork settings as well as negotiating ‘boundaries of the body’ (1999: 73). In other words, our physical relationship with the fieldwork setting and research subjects, how at home we appear to be or how conspicuous we make ourselves as we observe also requires some reflection in the write-up process as it may or may not have implications for how we have been able to recall accounts.

To keep track of my own interpretations and impression of my field observations, I kept a personal diary in addition to more formal field notes, of my feelings and experiences of the field (Goodall 2000: 87). This diary was a private place only for myself where I was able to share the true and unprofessional occurrences of the research. Periodically, I would read back through these notes and reflect on how a particular visit to a site, interview or even a response to an e-mail requesting access had made me feel and the direction I would take following any set-backs or accomplishments. Thus, I could analyse how my own emotions and privileged social position were influencing the research.

I made this entry into my personal field notes diary after I visited to a local shoe shop, owned and run by a family friend:

“Two young girls walked into the shop. I recognised them from the [local authority caravan] site and I was assuming the shop owner had just made a guess at it. [...] The expression on my own aunt’s face was instantly disapproving and Shirley’s²⁰ demeanour had become dubious [...] both women were convinced the girls would steal something. Nothing needed to be said between us, for me to know that was what they were thinking. When Shirley decided to try and act normal and go to the back to look for my size, she motioned at me to watch the girls, who were eagerly picking up and putting back different party pumps, discussing which colours they liked the best. I

²⁰ A full list of *Research Participants* with their allocated code names or synonyms can be found on pages viii and ix.

obliged her, moving slowly along the shelf, guiltily pretending to look at the shoes and for my aunt and the shop owner's peace of mind, pretending to watch the girls. They eventually left the shop. [...] The question I have continued to ask myself is, did [my aunt] and Shirley know that the two girls were from the site? If they did, was that why they were suspicious? Or would they be like that for any group of young girls coming into the shop? Probably - I have tried reassured myself. But one more question in my mind goes unanswered - why didn't we talk about it? Or more importantly, why didn't I say something about it?" - Diary excerpt from Friday 21st May 2010.

This is one passage of many field notes made throughout the fieldwork process, and it demonstrates the way that social or racial privilege operates and serves to oppress others when it is not highlighted, be it in everyday life or within research. A day or two after my trip to the shoe shop, when I visited the caravan site and saw the girls, I was again confronted with the guilt one feels when they have acknowledged their privilege but do not use it to prevent the discrimination of others (cf. Ahmed 2005). The above shoe shop experience made me feel quite wary about returning to the home of the two girls; it is irrelevant that the girls were unaware of how their actions aroused suspicion. What right did I have to research their lives when I could not even stand up to someone denying them free movement in their own town?

The exercise of claiming one's privilege can indeed be enlightening and furthermore, combining it with the recognitions researchers make through reflexivity, we illuminate a new dimension to our position within the field, our unbalanced relationships with our field subjects as well as biased world-views and observations. In short, we are able to see more aspects of the social event when we reflexively admit to our own role within it, than if we were to assume an objective stance, where there is only one truth.

Making Sense of the Self

My ethnic background and gender means that I may be in a better position than others to identify with groups or individuals who are discriminated against (Caplan 2003: 12-13). I also experienced a period during my fieldwork of feeling more like a friend to the particular family acting primarily as gate-keepers, rather than a researcher investigating their home. During this interval, I stopped taking notes as I became confused about what was personal and what was relevant to the research, although arguably very little is personal when conducting ethnographic research as everything is relevant to the research endeavour (cf. Nadel 1951). I called them to find out how they were rather than with specific queries about occurrences on the

site they lived on or interactions with the LA. There is nothing wrong with an anthropologist having genuine concern for her informants, but in some of these instances I failed to keep any formal notes or records of what was talked about as I found it difficult to keep up with new accounts and occurrences (Powdermaker 1966: 61). However, I did keep a diary of what was going on and how it made me feel about my research and the objectives behind it. Tracing these accounts throughout fieldwork has aided my understanding of my own analysis of the research data.

Since ethnographic studies usually begin with broader questions and general concepts, rather than a strict list of what one wants to know with a hypothesis to test, a longer amount of time is needed in the field to allow a period of reflection and also a narrower focus to develop (Van Maanen 1979: 38). Our experiences of and reactions to the field are a part of this process and therefore help us to decide upon what is actually important or relevant, helping us to develop our research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 160 and Okely 1996: 28).

Nonetheless, all of this self-examination can also turn into self-absorption, completely writing the researcher into the results and removing any recognition of a boundary between subject and researcher and thus the initial point of any research is diminished (Davies 2008: 5-9). The initial point of keeping a narrative is to be able to recognise when it becomes a part of the analysis process, i.e. when we are talking more about ourselves than the research (Goodall 2000: 24). This can occur when the writer does not already have a well established sense of 'self' in order to write autobiographical accounts in a constructive way and hence, some researchers are naturally more reflexive than others (Svensson 1997: 100).

4.2.2 Maintenance of Ethical Considerations and Overcoming Limitations

In all modes of social research, we may come up against certain stumbling blocks, preventing fieldwork or data collection from going smoothly. For instance, if we wish to conduct research in a foreign country then we may face the barriers of funding, travel and visas, as well as language or dialect, culture, climate and gender roles (cf. Abu-Lughod 1986 and Rabinow 2007). If the research involves a particular activity that the researcher is unfamiliar with, it can be difficult to learn the activity well enough to participate and establish a relationship with the group she is attempting to study. There are also more general problems accessing and becoming an accepted member of certain groups (Rock 2007: 33). The study of gender and/or sexuality has proved to be problematic for men studying women and vice versa (cf. Shapiro 1981), heterosexuals studying homosexuals (cf. Kirtsoglou 2004) and adult

men studying nursery school-aged children (cf. Corsaro 1985), as well as studies across class structures and between ethnic groups (cf. Moore 1988 and Walkerdine et al. 2001). The same can be said for ethnographic research within seemingly closed groups or sub-cultures, for example Goth culture (cf. Hodkinson 2002), neighbourhood gangs (cf. Whyte 1993) and co-dependent anonymous meetings and other forms of therapeutic activity (cf. Irvine 1998).

Groups and individuals of the public sector can be quite wary of social research and the way in which it may present their practices and intentions (Dixon-Woods and Bosk 2011: 258). Unless you are particularly charismatic it can be difficult to gain access to organisations or corporations in order to conduct research (Strang 2009: 162). For interviews rather than participant observation, it is often the case that a reliable contact with serious leverage within the organisation is needed in order to put the researcher in touch with potential informants. Whilst there are many potential problems that can interfere with the progress of fieldwork, one must find a way to overcome the difficulties to collect the data needed. However, researchers have a duty to themselves, their institutions and to their research subjects to carry out the research in an ethical manner.

Ethical Conduct

If we support the viewpoint that policies are subject to personal interpretation, to the extent that cultural and ethical values may be read into the text, then what can also be said for researchers? Should we not also take the stance that scholars read values, both cultural and ethical, into their own research, while making sense of a social phenomenon? Especially when faced with the task of interpreting other peoples' values and how they conflict between groups, our own personal view of what is right or wrong could become entangled in our understanding. Interestingly our own values may play a role in favouring certain research subjects over others, prejudicing our judgement and essentially leading us to take one side of the story for granted. Whilst subjectivity is important to ethnographic research, attempting to balance one's own views with others is also crucial to ensure the accounts we record are credible.

The notions of right and wrong are important to most human beings, making it difficult for any researcher to reproduce balanced accounts of an individual or community of people that she disagrees with ethically. Nonetheless, she has the ethical and academic responsibility to be true to each informant and provide as balanced an argument as possible. The academic community should not intentionally use social research as a platform for personal agendas. Research

involves the broadening knowledge in a certain field, widening interdisciplinary paths and making previously inaccessible fields of interest more attainable. By allowing private motives to become part of the end result of research, a barrier is strategically placed by the researcher between the experiences of the field and those attempting to learn more about it. In many cases, the researcher is unaware of her interpretive gaze, so reflexive approaches are needed in order to anticipate how we may present our findings to others (see 4.2.1).

Aiding researchers to make the right decisions during data collection are numerous ethical guidance documents, depending on the research institution. Usually, approaches to ethical collection methods are alike, supporting informed consent²¹, prevention of exploitation or harm to informants, ownership of data and being aware of the full impact the researcher's presence will make within the field. Also, attempts are made to leave "the field" as we found it, or as much as possible. One could argue that these issues overlap somewhat, since social research can be harmful to informants due to its disruptive nature. The level of disruptiveness and exploitation can be reduced greatly if informed consent takes place throughout the research process, giving informants the opportunity and authority to withdraw from the research if they feel it has become too intrusive or is having a detrimental affect on their day-to-day lives (HUBS 2005: 6 and ASA 2011: 3). Anonymity and confidentiality is also important within social research (ESRC 2010: 3), therefore attempts have been made here to protect informants' identities by using codes names and synonyms throughout the thesis, rather than informants' real names (see full list on pages viii and ix).

Due to the potentially differing social or class statuses of the researcher and informants, there may be more of an opportunity to exploit or resent participants (Walkerdine et al. 2001: 83-84). Marginalised ethnic minority groups such as Romani and Pavee communities, have been oppressed in many ways and are considered to be vulnerable (Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995: 25). Therefore, as a researcher, I am obliged to be especially mindful of the power differences between the groups I work with and also be aware of the potential risk of taking advantage of vulnerable groups due to their social position (ESRC 2010: 24). Strang argues that it is in the anthropologist's nature to want to help her informants, especially if they are part of socially disadvantaged groups (2009: 82). However, it can be said that some

²¹ Informed consent is explaining in an honest and comprehensible manner the nature of the research and its outcomes so that participants can make an educated decision on whether or not they will take part in the research (ESRC 2010: 24).

researchers in the past have taken advantage of the fact that their academic background gives them some authority within the field (Homan 1991: 124 and ASA 2011: 2).

In fact, social research rarely involved participants that were not considered to be 'below' or 'inferior' to the scholar 'himself' since these participants need not be respected or offered the same dignity as a man of a white, middle class, well-educated background (Shils 1982: 127). In this respect, having academic arrogance can also become part of the paternalistic mission to help one's research subjects, through establishing a relationship based upon one party patronising the other. These forms of social exploitation should never have occurred in the past or present within research, although it took a shift in fieldwork being conducted 'at home' before this was realised (ibid and Smith 2012: 8-9). Currently, modern ethical standards within social research dictate having a good education or conducting research in order to obtain a doctoral degree does not give one the right to carry out any research that they want to, with or without consent or consideration for others (Homan 1991: 124). Thus, this section will outline the limitations to fieldwork that I encountered and the ethical considerations that ensued as I sought to overcome these difficulties.

Research Limitations

The reluctance of LA officials to participate in this research due to not wishing to discuss the Gypsy "problem" (CCC 1998: 1) has been one of the main limitations whilst conducting research (cf. Dixon-Woods and Bosk 2011), leading to more contact with caravan-dwelling communities than LA individuals originally anticipated. Another viable reason may have been that those working in central and local government, as well as related organisations and agencies may not have had the time to speak to a student or possibly did not see the relevance of their role to the research. As a consequence, I tended to rely on the reports and policy documents that I was sent from policymakers and social workers in place of an interview when they did not have time, which in turn helped me overcome the potential complications associated with policy research, such as the difficulties in obtaining relevant, complete and up to date documents (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 130).

One may never truly know the reasons behind a potential research subject's refusal to participate, and we should not seek to decipher the reasons behind a decline to participate, since it is the decliner's prerogative to be free from coercion, intimidation and to decline or withdraw from research at any stage (Homan 1991: 71-74 and ASA 2011: 3-4). The LA policy documents initially analysed offered the

contact information for the relevant department handling caravan site provision in a particular district or county. From six policy documents utilised in this way, at least one individual was contacted per document, only half responded to a request for an interview (see 4.1.2). From those that responded, some redirected me to a colleague that they felt would be more helpful (and at times, this contact would not work out either), or they were too busy to participate in the research. It was often easier to get a positive response regarding an interview when I had initially met the individual in person, however this did not necessarily ensure that they would remember me a week or so later when I wrote to ask them about an interview.

I contacted other agencies and organisations working within Romani and Pavee relations, or who were familiar with the policies and legislations that related heavily to caravan-dwelling lifestyles. In these cases they were often keener to speak to me and help me in any way they could. Having said this, they are also more sympathetic to the Romani and Pavee “cause” and often advocated for traditional lifestyles and thus were supportive of research they hoped would also encourage this point of view. It was difficult at times to put across to anyone that I spoke to that the purpose was to uncover ethical narratives and their impact upon policy processes. Often, individuals would become so struck by the fact that the research would involve caravan-dwelling groups that they would become preoccupied with peripheral questions, such as what did I think of Nicolas Sarkozy or if I had seen the latest episode of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. Despite my best efforts, the fact alone that Romani and Pavee families were so much more accessible to me – to a certain extent reversing the roles of public services and closed groups - made appreciating both sides of the issues associated with policy implementation complicated. When studying a contested social area such as this policy process, where there is need to evenly represent the plethora of conflicting values and priorities of different parties, speaking to and about each party is crucial in order to avoid very biased data (Weiss 1994: 29 and Hills 2006: 131-132).

I was able to overcome this difficulty by reading local media articles from the districts concerned, regarding new site plans and court cases relating to contested planning permission. By analysing these texts in the same manner as the policy documents I gained an insight into the values and priorities held by members of the local community, the way they interpreted the actions of local councillors and planners, and their feelings towards the local caravan-dwelling communities. There were also opportunities for me to study the way that Romani and Pavee individuals responded to these media articles by referring to their own community-based forms of media, such as *Traveller Times Online*.

Although it was difficult in many cases to gain access to LAs and organisations, once access was granted the next major limitation lied in how reliable the accounts would prove to be. That is to say, especially bearing in mind the subjective nature of values, how do we know when we are being told the truth? Whose version of the truth matters? This problem was in part solved by the fact that the focus of the research lies in the *how* rather than *what* and therefore there was nothing to be proven as such. On the other hand, knowing what you are being told is honest is a clear advantage for any project. One way to ensure you are being told the truth may be to conduct covert research since individuals are more likely to be honest when they do not realise research is being undertaken and therefore are not going to be held accountable for anything they will have disclosed (Dixon-Woods and Bosk 2011: 270). On the other hand, covert research is considered to be ethically problematic in breaking the trust and exploiting the privacy of subjects and should therefore be avoided (ASA 2011: 3). The only potential exception to this may be if research on a particular phenomenon is crucial and yet informing research participants of the research process could be potentially harmful to that setting (cf. Irvine 1998), although such research cases, should be avoided or at least not taken on lightly (ESRC 2010: 29-30).

The final ethical issue that arose from conducting fieldwork using the methods that I did was based around where I chose to do the fieldwork. This project could be considered extreme “anthropology at home” since it did not merely take place my country of birth. It took place in the town that my mother’s family had lived in for many generations and also the place that I grew up in. In many ways this was the most challenging aspect of the research since I was unable to separate myself from the research topic whenever I went home to visit my family. In the past, coming from the place where one chooses to do research has been viewed as problematic since there is the risk that you will - as a researcher - take for granted your surroundings and also as a fellow local be taken for granted by one’s subjects. As a result I became critical of everything around me in an attempt to see my home essentially as a new place (Young 2005: 209 and Young and Meneley 2005: 3). As far as the research participants were concerned, I was able to get around any issues regarding local identity by being of mixed-race descent and thus not looking like most people that come from the area as well as no longer living in the town due to studying in the north of the country. Having said this, the flexible nature of my identity and sense of belonging within the community aided me to become close to informants due to shared familiarities and also maintain enough distance (most of the time), to inconspicuously ask questions that normally a local would not be able

to (Abu-Lughod 1986: 11 and Young 2005: 208-209). Most interestingly, due to family connections, I was able to obtain an audience with local politicians who might not have otherwise made themselves so accessible. Finally, due to the geographical location of fieldwork, I was able to relate indirectly to ethnic minority discrimination in my home-town with some of the Romani and Pavee informants.

4.2.3 The Gate-Keeper

In order to gain access to caravan sites – be that private, council, authorised or unauthorised - I relied heavily upon a gate-keeper (see 4.2.1). She became involved in the research with her own priorities and agendas (which of course she was entitled to), and I attempted within the realms of being ethical to accommodate any needs of hers in return for her help with my research. These needs included money transactions for each family she introduced me to as well as money towards fuel for her car if we went on a trip together to meet a family. I was thus required by my academic institution to ask her to sign receipts for the payments she received. This simple action introduced its own set of conflicting values: the accountability of funding versus the anonymity for research participants. Arguably, this should not be a conflicting matter at all for researchers as the necessity of anonymity for subjects, as well as proper usage of all primary and secondary data within social research is absolute, according to notable social research codes of practice (cf. ESRC 2010 and ASA 2011).

Gate-keepers can obstruct the researcher's access to their community, home or work-place as little or as much as they wish, whilst also granting access and consent to others (Davies 2008: 58-59). They potentially have an extraordinary amount of power over the direction of the research (cf. Rabinow 2007: 28-29) and therefore we should be wary about the kind of role we give them in the research process from the beginning. If in order to frame the research accurately this is not handled well, it can be difficult to reverse the situation later.

I did not rely entirely upon a gate-keeper for all of my research and had intended to try and manage as much as possible without one. However, in the end she was the main key to the caravan-dwelling communities, due to my lack of knowledge of where certain sites were located, who would be willing to speak to me and also, not being able to drive myself to these locations. My own ethical principles for conducting participant observation allowed my gate-keeper quite an influence over the entire process. For instance, I faced the decision of whether or not I would actually live with a family or in my own caravan on a site, as has been done in previous ethnographic research studying caravan-dwelling and Gitano groups (cf. Okely 1983 and Gay Y Blasco 1999). It was my decision after considering my various

options not to live within a caravan-dwelling community. The very premise of this research is the contestable nature of this policy area, not to mention the contestable topic of whether or not people can choose to live how and where they like, regardless of what the rest of the community finds appropriate. The two opposing sides of this issue have led to a shortage in caravan site provision and thus I felt that in the interest of both groups, me living on a site and taking up much needed plot space would only exacerbate the issue and possibly make conducting this research more problematic than it already was. Therefore I was only able to conduct research by visiting sites for a few hours at a time, although this did open up other methodological opportunities for the research and forced me to rethink my approaches to both communities.

Another ethical issue I became preoccupied with during the fieldwork process was that I felt it was important not to arrive for research uninvited by those I would interview and spend time with, since it was their home and territory (Visweswaran 1994: 95-96 and Silverman 2006: 81). The case of researching unauthorised encampments became particularly problematic as a result of this ethical standard since the families inhabiting such sites are in very precarious, chaotic and at times dangerous positions. I was unsure of where to find such a family and when I tracked one down, I was usually unable to reach them alone due to no one being willing to accompany me. Should I have been able to reach them, I doubt they would have been thrilled to be pestered by a student. I was constantly made aware by new contacts that caravan-dwelling communities had already been harassed sufficiently by researchers and journalists in the past, which was eventually a deterrent for me going about contacting random families. Therefore I relied quite heavily on my gate-keeper to introduce me to families that she knew would not mind me coming to their homes or being interviewed. It may seem like an advantage to be introduced to families who were willing to participate and had a relevant story to tell, but this also brought in two more issues. The first major issue was the consequence of monetary compensation for the aforementioned "work" the gate-keeper was doing and thus the potential exploitation of both researcher and informant or gatekeeper.

The second issue was that the gate-keeper would only introduce me individuals and families that she knew shared her view and priorities regarding planning and land rights, and would be present at all meetings and interviews with these residents, often redirecting the conversation. At times she took advantage of this and I knew it, but there was very little that I felt I could do about it at the time if I seriously wanted to continue having access to her friends and neighbours. My

oversight here was forgetting that just because I am the researcher does not mean that the research belongs solely to me. A large priority of ethnographic fieldwork for researchers - whether it takes place “at home” or at a foreign and unfamiliar location – must be to strive to find their place amongst their subjects, a place that will allow them to be both participant and observer. However, finding this place becomes impossible when we do not allow ourselves to be pushed and pulled and to some extent redefined by our surroundings and subjects (Young 2005: 208 and Rabinow 2007: 30). In a sense this is what my gate-keeper had done; she had redefined my purpose for researching this social setting and thus many of my encounters took place based on her experience and expectations of me rather than mine of her.

For my part, I had the task of managing my relationship with her alongside the development of a relationship with members of LAs. Whilst ethically speaking I should not be expected to share the identity of other participants with the gate-keeper (Davies 2008: 60), this became troublesome when not disclosing details of the other aspects of the research concerning other informants to her caused rifts in our relationship. It was clear to me the reasons she took an interest in my findings; she was interested to know which LA bureaucrats I had interviewed and whether or not I had been able to speak to the TLO responsible for the district she lives in with her family, since she had personal grievances to make. However, I felt obligated to respect the privacy of each participant of the research, although I took the opportunity to ask for advice on the gate-keeper’s behalf when I was in a position to.

Additionally, she took an interest in other prominent people of Romani descent I had spoken to, since there was the possibility that they would begin to have more of an influence over the research, swaying it away from her own aims. Referring back to two ethical issues previously mentioned, as long as the gate-keeper was the only prominent caravan-dwelling individual I had a steady working relationship with, she had a significant amount of influence over me and the choices I made. As I have pointed out above, I unwittingly put the gate-keeper in a position to decide which families I would speak to since I had little contact or access the families on my own. Her own awareness of their lifestyles enabled her to support her own stories rather than contradict her version of events when it came to explaining how the average caravan-dwelling family is living (Young 2005: 206). Thus, she assumed I would write more prominently from her perspective. Also, the amount of funding I could get and what I would spend it on became of great interest to the gatekeeper, and she regularly insisted that we try and claim more funding for the project. She also insisted frequently that she was entitled to her own fair share.

This is not something I disagreed with however it made things difficult when I wanted to collaborate with other caravan-dwelling families that she knew and did not approve of.

This has been a familiar and connecting scene for researchers of Gypsy groups throughout Europe. For example, Paloma Gay Y Blasco told of her difficulty to conduct fieldwork amongst Spanish Gitano communities due to a feeling of becoming constrained by her research subjects' own reluctance to socialise outside of their own kinship group, detailing how she was warned against trusting families in the next street (1999: 41-42). Aside from this was the fact that the gate-keeper had access to my home and family and I hers. Consequently, there was a need after a while of working together in my home-town to try and draw a line between my personal and professional lives, although I became aware this would be a contentious boundary to attempt to set between myself and research informants (Rabinow 2007: 29). I originally tried to see her as a colleague: equal and deserving of repayment for the time and effort she put into helping me. However, I ultimately failed in preventing my emotions from getting in the way to maintain a professional relationship (cf. Gibb 2005). As a result, after knowing each other for more than five years, we took a mutual interest in each other's lives. She especially encouraged me to finish my studies for myself, as well as for the caravan-dwelling community, and also to build a career and have a family. We have had periods of very close contact, shared a local history and emotional reactions to geo-political and social changes in the place we both call "home", my gate-keeper and I became more than just colleagues. We became friends.

4.3 Summary of Methodology Chapter

This chapter has provided in the first part a detailed explanation of the methodological and philosophical roots of this thesis (interpretive critical discourse analysis), as well as the tools used to conduct research, analyse findings and answer the research questions (document analysis, semi-structured interviews and aesthetic observation). The second part of the chapter contains comprehensive passages regarding reflexivity, ethical considerations and accessibility to the field.

The following chapter will begin with an ethnographic reflection of exactly how the researcher came to meet the gate-keeper and also an illustration of the other numerous interactions that she allowed the researcher to have with caravan-dwelling families. From here we will begin to examine the narratives more closely. This chapter will continue to make use of a first person narrative, as the emotions, impressions and observations of the researcher are part of the aesthetic research process. In order to provide an overall context for the later interviews and analysis a

small number of in-depth accounts of visits to the caravan sites are presented. This provides the necessary accounts when considering the arguments and claims made in the final chapters of the thesis, based on the narratives interpreted from the interviews and observations.

5. The Aesthetic Context: Contested Landscapes

Introduction

The neatness of policy and administration is non-existent within the communities that will ultimately be affected the most by their practices. This is why in order to really understand the ethical value of policy language and implementation, substantial time within the community was deemed to be appropriate. Narrative in ethnographic writing has a duplicate presence (Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein 1997: 291). While one element of this narrative approach is telling how the research was conducted by the scholar (see *Methodology* chapter), the other is the story of the customs and experiences of the research subjects (ibid). Therefore, ethnography is an ideal methodology to understand narratives since the approach itself relies upon a narrative-based perspective (Cortazzi 2007: 384-385). The story of the scholar involves more than an explanation of scientific tools that were used to conduct fieldwork, for it is also an exploration of the process of change the researcher goes through herself as well as how she relates to the people she comes into contact with (cf. Coffey 1999). Conducting aesthetic research uses the scholar's experiences and impressions upon entering a fieldwork site as well as the stories they hear while there (cf. Yanow 1998).

In total, research was conducted on seven caravan sites, however it was decided to use the material gained from six due to the eventual location chosen for fieldwork process. I was able to examine the varying issues relevant to the main five types of caravan sites caravan-dwelling families live on:

Local Authority Sites: a site built, owned and managed by the LA of a district, who rent plots out to families. These types of sites operate largely in the same way as council or social housing with wardens and TLOs carrying out the duties of landlords and social workers. In this case it is the responsibility of the LA to provide and maintain the sites.

Temporary Local Authority Sites: a site temporarily established on land that would not normally be suitable according to the LA, who allow the "toleration" of families who have nowhere else to go and especially when there is a lack of space on existing sites.

Private Sites: a site built on privately owned land by a family for themselves, usually for no more than five trailers or caravans. These sites require planning

permission in order to install electricity and plumbing mains, establish a legitimate address and become an inhabitable space.

Privately Owned and Managed Sites: a site built on a large plot of privately owned land by a family for themselves and other families that need somewhere to live, sometimes due to a shortage of LA plots. Families pay rent for their plot as they would for a privately rented house or flat and the landowner acts as ‘manager’ in place of a TLO.

Unauthorised developments: a site established on private land, owned by the family, yet developed and occupied illegally due to a lack of planning permission. In many cases the families face eviction from the land by the LA without any other option of a home.

It remained an ambition throughout fieldwork to conduct research in and around an unauthorised encampment – a site established on private or public land illegally (without permission from the council or landowner), leading to the eviction of families, sometimes to a new council plot, sometimes to the road-side. However, due to problems concerning access, this was not possible.

Below are some accounts of my experiences interacting within these contested landscapes and their residents but more importantly, through this written piece I tell stories of the lived experiences and social circumstances of the inhabitants of a variety of caravan sites, and how this potentially impacts on the residents’ world views (cf. Pader 2006: 163). This chapter focuses on contextualising each fieldwork setting. Since there is no single way to actually translate field experiences into written work, I have presented each visit and interview as its own short story based on the lives of the residents, rather than a report based upon observations (Goodall 2000: 122).

5.1 Authorised Spaces

When I began fieldwork for this thesis, two years had passed since the very first time I set foot on a caravan site. As I approached the site to ask about conducting more interviews, I found that I was just as nervous as that first time, although on this occasion my fear was more to do with the possibility of rejection. Nonetheless, I thought certain families would remember me and perhaps be accommodating. As I passed a petrol station I noticed two adolescent boys walking towards me, presumably going to the shop. They observed me closely; it was unusual for anyone to walk along the bypass, unless you lived on the caravan site that could be found

along it or worked on the industrial estate that can be found further along the road. I was so worried they would catch me up and at best interrogate me, at worst chase me off. I just needed to turn the bend and get inside the site and then I would be safe. However, safe from whom? No one knew I was coming and since I had no regular contact with any of the residents they had no reason to expect me to randomly visit them. I was sure that the boys had called out something to me, but I pretended not to hear them and continued on, passing a large yard for burnt out cars on my right, until I found myself stood in front of a horse-box at the entrance. Again, I was struck by the greyness of the concrete, the caravans that seemed piled up on top of each other²², the simple horse-field at the end of the road, the claustrophobia inducing hedges. Every plot (at the time there were ten), was allocated with an amenity block where access to water and plumbing facilities is situated. This is where families can do their laundry and take showers, although many of the caravans also had kitchens and toilets with running water facilities (DCLH 2007: 66).

I decided that as long as I seemed to have a purpose, no one would question me. So I headed to the far end of the site, determined to come away with a contact. One family that I had spoken to before and hoped would participate again were away for the day, a neighbour told me. She did not want to participate herself, but told me the other resident I asked her about was home. I approached and found myself face-to-face with a formidable woman. It was her father's plot and she – Julia – was visiting with her daughter and sister. Julia had also been there the first time I had spoken to her father. This time she drove me off, stating that if I wanted her help I had better pay her for her time. I came back with some money and was invited into the caravan for a cup of tea. The family were preoccupied with the looming expansion of the site with two new plots to be added at the end. With regards to who should gain allocation to the new plots, Julia told me:

“You won't get two new families going on there because it wouldn't be fair to the families that have already got married and had to double up with their parents - that's illegal anyway. When the plot goes up they should to be get that person that's doubled up²³ off that space.” – Interview 2009.

²² Typically LA sites are built to hold no more than two caravans per pitch (DCLG 2007: 66 and EERA 2008: 15), however in this case, some pitches were holding several vehicles.

²³ “Doubling-up” is a living arrangement that consists of several generations of caravan-dwelling families establishing a home on the same pitch, usually only used to refer to pitches too small for the amount of occupants.

On my last visit to the site in 2011, the plots had been built and were occupied by at least one new family. Julia became my first and most important contact, introducing me to other caravan-dwelling families over the following year.

5.2 Unauthorised Spaces

The Murphys

The next time I saw Julia was later the same month, in May 2009. She had offered to meet up with me and hear more about what exactly it was I wanted to know about caravan sites and to decide who would be best for me to speak with. I managed to convince my mother to drive me through the narrow, bendy roads characteristic of this part of the country, to a pub in a small village some ten miles away. To give the reader some idea of how small-scale the communities are that I worked with, the pub chosen by Julia for our meeting was one that my maternal Grandmother used to own and a place I spent some years of my own childhood, most notably Christmas in 1992 with my entire maternal family. This strong sense of familiarity and shared space made me relate to Julia; they made me trust her. After a long conversation about the “unfair” planning situation many caravan-dwelling families have found themselves in, especially since the Conservative initiated *Criminal Justice Act (1994)*, Julia unexpectedly suggested we go to a nearby, unauthorised site she used to live on. She told us then was the best time, at the beginning of the summer when many families would be away at fairs and I would be able to make observations and ask questions without being bothered by a plethora of suspicious residents.

We drove out through the countryside and around a village. On the outskirts, we found even narrower roads, leading to secluded lanes and farmland. Julia – who was driving in her own car ahead of us - pointed out of her car window, towards a lay-by, where we stopped. She suggested my mother leave her car there so that the residents of the site would not feel ambushed by a convoy of unknown vehicles. We continued along a pot-holed road, until we came to a dusty, rubble filled clearing in the fields. It reminded me of those miserable, unprepossessing council estates you find in large cities: deserted yet potentially dangerous. However, rather than intimidating towering blocks of flats, we were confronted with such emptiness that it became stifling. Row upon row of un-kept, unoccupied plots of land lay ahead of us. Unlike Julia’s father’s site on the outskirts of my hometown, these plots were not entirely divided by neat fences. One could see that efforts had been applied to the maintenance of a small number of plots, but on the whole it was a mess. We passed burnt out brick shacks, abandoned caravans and trailers, heaps of rubbish and every now and then a lovely yard with a pristine caravan positioned immaculately in the

centre, as though the occupants knew someone would be coming to see. Many plots featured Catholic Virgin Mary shrines at the front, but few had any garden features.

Julia explained to us that the site used to be predominantly English Romani families who had bought and developed the land privately. However, she went on to say that due to a severe lack of provision of caravan sites in the area: “The Irish come in [...] all the English got out and scattered.” Thus the site has become home to many Pavee families. Julia introduced us to an elderly Pavee couple living on quite a large plot in a static caravan. The plot had been kept in impeccable condition, with neat fencing and not a speck of litter; the caravan itself was also impeccably clean inside and out. The ground around the caravan was gravelled and one could tell a substantial amount of effort had been put into making the dwelling comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. My mother and I were impressed considering the couple were living there illegally according to planning laws, which state one must have permission to develop the land in a certain way and live there for an extended period of time, otherwise leaving the land after 28 days (SCDC 2004: 1). Nonetheless, I would learn that these achievements had been made for their own benefit solely; this was their home and they had no intention of leaving.

Mr. Murphy, who was sick at the time I met him, talked to us for a short while about his life on the site, claiming that the land itself belonged to him yet he was being denied the planning permission to stay there with his wife. I asked him how that was possible, to which he replied:

“The situation is we get this council passed – license for life - and three months later they revoked our license and they [the local council] took me to court and still wouldn’t give back our license. And through my ill health they’ve said they’ll tolerate us here. Tolerate us – but everyone else has to go.” – Interview 2009.

Mrs. Murphy busied herself throughout our interview with chores around her home and made us coffee. According to him, Mr. Murphy had repeatedly tried to appeal this decision to be granted the planning permission, not only to remain in his home but also to develop some neighbouring land he had recently purchased into “a playfield for [his] grandchildren.” Mr. Murphy showed us his eviction notices, and explained he had the intention to “turn [the land] back into fields”, although the council had denied the request. The Murphys told us of several other elderly families who had been “moved off” the site, despite their ill-health and having nowhere else to live due to inadequate provision of sites in the area. Mr. Murphy’s main worry appeared to be about what would happen to his wife if he were to widow her, as she did not have a stable home where she could live for the remainder of her life. At that time their plot was to be “tolerated” by the council; in other words, they would not

grant planning permission, but Mr. and Mrs. Murphy would have temporary access to the land for several months, giving them time to find a new home or appeal the decision again.

As a family, they felt they had been discriminated against due to being Irish, since English families had been allowed to live on the land for over 20 years, but since Pavee families moved in, evictions began taking place. He added that the council was “making criminals” out of young families that just needed a stable environment for their children and have nowhere else to go. As we were leaving, Mr. Murphy added: “Now if we apply for accommodation it’s turned down flat [...] Can you see anybody doing any harm on here? This could be a lovely site if we just got the chance to do it right, because [otherwise] who’d want to spend the money?”

Cathy and her Caravan

After speaking Mr. and Mrs. Murphy, Julia took us to meet another elderly Pavee couple who had invested in the land. A fence enclosed their private plot with a long gate at the front and gravel crunching underfoot. A tall, skinny man stood at the gate leading to a plot with one static caravan and one transit trailer. Many of the caravans resembled bungalows, however we found out later that the chalets can be moved when necessary. The sight of how fixed the main trailer seemed to the gravel below gave the impression that this family - like the Murphys - were settled and not planning to leave. We followed Julia into the trailer and stood before an old, plump lady, who sat in the centre of the room in her wheelchair peering up at her unexpected guests. Her name was Cathy. After Julia introduced us, Cathy began to narrate her own sad story of being confined to a wheelchair and thus not being able to enjoy the independence of relieving or washing herself alone with her current bathroom facilities. The couple had made applications to develop the bathroom and build an extension which would house a separate bedroom, giving the couple privacy from the rest of their (now adult) family. The requests had been denied and there was little room left for negotiation, leaving Cathy in a somewhat desperate position, with nowhere else to go and denied the right to dignity or comfort in her own home. Julia explained to us on the way to the car that when families begin to make such permanent developments, it makes it more difficult for LAs to evict them later.

5.3 Private Spaces

Aunty

By the end of the summer Julia agreed to put me in touch with someone she felt was the most important person to speak to. Her Aunty, who she had described to me as

“second to none.” This relative was special, not only because she owned her own caravan site, but also because it was big enough to become the temporary or permanent home of other caravan-dwellers. She had worked towards acquiring her own large plot of land, where she had her own house built and also developed the land behind it to make it appropriate for site use. I arranged to visit her on a day when I would have business in the region, so that the long journey would not only be for the sake of an hour long interview. However, the time I spent with Aunty ran much longer than the hour or so that we had planned.

The roads in this part of England are particularly narrow and bendy, flanked by ditches and flat farmland. One really gets the sense of driving off into the wilderness when taking any of these roads somewhere, and it is essential to know exactly where you are going in case you miss one of the many turnings that appears in the curve of the road, all of a sudden. Luckily for my mother (who had agreed once again to drive me) and I, we knew where we were going, although neither of us knew exactly what to expect. I had assumed that since Julia had spoken so highly of this site and her Aunty that it would be in better condition than the previous sites I had visited. Upon arrival it was hard to tell. From the road leading up to Aunty’s house, which was lined with tall conifer trees, it seemed as though a lot of construction work was going on, and there were some young men stood opposite what we could vaguely make out as the possible entrance to the caravan site. The only clear thing we could see was a neatly built bungalow, tucked away behind an even neater, long front garden. After we had been directed to an appropriate place to park the car by the men in the road, an older man came out to greet us. Once we had introduced ourselves, we were led into the bungalow where we found Aunty, and she welcomed us into a wide room through tall, double doors and motioned towards a glass table with chairs around it next to the window. I remember trying hard not to stand on the beautiful rug, which was spread out over the tiled floor while I admired her home. I was so impressed by the tall set of shelves, decorated with glass and porcelain ornaments; the long, glamorous sofa; the wide unrestricted view of the wild, rural landscape from the window.

Aunty had this classic charm about her - a kind of effortless, countryside glamour that reminded me of my grandmother. This was the second time I had been reminded of her during my fieldwork and making an association between her with a woman who was probably the same age, again made it easy for me to be drawn into the topics she discussed with us, taking them for granted. However, of the many messages Aunty seemed to want to get across to us that afternoon, this was the most important and recurrent: “You’ve got to do your utmost to convince them [...] to

change that policy and it's quite an effort sometimes. I feel like I've been doing it all my life."

Aunty's story embodies many of the themes surrounding ownership, leadership and relationship with the physical environment, which have been communicated to me by other caravan-dwelling families. A pattern began to emerge over the conversations I had: that each person should be entitled to find a home of their own. However, unlike other residents that I spoke to, Aunty had a strong knowledge of legislation that had affected the way of life of caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee families in Britain, and made references to them throughout our discussion. From the *Caravan Sites Act* (1968): "A few campsites were built but not enough," to the *Criminal Justice Act* (1994): "They [local authorities] was making it illegal to travel. It was not illegal to travel but illegal to stop".

After a long conversation about Aunty's long life and struggle with planning policy, in order to establish a privately owned and managed caravan site near her home, I enjoyed a brief tour. Eager for me to appreciate her accomplishment, Aunty allowed me to take a walk around the site alone, encouraging me to take pictures or ask anyone about their lives that I might meet along the way. Not entirely comfortable with the idea of approaching people out of the blue, based on access given to me by the landlady, I decided to just walk and take a couple of photos but tried not to focus on any pitch in particular (see appendix a, figure 6). The site was surprisingly a lot like the LA sites I had visited in terms of its layout; there was plenty of the characteristic concrete and fencing for instance, as well as the amenity block located neatly on each pitch. On the other hand, there was also something cleaner and sharper about the green and yellow colour scheme, the neat little driveways, as well as many more plants and personal touches to each individual plot. Also, the roads were maintained with speed bumps and street lights. Another difference to my previous visits at other sites was the tidiness. Like Aunty's home, each plot was immaculately clean, with neat waste containers at front or the back of each plot. Unlike the other sites, one had a clear and accessible view of the surrounding countryside and whilst the lay-out of the actual pitches was very much the standard, removing boundaries between the peripheral landscape and the site gave the space a more open feel. For the first time whilst visiting a caravan site I felt at ease and the only thing that rushed my visit was my mother calling me from a distance.

Shelly and Julia

When I had begun fieldwork and struck up a professional agreement with Julia, we had an understanding, that whilst she would aid me in finding families to speak to and get me access to view some sites, her own personal life and story would not be a part of our work together. Of course, I had access to Julia's personal life since I knew her father and visited him several times independent of any pre-arrangements with her, and Julia herself orchestrated a meeting with her aunt. However, she asserted that telling her own story was not as important as helping every caravan-dwelling family that needed it in the country and therefore, the focus should be on them. As I began to wrap up fieldwork with families I was invited to Julia's home to witness the state of the road leading down to her land. I had advised her to take pictures and send them to me if she wanted them to be featured in the research, however, even after the photographs had been developed (see appendix a, figure 7), Julia continued to insist that I travel out to her home to see the road for myself. "Those pictures that I took don't do the road justice at its worst!" she argued, and reluctantly I agreed to visit her, if she could arrange for me to get there and back. I was aware being asked to personally photograph the road and travel along it to feel its affect on a vehicle was not the same as an invitation into Julia's home, to talk to her about why she had been taken to court several times over a period of four years (as she had mentioned in previous conversations), or what her current standing with the LA was. We agreed that she would arrange a lift from my hometown to the village where she and her family had their own small plot of land and that she would introduce me to her neighbour and find out if I could interview them about the road as well.

I found out later that it would be Julia's eldest daughter - Shelly - who would collect me and Julia suggested, that if I liked, I should also ask her some questions, since we were about the same age and then I would know a bit more about the "gypsy" experience through the eyes of a younger person. It eventually became clear to me that although Julia finally wanted her story to be told, she did not want to be the one to tell it. Of course, telling the world, in a scientific manner was my job, but Julia could not even narrate the tale to me, she had ordered her daughter to do it. This is how we had come to be sat in the car together, and it was increasingly obvious that Shelly was not happy with this arrangement. It was also arranged that I would pay Shelly for the car fuel she would use to drive out to pick me up, however the sullen, young woman refused my money, seeming both amused and offended by the offer as she drove us through the countryside. Another uncomfortable silence followed, however - obedient daughter that she was - Shelly began the conversation with: "Me Mum said you might want to ask me some questions [sic]?"

We drove through a countryside of flat fields and endless skies, tiny dots that make your eyeballs ache at first then, as if from nowhere, emerge as villages from nowhere. We had shared this landscape all our lives and called it “home”, but by the end of the car ride I realised we had existed in different worlds and knew so little about the other. Much of this was down to the conscious decision made by Julia, Shelly and their family to have as little to do with Gorgers (see *Background* chapter) possibly due to our apparent insufficient moral qualities. For example, an issue some Romani families have with Gorgers is their supposed lack of sexual modesty, especially amongst young women. This is no doubt rooted in the highly valued family unit, which Romani groups hold to be the foundation of the community (cf. Gay Y Blasco 1999). Shelly shared her thoughts on this topic through relaying her experiences of working with Gorgers. She said:

“I feel more comfortable with like [pauses] someone of me own kind [...] When I first started work [...] the people was different [...] the way they acted around you was different [...] and I’m not used to the way like [sic] Gorgers men act around women [...] I wouldn’t expect a travelling boy to say anything dirty in front of me just because I wouldn’t expect it. And if they did I probably [...] wouldn’t speak to them again [...] Gorgers boys [...] they’re complete opposites [...] And the way the girls are different [pauses] they’ll go into a nightclub and pick somebody up [...] it’s just something I’ve never [pauses] heard of before - ‘till I started work. [sic].” – Interview 2010.

Up until about 10 years ago Julia, her husband and their children had followed what is considered to be a traditional “Romani” lifestyle, consisting of travelling around based on the work available from place to place, living on the curb of a road for a few days at a time (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 28-29). According to Shelly, the family never lived on a LA site. When her younger sister Kerry was born, the family was forced to cease their nomadic lifestyle due to her severe physical disabilities. The family now needed to be rooted in one place so that Kerry could attend regular hospital appointments and later a school that could cater for her special requirements. Eventually, Julia and her husband purchased a plot of land that had previously been used for fly-tipping. Shelly recalled:

“I think we moved down here on the Friday [...] and as soon as like the village got wind of it: “Oh there’s Gypsies moving into [the village]!” It was in the newspapers and everything by the end of the day [...] and we had three days to get fences up, put bricks down, put stones on top of that, get everything sorted before [the local authority] got an injunction on [...] I think our place has been passed for two year now. For a year and a half, they dragged us through [pauses] courts as high as they could get them just to

try and get us off [...] twice we won the case [...] they still tried to appeal against us to chuck us off!" – Interview 2010.

As we reached the long road leading to Shelly's home I remember being thrown about in the car due to the pot-holes; it was not what you would expect to find anywhere in England. However here it was: the potholes photographs could not do justice. Julia had been right. At first we only passed small houses and bungalows. However, eventually fields and hedgerows stretched out and small caravan plots revealed themselves behind neat fences. We reached the end of the lane and pulled into a wide driveway, where two large white caravans stood, one directly in front of us, the other to the right. Both had wide ramps and double doors, presumably for easy wheelchair access. I could see a long wide garden behind the first caravan and wild, uneven, marsh looking land behind the second.

Julia greeted us from the caravan on the right in turn and whilst she invited me in for a cup of tea. She stood in the door-way of the caravan on the right, dressed smartly as usual in her knee length pencil skirt and a neat, modest sweater. Over the top of her ensemble she was wearing an apron and on her feet she had slippers. I was used to her wearing knee length black boots; obviously she would not wear these inside her home. Her home was immaculate, inside and out and there was an immense sense of calmness, as though we were miles away from everything. Well, in all honesty we were miles away from everything, but I lost all connection with the two-dozen or so homes – caravans and houses - that we passed on our way down the lane. As I entered, directly in front of me a door leading to a bedroom was ajar, revealing lifting equipment that I assumed was used for Kerry. To the right was a small kitchen and to the left, a long family-size sofa.

As I literally sat on such a contested piece of land I could almost feel the ground shaking beneath us, while Julia described her endless, harrowing experiences at the hands of the "control freaks" in local government offices, in the attempt to find one, stable place to safely raise her five children. She did not really tell me anything I had not already heard before from other families, but this time she showed me her story. The wild and unmanaged land behind the second caravan was also part of her plot it turned out. In the year and a half since she and her husband were granted permission to develop their land, Julia had not managed to do much with the other half. It was a mess, almost impossible to walk over the uneven grassy dunes, the burnt out tyres, the heaps of horse manure. Most shockingly to me was that the entire plot had originally been in this state, however Julia and her family had worked tirelessly to give themselves a clean and decent home, with something nice to look at from the window (see appendix a, figure 8).

Dennis and Emma

The last family that Julia would introduce me to were a young couple living along the same lane as her. Dennis and Emma lived on half of a private plot with their young daughter Laura, the land belonging to Dennis' father – Craig - who also lived there with them, the other half being inaccessible to them due to a lack of planning permission. The pitch was set out in the same way as Julia's, with one caravan facing the long gate and a second to the right, running along the side of the fence. There were also two cars parked in the gravelled pitch, in front of the bigger caravan. The family were expecting me when I arrived with a shopping voucher to compensate them for their time, as had been negotiated on my behalf by Julia. As their neighbour, I was aware that she would already have some knowledge about any issues they would choose to discuss with me. I began to wonder if Julia had other motives for introducing me to this family in particular, rather than any other along the lane, since I had learned there were several caravan-dwelling families as well as many houses. It also occurred to me as we were welcomed in and Emma introduced herself, that if the couple did not discuss the issues Julia wanted me to focus on, she was more than capable of redirecting the conversation. I suddenly began to regret the whole arrangement, feeling as though I was about to lose my last opportunity to record some valuable insights.

I entered the chalet with Julia in tow and was offered a seat by Emma at the table by the window, where we could look out into their front yard. Inside the chalet, it felt just like any other one-storey home, with a small kitchen off to the right as you entered and a living room straight through. I noticed that somewhere there was a radio playing as I settled into my chair and prepared my Dictaphone. After sitting there for a while and getting the conversation started, I can recall forgetting that I was even in a mobile home several times, due to the interior dimensions of the caravan and how much they differed from other caravans that I had visited. When the words "caravan" and "trailer" were mentioned in reference to our setting, I would again take in my surroundings. Even from the window, looking out into the wide, gravelled yard, I did not experience the same caged-in sensation. I was not worried that someone would walk passed the caravan at any moment and discover my intrusion. I felt safe knowing that I was on secure and private land. The feeling of familiarity soon replaced my nervousness, except for short pangs of annoyance whenever Julia interrupted the couple's account.

Later I would discover that Emma was not actually of Romani descent. She and Dennis had fallen in love and when they discovered she was pregnant, it was

decided she should move from the village to be with him, rather than Dennis relocating to be with her in a house. Emma explained:

"I just wanted the upbringing of my daughter to be with her family. I don't want an upbringing where she's in a house with us and he's always out and never see him here [...] She gets to see her Granddad and be around everything that's in Dennis' history as well. He's been here for years." - Interview 2010.

At the time I met the family, this had been Dennis and Craig's home for over 20 years. They had lived there with Craig's now deceased wife and their three, now adult children. Dennis explained to me that his brother and sister had left the site because "[T]here was no room on here," further stating that they "[N]ever hardly [sic] see each other anymore".

Originally, when I had approached the family, I had intended to discuss an ongoing dispute that I knew the residents along the lane had with their local council, lasting at least 20 years according to them, regarding the maintenance of the road. The residents claimed the road was a public bridleway and should therefore be repaired and maintained by the LA. However, they had been told since the caravan sites and houses were privately own, if the residents wanted the road to be repaired, it was their responsibility. Some residents, including Dennis' family, have accepted this response, although they maintained that the council had failed to provide the families with any materials to improve the road themselves. Dennis went on to say:

"They [the council] spent thousands on lanes and bridleways. This is bridleway obviously – that's why they won't tarmac it or anything but they won't even give us some black stuff. We're quite happy to do the work ourselves if they'll supply the black stuff." - Interview 2010.

Julia, who supported her statement that the bridleway was indeed public by reiterating the council's responsibility in the matter: "[T]here's people coming through this way [...] there's the youngens out this [sic] village from college that come through here in their college clothes in the morning [...] So it is being used publicly."

Finally, Julia took me across the road to a clearing in the hedgerows where there were three small caravan plots, tucked away behind tall yet frail wooden fences. Two of the caravans could be found to the right as you entered along a small road, and the third faced you straight ahead. There was rubbish strewn about in the ditch running along the left side of the clearing and the small road was, like the lane, a bumpy mess due to pot-holes. I noticed large puddles along the road and on the ground within the plots, but paid little attention to them. I was trying to photograph the road some more, without framing the caravans within the shot. Julia suddenly

became conscious we were being watched and began rushing me, since we did not have the consent to be on the land from the families who privately owned it. Therefore I was doing my best not to invade their privacy but also not to offend Julia as she seemed to feel what she was showing me was of great importance. At some point as we were leaving, Julia asked me if I could see anything that indicated the caravans were “plumbed” into the land. I could not. She then asked me where I thought all the water went when someone went to the toilet or emptied the kitchen sink. Slowly, my eyes traced the puddles of murky water near my feet and around the base of the caravan in front of me. The image of grey liquid floating like a moat around the trailer (see appendix a, figure 9), where children probably traipsed through it carelessly, everyday immediately disgusted me. I asked Julia then and other times since the visit when we have spoken about it, why the family do not have plumbing for their caravans. She explained patiently each time that you need planning permanent permission for that and the council had only granted temporary permission, meaning the family could receive electricity and heating, but could not build a sewage system.

When I speak to other non-Pavee or Romani house-dwellers about the barriers set in the way of caravan-dwelling families who are trying to maintain an alternative lifestyle, they will often argue that they are only the same planning obstacles that we all face. This is met with agreement by local councillors and parliamentary representatives, bureaucrats and even to some extent traveller liaison officers (TLOs): the law is the law and we all have to follow it. If a certain amount of land is designated as Green Belt or if sufficient permission has not been granted for building, it does not matter if the family is Pavee, Romani, New Age or Gorger, they will face the same consequences for their actions. However, as we will see in the following chapters, in spite of all the policy and strategy documents for new caravan sites published in the last six years, we have yet to see a similar approach being taken for caravan site provision as with housing development policy, as long term forecasting often does not take place. Only recently has there been a central government policy to encourage viewing the two forms of accommodation in the same light (DCLG 2011c), however it remains to be seen how local governments will actually respond to such a legislation.

The fact is, the dominant perspective of caravan-based lifestyles is that they are not normal. This statement might be disputed by others observing the same social phenomenon, perhaps stating that there are LA caravan sites and opportunities to buy and develop land for privately owned sites, therefore there is no need for house-dwelling communities to suffer the on-going existence of

unauthorised encampments and developments. However, one cannot deny that currently there is not enough LA provision to account for all caravan-dwelling families, let alone the inevitable growth of these communities (see appendix a, figure 10). Proof of this is the volume of unauthorised developments. In cases where families have been granted planning permission, other limitations have been enforced regarding to what extent they can develop and enjoy their own land, as in the case of Dennis and Emma, which I explore further in later chapters.

As for the one of the districts studied, it seems that ample provision is available (five sites to this date). However, one might question the quality of the sites and the level of satisfaction of their residents. The one LA caravan site that I have had regular access to over the past five years has seemed bleak at best. It is a heavily controlled environment where residents feel that have little control over the fate of their own home. There is also the preoccupation amongst some caravan-dwelling parents regarding what will happen to their families when their children become adults; the children are forced to move away due to constraints on natural growth of the site, going against some of the most core values of this community.

5.4 Summary

The above discussion has provided an insight into how access was gained to the fieldwork settings as well as an articulation of the visits made to caravan site and meetings with families living there. The reader has been offered by this chapter an opportunity to learn about the challenges of a caravan-dwelling lifestyle from the perspective of those living it, rather than merely from those observing. The observations presented above and any conclusions we might draw from them are the product of an aesthetic research method, where I was able to enter and leave a research setting on more than one occasion in some cases, to tangibly understand the lived experience of LA caravan site planning and policy narratives from multiple perspectives. This chapter has introduced the reader to several of the research participants (who will also feature prominently in chapters seven, eight and nine) and provided a vivid image of their homes, which are the built artefacts of policy decisions.

The following chapter will provide an overview of each of the documents concerned with caravan site planning in England that have been extensively analysed for this research. The ethnographic style of writing within this thesis ends here.

6. The Policy Context: Analysis of Policy Documents

Introduction

Of the numerous policy documents that have featured and been referenced to throughout this thesis, six were eventually selected for analysis along with interview transcriptions and site observations, to aid in sustaining claims made. A more detailed explanation of how each document was sourced and finally selected for analysis will be given below. This overview is a helpful guide for readers who are unfamiliar with the policy documents being referred to throughout the analytical chapters. An analysis of the documents will not take place in this chapter; this will be provided alongside the analysis of interviews with families and officials and observations in chapters seven, eight and nine. For now, we shall focus on how analysis and document selection was carried out.

The search for documents detailing certain relevant topic areas related to “Traveller” caravan sites (such as anti-social behaviour, environmental issues or community cohesion programmes), began as a way to learn more about this particular policy area as well as the previous and current situations regarding caravan site provision. Therefore, each of the policy documents, and any other necessary supporting literature were read early on in the research process. As fieldwork within caravan sites and LAs progressed and research themes began to emerge, certain policy documents were revisited or new ones sought out altogether, with the intention of utilizing them later in the wider CDA process.

As has been explained above, an original intention of the research was to explore the theme of values in policy processes. As the initial interview transcripts were completed and annotated, two more prominent themes emerged alongside values: power and citizenship. At this stage, the researcher was able to start reading the initial selection of documents from a new perspective. Policy documents from the early 1990’s were originally part of this selection, however as fieldwork and the subsequent research-based arguments progressed, the data gained from older policy documents became less relevant. This is not to say that a historical perspective as a secondary resource to policy and administrative practices in governments is not useful or important for the social sciences (Lynch 2006: 296 and Kerkhoff 2012: 223), however in the case of this research in particular, the use of more up to date policies, which are still in use, proved to be more meaningful in validating the claims that came from the field through the potential shared meanings of power, citizenship and ethics. The varying attitudes towards this policy initiative, from both families and practitioners alike, were quite telling. Comparative policy analysis was not thought to be an option here, due to more of a focus on the lived

experience of policymaking and implementation (see *Methodology* chapter for a fuller explanation).

The analysis of the newly selected documents did not occur in a very systematic manner, however there were some patterns. The use of colour coding was used on the texts in order for the researcher to distinguish between the aforementioned themes. Usually the colours orange, green and pink were in use to highlight and differentiate implications of citizenship and community, socio-political power mechanisms as well as expressions of ethics, although other colours were also used when new themes presented themselves in the text. Hand-written annotations were also made around the text, detailing the researcher's interpretations of the meaning of the use of language within texts throughout analysis and how these aforementioned themes were being conceptualised by central and local government (see appendix b, figure 1). Longer annotations were written on the back pages of the documents so that the research could return to and reference the document at any time and be able to read the original text clearly.

Eventually, the following six policy documents surfaced from this analytical process, presented here with short summaries and in order of their publication date but not necessarily in the order that the researcher accessed them. This chapter has been divided into two parts that focus on policies drafted both before 2010 and from 2010 to reflect the change in political rhetoric that came with an impending general election. Only one of the policies featured below was drafted and published after the general election. Please note that whilst the other chapters of this thesis refer to the families who primarily experience the effects of the policies being analysed as either caravan-dwelling, Romani or Pavee (in line with their self-identification towards an ethnic group), in this chapter the terms 'Traveller' and 'Gypsy' are used more frequently to stay close to the language of the documents.

6.1 Policies drafted and published before 2010

6.1.1 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (2006)

This document was drafted following the publication of the *Respect Agenda* (2004), and led to the introduction of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Development Plan Documents (DPPs). *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* was sourced by the researcher via a legal documents website in order to see what had been written during the recent Labour administration, prior to the implementation of the RSS as well as provide an opportunity to learn more about the development of this policy strategy and the aims and objectives behind it. This search was prompted by the analysis of a draft of an actual RSS document used in the district where

fieldwork took place (see below). This document seeks to rectify LA caravan site provision after the arguable failures of the previous Conservative government in 1994: '[E]vidence shows that the advice set out in Circular 1/94 has failed to deliver adequate sites for gypsies and travellers in many areas of England over the last 10 years' (ODPM 2006: 4).

The document and - by association - the Labour Party associates these policy failures with contemporary social issues thought to be more prevalent within 'Gypsy and Traveller' communities. For instance, social tensions arising from anti-social actions such as fly-tipping and illegal developments, unauthorised encampments and additional social difficulties such as lower accessibility to sufficient healthcare and lower attendance to school for children living on and between caravan sites:

'We recognise the conflict and distress associated with unauthorised encampments, and the anti-social behaviours that sometimes accompanies such sites [...] Gypsies and Travellers [...] experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England. Research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for gypsies and travellers and poor health and education' (ODPM 2006: 4).

That being said, the document does not appear to be in support of retrospective planning applications from the caravan-dwelling community as a justifiable means to legitimately establish new pitches and sites: 'The Government's aim is to ensure that planning policies and controls are respected by all sections of the community and that where breaches occur effective enforcement action is taken' (ODPM 2006: 16).

As members of local communities and citizens within society, the document concludes that caravan-dwelling families are entitled to access to decent services, secure homes and a decision-making role within the community:

'The Circular comes into affect immediately. Its main intentions are [...] to create and support sustainable, respectful and inclusive communities where gypsies and travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision' (ODPM 2006: 5).

The inclusion of the above statements within the policy document illustrate a perceived lack of access to these rights and services within 'Gypsy and Traveller' communities as well as an acknowledgement that the government has a responsibility to the welfare of all families regardless of where or how they live.

6.1.2 The Road Ahead (2007)

The second document addresses more pressingly than the first, the urgency of the need for more caravan sites and acknowledging the right to a decent home for all

members of society with an increased usage of the RSS to aid regional land allocation. As with the previous document, *The Road Ahead* was obtained from an online legal documents archive. The document was sought out with the common intention of investigating any documents drafted during the recent Labour administration, prior to and during the implementation of the RSS programme. Like the document above, here one can observe a top-down approach from the government in the implementation of their RSS strategy. While the previous document comes across as a formal and straightforward introductory piece dealing with the initial plans for the RSS and DPD, the second policy addresses some of the more practical, tangible elements of such policy initiatives. For instance, as it states:

'At the current rate of progress, based upon Regional Spatial Strategy timetables, we are concerned that sufficient new sites will not be identified, still less provided, through the RSS process before 2011 at the earliest. That is simply not an acceptable response to the serious concerns of both the settled community and Gypsies and Travellers themselves' (DCLG 2007: 13).

This quote an insight into the standard of caravan site provision in 2007 while arguably illustrating that the aims and objectives of the strategy are not only to change living standards experienced by some 'Gypsies and Travellers', but also to change public and LA attitudes towards caravan-site dwelling families. *The Road Ahead* addresses the aims of the RSS in a rigorous attempt to motivate LAs into action. It is acknowledged at the start the document and throughout that without social rights, any member of society is restricted in their ability to take up their responsibilities as citizens: 'Gypsies and Travellers, like every other group in society, are entitled to have somewhere safe and secure to live, They also have responsibilities to abide by the law [...] Until there are sufficient places for them to live there will be conflict between these principles' (DCLG 2007: 5).

In this way, the document urges its audience – which is pointed out to be members of the various stages of government - to invest in the social rights of caravan-dwelling individuals and their homes, in order to rehabilitate the entire community:

'Central government has a responsibility to support and facilitate that delivery; regional government to set out clear requirements for their areas; and local government to rise to the challenge and deliver for everyone in the communities they serve' (DCLG 2007: 9).

However, the language used throughout this document to differentiate between house-dwellers and caravan-dwellers (i.e. the 'settled' community and 'Gypsies and Travellers' respectively), contributes toward a construction of caravan-

dwelling families as displaced rather than a steady, permanent part of local communities. *The Road Ahead* is also at risk of perpetuating the families it seeks to help, as powerless and deprived victims of a prejudiced system based on their official status as 'homeless': 'The Task Group expects to see all delivery partners recognising the importance of meeting the accommodation needs of this vulnerable group, a group where 20-25 per cent of those living in caravans are effectively homeless' (DCLG 2007: 18).

Therefore, according to this document, the maintenance of retrospective planning permission is necessary, 'Despite the problems [it] can cause' (DCLG 2007: 27). The document adds that house-dwellers at times resent unauthorised developments and encampments due to the prevailing idea that caravan-dwelling families 'play' the planning system, whereas a house-dweller would never be able to build on land without an approved planning application (ibid). However, the document refutes claims of any unfair administration due to an acknowledgement that finding people homes is what is most at stake, rather than upholding bureaucratic rules (ibid).

Additionally, it is arguable that through the document's vision for 'Gypsies and Travellers', one can gain an insight into its vision for society on a wider scale, as inclusive, fair and equal. In other words, when individuals and especially minority groups become socially, economically and politically empowered enough to take on their social duties and responsibilities, they will subsequently become full or 'active' citizens (cf. Lister 1990: 14-15). In this sense, all caravan-dwelling members of society are also able to avoid the social problems currently plaguing pockets of Romani and Pavee communities, such as poor 'health and school performance' (DCLG 2007: 13). Lack of community cohesion as a manifestation of lack of political and economic strength is another issue pointed out by this policy document and has also been a focal point for other policy analyst, researching other minority groups in Europe (cf. Hoppe 1993).

6.1.3 Draft Policy: Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England (2008)

The third document was drafted for the East of England Regional Assembly; the committee responsible for the: 'economic, social and environmental well-being of the region' (EERA 2008: 1). This RSS provides a long-term view (three years) for the planning and allocation of caravan-dwelling families. It gives detailed information with regards to site and pitch figures in addition to an indication of within which districts more pitches allocation is required, by when as well as within a regional context.

As the document was still in its draft stage, it did not offer any accurate predictions of how caravan site provision should increase to accommodate population growth, although it does suggest a three percent annual increase in pitch provision as a guideline (EERA 2008: 6). The figures that feature in this document focus solely on target figures for pitches by the year 2011, based on the need in the year 2006, with the document actually being published by 2008 (ibid: 4-5). The researcher acquired this document through an informant living on a private caravan site at the time of fieldwork during an interview as more tangible evidence of the proposals of the RSS. This was a particularly valuable source of data since the document deals specifically with caravan site provision for the caravan-dwelling communities being researched. However, before it was possible to obtain the official document (rather than a draft), the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat government announced plans to abolish the RSS, which would eventually be replaced with the *Planning for Travellers* (2011) strategy (see 6.2.3). Alongside this shift, the LAs that would have made use of the RSS document, began work on a new, localised strategy for their caravan-dwelling communities (cf. TSCG 2010). This document was not completed by the end of the discourse analysis process for this thesis, however the researcher used of the original RSS draft for its insights into the needs of the caravan-dwelling communities.

This document, which is written from a local perspective rather than national (as the previous two were), is entirely reactionary in two ways. Firstly, this RSS has been drafted in reaction to the introduction and implementation of the first policy strategy in this list. Secondly, the document is a reaction to the realised social risks posed and experienced by the 'Gypsy and Traveller' community and thus an additional realisation of a need to either contain or aid the families in question, or both:

'There is an urgent need to address the shortage of accommodation suitable for Gypsies and Travellers. This shortage creates additional problems [...] in terms of access to health, education, employment and other opportunities. It can also create tensions over the use of pitches without planning permission' (EERA 2008: 6).

The above quote illustrates the acknowledgement of the 'national issue' (EERA 2008: 6), as presented in the two previous documents and here we can see the EERA explore how this issue plays out locally. Specifically, the writers comment that inadequate accommodation for 'Gypsies and Travellers' is 'particularly pressing in the East of England' (ibid). The longer quote above also indicates a local acceptance of the link between insufficient caravan site and pitch provision and other social difficulties such as education and health maintenance. Again, the

'tensions' regarding planning permission and unauthorised developments and encampments becomes contingent upon a lack of available land for caravan-dwelling families to live on. Thus, in order to prevent tensions with communities, suitable land needs to be made available. More cynically, one could argue that some LAs may have viewed the RSS as an opportunity to control the movement of caravan-dwelling families by deciding where they can live. Nevertheless, the text explains the RSS as intended to prevent them from causing annoyance to their house-dwelling neighbours or to avoid 'adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife and landscape importance' (EERA 2008: 7).

The importance of finding families homes remains a priority with the document asserting that the 'alteration of Green Belt boundaries' is a viable option in order 'to make the required levels of provision' (EERA 2008: 6), mirroring the intention to overlook retrospective planning, as indicated in *The Road Ahead*. The document admits that providing the necessary number of new pitches before the given deadline will put a strain on 'the planning system and delivery mechanisms' and resolves to provide 'help and advice to the Gypsy community in developing their own sites' in order to alleviate this pressure (ibid: 7). However, Basildon council (a district council that features in this RSS document), required 81 more pitches by 2011, a figure that we can consider to be extremely high since only one other district required more spaces than Basildon out of the total 48 district councils which make up the East of England Region. In 2011, 90 families from of Dale Farm – a prominent unauthorised development in Basildon – were infamously and forcibly evicted by the Basildon council, with many of the families not being offered any alternative land to live on in their caravans and trailers post-eviction (Ryder et al. 2011: 44)²⁴. This suggests that the LA in question had little intention of utilising the guidance of the RSS once the Conservative-Liberal Democratic government abolished the strategy.

6.2 Policies drafted and published after 2010

6.2.1 Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy (2010)

This is a LA document, drafted for one of the district councils investigated during fieldwork. The responsible officer took part in interviews and contributed the document to the research as some tangible information regarding caravan site

²⁴ Since the eviction, families have returned to their homes at Dale Farm and Basildon Council leader Tony Ball has stated that if they remain there, they will be evicted once again (Basildon Council 2013).

policymaking and provision. The document is a local response to central government guidance and pressure for local governments to acknowledge the 'equal rights and responsibilities' of all members of their communities and to hereby include 'Gypsies and Travellers' in their considerations of a 'cohesive community' (SCDC 2010: 5). According to the author of this document, it was the first of its kind drafted by this district council in particular, related to local caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee communities. It took nine drafts to complete and by 2010 the aim was to implement the strategy over a three-year period, alongside a monitoring design to ensure goals were being met.

The document opens with a profile of the area in question, illustrating the social context the strategy is subject to (SCDC 2010: 7). It is a rural area with high employment and low crime rates, is predominantly populated by white families (above 90 per cent) and also has a shortage of affordable housing (ibid). This section provides a further insight into current population demographics by stating 'Gypsy and Traveller' families made up: '1% of the 2005 district population and makes them the largest ethnic minority group' (ibid). Following this is a brief history of Romani families in the district and some details of how a caravan-dwelling lifestyle is viewed according to the law. The document explains on the one hand, '[T]ravelling is not a defining characteristic of the groups but only one among others,' and on the other: 'The courts have ruled that nomadism and living in a caravan is a reflection of Gypsies and Irish Travellers' cultural heritage and not simply a lifestyle choice that can be ignored' (SCDC 2010: 8).

While illuminating and promoting the 'cultural heritage' and protected rights as an ethnic minority group according to 'Race Relations Legislation' the author(s) of the document admits that the strategy is to cover provision for new travellers as well as Travelling Showpeople (ibid). In spite of the fact that all four of the aforementioned groups have very different histories, cultures and social and accommodation needs, according to this document they are to be dealt within one single policy strategy and under one common definition within that strategy: '[A] person with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan; and all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin' (SCDC 2010: 8). Arguably, this is a very efficient way to handle and provide public services to various members of a community who have overlapping lifestyles and needs. Additionally, one might comment that no community is entirely homogenous and societies in general are made up of many different groups of people, adhering to various lifestyles. However, one can maintain that by giving Pavee and Romani families, new travellers and Showpeople a common definition and treating them as one group, the

LA fails to educate itself about the differences between the groups and how they each may be affected differently by the strategy itself is also neglected somewhat.

The Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy seeks to ensure that its own aims and objectives would complement the 'range of existing council strategies and policies' in order to 'contribute to the identification of, and response to, the needs and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers' (SCDC 2010: 14). Among others, the document seems to have been written with the *Race Equality Scheme*, the *Sustainable Community Strategy* and the *Community Service Strategy* in mind (ibid). To meet the expectations of the other strategies mentioned, the author of this document proclaims that the 'authority' is: '[C]ommitted to eliminating discrimination and prejudice, and developing a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery' (SCDC 2010: 13).

'A culture which values difference', obviously does not extend here to acknowledging the vast differences between new travellers and families of Romani descent. The document's references to improving race relations and service delivery are extensive and connected by the recognition that 'Gypsies and Travellers' are the largest ethnic minority group in the district (SCDC 2010: 10). However, when presenting this fact the document fails to make clear new travellers and Showpeople are accounted for by these figures. Also, it is interesting that 'Gypsies and Travellers' who are implicitly Romani and Pavee groups in many documents are described here as one singular ethnic group with one cultural heritage, which is not the case. While the document alludes to the 'social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities' it also seeks to ensure that the LA will henceforth take into account 'cultural issues and specific requirements' (SCDC 2010: 9). How can LAs do this by addressing four different groups as one? In the promotion of service delivery and community cohesion, the document seeks to tackle two key areas: '[S]ustainable, respectful and inclusive communities in which Gypsies and Travellers have access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare services' and 'Recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community' (SCDC 2010: 11).

The document maintains in an earlier section that managing unauthorised sites is a priority in the district, not because of the urgent need to improve site provision (ibid: 20), but in order to reduce the 'potential level of nuisance for local residents' (ibid: 9). Are 'Gypsies and Travellers' not also local residents? The referral of house-dwellers as the 'local' or 'settled' population, juxtaposed with the 'travellers' - a vulnerable minority group with special needs and potentially posing as a nuisance to their neighbours - is a common thread between each of the

documents presented (see 7.2), although this is not the only similar rhetoric that they share.

Documents two, three and four have been drafted following and in response to the publication of Circular 01/2006: *Planning for Gypsy and Caravan Sites*. Therefore, their aims, objectives and recognitions overlap considerably. These documents acknowledge lack of sufficient provision as well as a less than desirable attitude towards caravan-dwelling communities in English LAs. The documents point out how accessibility to healthcare and educational facilities is undermined by the inadequate accommodation currently suffered by a number of caravan-dwelling families, while it is also noted that attempts will be made to manage unauthorised dwellings better, without removing the notion of retrospective planning permission applications for families who want to buy and establish their own homes. Policy document four had taken several years before becoming accessible to the public. Therefore, it is quite possible the overall direction that the document has taken did not reflect the political climate of the time of its publication.

Nonetheless, in 2010 attitudes in other organisations and authorities were changing towards caravan-site provision, months before the election of a majority Conservative-Liberal Democrat government, with policies being re-designed altogether after the elections, as one can see below.

6.2.2 Anti-Social Behaviour Related to Gypsies and Travellers (2010)

Sourced from a legal document website, this document was discovered while conducting research on anti-social behaviour policies may have been written concerning ethnic minority groups in the UK. As it happens, there had been a very recent one published (in March 2010), focusing entirely on forms of anti-social behaviour associated with 'Gypsies and Travellers'. The document details a number of particular anti-social activities that caravan-dwelling groups are supposedly more prone to, especially if they are mobile, and offers advice for LAs on how to handle incidents effectively. The social aims behind the document appear to revolve around community cohesion and mutual respect and responsibilities amongst citizens, as well as developing a new rhetoric of the good society:

'The Government's policies on Gypsies and Travellers are set within a framework of rights and responsibilities [...] Creating and sustaining strong communities in this way is at the heart of the Government's commitments to social justice and a fairer society' (DCLG 2010: 5).

This proved relevant to the socio-political power dynamics that were witnessed while participating in everyday house-dwelling society and discussed by Romani and Pavee families. Also, it is interesting that such an article was published

by the DCLG just ahead of the election of a new Conservative-led government, amidst rumours of more strict laws to tackle unauthorised developments and encampments (cf. CHLG 2010).

Above are examples of caravan-dwelling families being compared to their supposedly normal and settled house-dwelling neighbours, which is evidence of attempts being made to prevent caravan-dwellers causing problems for others, while their needs and cultures are generalised. Not only does *Anti-Social Behaviour Related to Gypsies and Travellers* mirror the previously addressed policy traits, it magnifies the apparent issues, focusing solely on the problems 'Gypsies and Travellers' are said to cause in society and, unlike the aforementioned policy texts discussed, pays very little attention to the problems caravan-dwelling communities face themselves.

Anti-social behaviour is presented as 'unacceptable activities that can blight the quality of community life' (DCLG 2010: 8). While the context of these activities is clearly difficult to define since various forms of behaviour can be viewed as anti-social in different settings, the document is devoid of detailing the social struggles, which 'blight' the lives of caravan-dwelling Pavee and Romani families across the country, as the previous four policies clearly address. For instance, the shortage of land made available for caravan-dwelling communities to build homes upon is not mentioned throughout the document. In other words, no relationship is drawn between the apparent problem and its cause, besides associating certain forms of anti-social behaviour with 'Gypsies and Travellers', who apparently need to be taught how to behave properly through strict observation: '[C]lose monitoring will be required in order to ensure that those behaviours are modified or minimised [...] The police service may also be well-placed to monitor compliance with the terms of the Order' (DCLG 2010: 12).

The above quotation illustrates how the document gives power to LA bodies such as the police to decide what acceptable behaviour is. The document is also at risk of criminalising the group(s) it refers to. For example, the main introductory objective of the strategy is to: '[S]upport local authorities [...] in their approach to tackling anti-social behaviour associated with Gypsies and Travellers [...] and sets out the power and tools available and how they may be used' (ibid: 5).

In managing 'policing and prevention, fly tipping and waste management issues, noise nuisance and straying livestock', the document also points out that it aims to tackle these issues with 'Gypsies and Travellers whether they are the victims or the perpetrators' (ibid). However, the document fails to deal evenly with

instances where caravan-dwelling families are the victims in cases of anti-social behaviour, mentioning 'hate crimes' twice as the only instance (ibid: 7 and 9).

Rather than producing a document that would focus on how a lack of sufficient provision for the many various caravan-dwelling groups living in the UK can lead to the above forms of anti-social behaviour, to be suffered by both neighbouring caravan and house-dwellers, this document only goes as far in suggesting LAs offer 'effective provision for dealing with known seasonal movement of Gypsies and Travellers' (ibid: 8). More permanent provisions seem to be unnecessary as the document begins by referring to the community it targets as 'a small minority of Gypsies and Travellers' with a 'mobile nature' (ibid: 5). The notion that some families are forced to be mobile due to a lack of provision within their home district is ignored in favour of the view of unsettled caravan-dwelling people, disinterested in integration and nomadic by choice. Because this 'small minority' of families is framed as choosing their lifestyle, it is possible and necessary to restrict their choices in the interests of others.

The only policy documents *Anti-Social Behaviour Related to Gypsies and Travellers* is complemented with, is the two-part *Guidance to Effective use of Enforcement Powers* (DCLG 2010: 5). The policy suggests that the possibility of anti-social behaviour 'should be considered in the design of new sites, and refurbishment of existing sites' thereby by facilitating 'a positive, realistic and practical approach to site management' (ibid: 6). This can be construed as simply attempting to prevent trouble for existing residence and neighbouring communities. On the other hand, why would any LA anticipate problems related to a specific group in society? It is arguable that the authors of the document are adhering to generalised and stereotypical characteristics of caravan-dwellers. This would explain why the document suggests LAs should improve their management techniques in order to prevent any misbehaviour without mentioning the reluctance of the same LAs to provide enough space for families to grow. The management of caravan sites (especially LA sites and pitches), implies the management of the people living on the sites, monitoring their movements and scrutinising their activities. The guidelines set out here in order to address the need for more management is based on broad and imprecise portrayals of caravan-dwelling communities.

Additionally, the document consistently places decision-making powers for solving disputes in the hands of the 'settled' or house-dwelling majority: 'Community agreements [...] are settlements reached between the residents of a community [...] based on the wishes of the majority' (DCLG 2010: 13). Here the implied 'majority' are house-dwellers, since within a wider social context, caravan-

dwelling families are the minority, although the document also claims that the 'community agreements' can be used to settle disputes and 'address the concerns of all site residents' (ibid).

This policy document is problematic because house-dwelling members of the community, as well as individuals working in the LA may come to anticipate the kinds of anti-social behaviour mentioned above from caravan-dwelling groups and families. Therefore, established members of the community may be less welcoming or accepting to incoming caravan-dwellers who either plan to settle or pass through, as well as potentially showing levels of antagonism towards already settled caravan-dwelling families in the area.

6.2.3 Planning for Traveller Sites (2011)

The final policy document to be presented here is dedicated to the improvement of LA caravan site provision, through highlighting the spread of unauthorised sites and the risks associated with them. The document was in the consultation phase at the time of sourcing and data analysis, therefore changes may have been made to the strategy that eventually came to be implemented: *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (2012), which has not been analysed extensively for this research, but is referred to in the thesis. *Planning for Traveller Sites* (2011) focuses primarily on how the provision of 'traveller sites' will be positioned 'within a broader package of reforms' of the planning system (DCLG 2011b: 3). The overarching theme of the document is 'to see fair play in the planning system' (ibid), and thus ethical language (i.e. declarations and implications of what is right and wrong or fair and unfair) can be found weaved into the text: 'Our new policy is fair' (ibid). Here is an example of explicit and implicit linguistic ethics: the new policy is being explicitly stated to be fair, while previous policies are not actually mentioned in this statement, the usage of the word 'new' separates this policy from the preceding and implies this particular strategy will be more fair than others.

Planning for Traveller Sites is one of the most recent documents to be sourced, and featured in the thesis, having been published after the 2010 general election. Unlike the previous five policy documents to feature in this chapter, the researcher was already aware of the strategy before searching for it, having read about the document in the *Localism Act* (2011). The document was sourced from an online legislation archive once all other discourse analysis had been completed. Reactions to the upcoming and expected changes in caravan site provision were a major discussion point throughout interviews with LA officers and caravan site residents alike; thus the analysis of this document proved necessary in order to

interpret community anticipations and align them with tangible government proposals.

The document opens by announcing plans to abolish the top-down initiated RSS in favour of more localised policy and decision-making to 'give communities a greater role in shaping their neighbourhoods' (DCLG 2011b: 7). The planning system in particular is stated here to face a number of 'decentralising' reforms in order to 'strengthen the role of elected councils and communities' (ibid). The various aims behind the strategy inevitably overlap in a bid to give power back to local communities and make decision-making fairer from the bottom up. For instance, the removal of the RSS allows local councils to decide when they need more caravan sites, where the sites or pitches should be allocated and how many should be provided as well as to whom. According to the document, more localised control over caravan site development will also prevent 'abuse of the planning system' by Travellers who 'undermine community cohesion' (DCLG 2011: 13).

The government aimed to 'limit the opportunities for retrospective planning permission' for 'unscrupulous developers who have been deliberately 'playing the [planning] system'' (ibid: 14). In other words, the dedicated effort to make the planning system fairer for all needs to lead to the abolition of retrospective planning permission framed as the pinnacle of what makes planning unfair in the first place. The Conservatives stood by their policies when 90 families at Dale Farm were evicted in October 2011. The document also makes it clear that the government intends to 'protect Green Belt from development' (ibid: 16), taking a significant step away from the RSS document summarised in 6.1.3, which had declared Green Belt a viable option for development opportunities (EERA 2008: 6).

To tackle the issue of unauthorised encampments due to a lack of sufficient site provision by LAs, the strategy sets out plans to reward councils 'through the New Homes Bonus scheme' (DCLG 2011b: 12). The document explains:

'[F]or every new home that gets built in its area, a local planning authority should get six years of matched council tax funding, with an extra supplement for affordable homes (such as houses or traveller sites owned or managed by local authorities or registered partners)' (DCLG 2011b: 12).

The inclusion of caravan sites as acceptable housing or accommodation is truly a breakthrough in UK policymaking regarding the caravan-dwelling population. Additionally, part of the planning reforms include making planning documents themselves 'simpler and more-user friendly' and thus more accessible to those who will be the target of reforms and changes to the planning system (ibid: 14). On the other hand, the document continues to acknowledge there 'is

increasingly a need for permanent pitches' as well as 'transit sites to facilitate travel' (ibid: 10), and that a lack of sufficient provision can lead to: 'poor health outcomes, poor performance at school [and] hate crime and discrimination' (ibid: 13) suffered by 'Gypsies and Travellers'.

In spite of the seemingly inclusive stance taken by this new strategy, the text of the document collocates the 'traveller' family and the 'settled' family. There is also a lack of any details regarding the encouragement of personal or private ownership of land for caravan-dwelling families. *The Road Ahead* (2007) states: 'feedback from Gypsies and Travellers suggests that most would choose to live on small, authorised, privately run sites' (DCLG 2007: 13). This quote is quite clear in what it believes most families aspire to with regards to meeting their accommodation needs. However, what is missing from *Planning for Traveller Sites* is any clear guideline on how the government intends to encourage families to continue to buy and develop land on their own in order to live on 'small, privately run sites,' despite their pledge to offer local councils and planning bodies incentives to increase LA provision. One way to interpret this is that the government does not wish to encourage private sites, fearing that any support will be indirectly condoning unauthorised developments, which the current government vehemently condemns (CHLG 2010: 1-2 and DCLG 2011b: 13). Furthermore, focusing on and strengthening LA provision and management of caravan sites for "Travellers" allusively fortifies [local] governmental control and close monitoring of the community, which would align this strategy with potential aims behind *Anti-Social Behaviour Related to Gypsies and Travellers* (2010).

Ultimately, while the document gives the impression that it has the best interests of all members of local communities in mind, the potential to control and regulate movements and living conditions, gives way to the underlying notion that what is best for society at times, is the supervision of certain groups so that others can enjoy their civic entitlements, thus creating in some minds a 'fairer society'.

6.3 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the six documents that have been extensively analysed for the purpose of this research. Also, this chapter provides an elaborate socio-political and historical context of the policy area for the reader. Without having read the documents themselves the reader should now have a sound idea of their purposes, who they were each written by and also for whom. Additionally, the reader should have gained a detailed insight into how and why each document was selected for analysis, as well as how the researcher originally sourced the documents.

While the actual analysis of the narratives, which make up the text of the documents, has not been conducted in this chapter, the following three chapters will examine and provide an analysis of the themes of power and authority; citizenship and social duty; and finally values, norms and ethics. Here we shall see the role of policy texts in constructing community identity, social and living spaces as well as ethical narratives.

7. Analysis of Themes Part 1: Power and Authority

Introduction

In chapter five, the reader can find a reflexive ethnographic account of the caravan site visits to explore the tangible dimensions of site provision and policy. In chapter six the reader can find an explanation of the policy document selection process. Themes of (i) power and authority, (ii) citizenship and social duty and (iii) values, norms and ethics emerged clearly through dialogue and the experiences of visiting caravan sites as an outsider. The themes from the interviews were then used as the framework to analyse the policy documents in the search for an ethical narrative throughout public policy implementation. As explained in the *Methodology* chapter, CDA was considered an appropriate approach to analysis, due to the association this methodology has with highlighting power relations and modes of exclusion in discourse (Van Dijk 2001: 96). Beginning with power and authority, each of the three broadly encompassing and overlapping social themes are investigated; the remaining two themes (citizenship and social duty and values, norms and ethics), will be explored and analysed in chapters eight and nine.

7.1 Defining Power

Power is usually thought of as prohibitive and dominating; however, explaining what power is and how it is employed and realised is not as simple as that (Lawler 2008: 55). Our understanding of the world around us and the meanings our actions are imbued with is based on a complex 'cultural system of interpretation' whereby communal or social participation in an act shapes how we come to understand what the action implies (Foucault 1980: 119; Said 1986: 150 and 154-155; Bruner 1990: 33). This is how we come to understand or imagine power, as it is subjective and thus found everywhere, applied in different social settings by various social actors, who also employ a variety of roles, connecting them with other social actors to develop both social and power relations (Pfeffer 1981: 3). Throughout such relations, power can be exerted either by force and manipulation, or by persuasive influence; the former using methods ranging from physical violence to economic bargaining and the latter relying on shared values and social meanings (Scott 2001: 12-13). Having power and using power are two distinct things (ibid: 4-5 and Harvey 2001: 205). The use of power, a right that can be based on standardised norms, indicates our capacity to act and causes consequences, at the expense of and through the domination of others, in order to achieve what we want 'in a world of conflicting wills' (Hawkesworth 2006: 161).

An example to help visualise how power operates could be by examining the social management of noise pollution. Should an individual go to their neighbour and request them to turn down their music, they could employ the power of threat: to speak to the landlord and have them evicted from the building. Alternatively, they could reason with the neighbour and try to appeal to possibly relatable experiences, such as the need to sleep or study. On the other hand, they could enter the home of the loud music and physically switch off the music themselves, possibly pushing the listener out of the way in the process. The ability of one deciding how the other should listen to music within their own home already indicates one type of power relation resulting in the domination of one party over another. Had the annoyed neighbour not confronted the loud neighbour, this would have revealed the ability or power of the latter to disturb the former, unhindered. The operation of power dynamics with regards to managing noise levels are also applied to caravan site management: '[W]here excessive noise comes from Gypsy and Traveller sites, it can create or increase tension with the settled community [...] Excessive noise can be a statutory nuisance,' (DCLG 2010: 20).

The concept of power being exerted by dominant groups over subordinate groups through written discourse is not original (Said 1993: 75); neither is this the first time power through discourses have been investigated with regards to caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee families. Recent discourse analysis research has shown that various forms of rhetoric have been employed, in the media for instance, as a form of control over so-called folk devils in society (cf. Richardson 2006a and 2006b). Such a notion is not exclusive to Pavee or Romani families, nonetheless it has been an effective method to manage or restrain certain non-conforming groups in the past and the present. Authority over these groups is exerted through evocative language in media texts and it will be demonstrated here how various stakeholders (i.e. LA policymakers, bureaucrats such as TLOs and local councillors) locate it themselves whilst the delivery of public services at local level, has an impact on the well-being of caravan-dwelling families. First, how the families conceptualised power and authority in the interviews will be explored.

7.2 Romani and Pavee Perspectives of Power and Authority

Political Power

Pavee and Romani communities have been described by public figure Jake Bowers as a “political blind-spot”²⁵ for ministers and local governments since – according to him - there is no political benefit for them in standing by any “gypsy” causes. Whilst the Showmen have the Showmen’s Guild to speak up for them, Pavee and Romani communities have no one. Aunty added to this statement, claiming:

“The travellers will find the land – they keep saying it’s not suitable. I don’t really think there is any shortage of land. We got space, we got money [...] there’s no political will to do it – I don’t mind telling you. They have debated it for so long and so often and got nowhere.” – Interview 2009.

The “they” referred to in this quote are the LAs the informant feels are debating rather than acting, due to a lack of political will to find a solution for site shortages. LC1 (who is head of a LA) seems to support this claim by stating, “There’s plenty of land there to develop”, while keeping his emphasis firmly on houses and infrastructure. When caravan sites were mentioned, his answer was simply: “[W]e can say as far as [the LA] is concerned, per head of the population we have made provision for it.” In other words, according to LC1, within his district, provision of LA sites reflects immediate demand. Aunty insinuates in her quote that “travellers” have no problems finding land to live on, however they are denied access to the land due to LA rulings that it is not suitable. Richardson has also claimed that media constructions and political rhetoric of caravan-dwelling groups as ‘unpopular’ potentially affects the popularity of a party and therefore has an impact on caravan site planning (2006b: 13). Interviews revealed that individuals do feel as though they are on the peripheries of communities, which is not helped by the actual geographical location of most caravan sites. Often, this contributes to a lack of local

²⁵ Quoting Jake Bowers’ lecture at Huddersfield University titled: *New Perspectives in Britishness: The Gypsy Traveller Experience*, October 22nd 2009.

awareness and also a feeling that as a community they are left out of decision-making processes. This has led to the sense for many caravan-dwelling individuals that they do not have a place in mainstream society and therefore do not have a voice, individually or collectively.

This point was raised throughout interviews, adding to the worry that the Romani community in particular has become so fragmented that people of Romani descent lack political strength as a group to fight off social injustices. They compared themselves often to other minority groups who had come together and staged demonstrations in order to demand their social and political rights (cf. Johansson and Hvinden 2005: 104; Friedman 2006: 487 EHRC 2010: 576). Having said this, some stories were told of individuals seeking out political roles at grass-roots level after suffering discrimination. For example, Ruby told me of her aunt, who became a governor at a school when she realised that her own children as well as her nieces and nephews were being mistreated by the lunchtime staff:

“It was obvious we were the only [...] travellers in the school [laughs]. My cousin sneaked home the yoghurt one day, and gave it her mum - not even took the lid off of it ‘cause [sic] we knew it would be mouldy [...] her mum, who went up and had holy blue war with the school and actually became a governor of the school.” - Interview 2010.

Here, the interviewee describes an incident at school where her cousin had been given mouldy yoghurt for lunch, while also expressing her belief that it is because she and her relatives were “the only travellers in the school”. It was apparent in the way Ruby told this story that the mouldy yoghurt incident was not the first time mistreatment of this nature had occurred and when able to prove it to an adult member of her family (by taking the yoghurt home), the relative became a governor at the school, therefore exercising her social and political rights to gain authority in the local community.

The idea of voting was not a topic discussed at length in interviews, however the idea of homelessness and thus not having an address and the social burdens that carries was a frequent point of conversation. What was not discussed, but remains a fact, is that individuals without an address cannot register to vote and thus to some degree become politically disenfranchised leading to other social inequalities. Additionally, without an address one is unable to acquire an education, although in some districts TLO’s indicated they are working around this so that children may attend their local schools. However, in some cases families who have not received regular, basic literary education fail to be able to take part in political activity. This is not true across the board, but remains to be a relevant point when discussing how

the lack of adequate site provision can lead to a denial of other public services and rights, thus marginalising a family or individual's ability to participate in socio-political 'collective action' (Cunningham 2000: 43-44). There were many family stories told in interviews about administrators abusing their professional authority to intimidate politically powerless families, and therefore forcing them from their locations. One such story went as follows:

"One day when father was away, there was a woman [...] you know, to shift you [...] she was with [...] like a mob [...] and she was acting out this job: "I've got a job to do!" sort of thing [...] they kicked the fire over and mother looked at this young woman [...] with all the men around her and we didn't have anybody you know? And she said to this woman: "Young woman, Jesus is watching you." Well, she went into such a fit - she went into hysterics! [...] It [frightened] the woman right out and she left [sic]." - Interview 2009.

The above account illustrates that while the individual knows that LAs hold power, she (and her mother) believed strongly in the power and judgement of "Jesus". Physical and political power is not needed to overcome the "mob" who have arrived to evict the family, led by a female council official. The informant's mother's unwavering faith in God was enough to "frit" (frighten) the official, who left without evicting the family.

Social Power

Caravan-dwelling families claimed that more social inclusion is the key to more social authority and security and feel that the "mainstream" or majority population has the main responsibility in ensuring this. The location of sites – often in rural settings, a few miles from the town centre and found along vast, inaccessible lanes or tucked away along busy by-passes – also prevents families from interacting with local house-dwelling communities as well as preventing them access to some of the public services house-dwellers take for granted.

On the other hand, at times antagonism towards conformity was indicated, due to a combination of policies and persecution which have forced Romani and Pavee groups to deny their heritage in the past. For example, restrictions on the kind of self-employment individuals can legally engage in has forced many to find alternative jobs. The reluctance of some families to conform to dominant cultures and norms, has led to some caravan-dwelling communities becoming geographically isolated and politically powerless (Cowan and Lomax 2003: 284). This cultural defiance verses nationalistic homogeny has led other groups to question whether or not caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee groups should be entitled to the public

services that others can enjoy (Richardson 2006b: 83). In this sense, caravan-dwelling individuals feel that they have been “black-listed” from many public services. Julia elaborated: “[W]hat isn’t good enough for a Gorger shouldn’t be good enough for a Traveller [...] [Travellers] should be provided with the same facilities as everybody else and we’re black listed from them.”

It has been shown that when minority groups suffer discrimination or feel that their way of life is being targeted, they become more insular in order to protect their culture and values and in some cases this also brings collective strength to the group (Sarup 1994: 95). However, in this case it is clear that the socio-political pressures faced by Pavee and Romani groups over the centuries has indeed made them more of a closed group, but on the other hand, this has also made them brittle (Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995: 19). Gaining the rights that would lead to more inclusion, such as education and steady, secure home-base locations was something that families acknowledged they would need to fight for collectively. This has been a long-standing method for families to resist unfair treatment. At times, where LA provision is scarce developments such as Dale Farm in Basildon, Essex have escalated into large unauthorised sites, but the volume of people living in such locations and their instigation to integrate (for example, children attending school or elderly people receiving regular healthcare) has made it difficult to evict the families. The Road Ahead (2007) states: ‘While the scale of development at Dale Farm is far from typical, it provides a cautionary tale of how temporary planning permission can fail to address [...] fundamental problems with the supply of permanent accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers’ (DCLG 2007: 46).

Whilst ‘temporary planning permission’ incurs a period of uncertainty for the families, there is also potentially a comforting sense of community with other families facing the same adversity. Accounts were regularly heard during fieldwork of the stress and pressure experienced by families who buy and develop land and the adverse effects evictions have had on their emotional and mental well-being, their physical health and their overall stability as a unit. Jim, a campaigner from an advocacy group for Romani, Pavee and New Age communities summarised this point by claiming: “I’ve seen families break up, major problems arise simply because of the pressure they’re under all the time and the insecurity they live under [...] so it’s a horrendous situation for individuals to be in.”

Whilst the families acknowledged a lack of collectivity shared by other minority groups in past and present times, they also pointed to the fact that they are rarely viewed as an ethnic minority group by the mainstream population, regardless of what policy says. Some informants felt that this removes their rights to have those

who discriminate against Pavee and Romani groups punished by higher powers and thus leaves them open to negativity and victimisation. Based on his work within Romani communities, Jim was given the impression that: “Unfortunately - you know travellers - unless you’re [...] quite dark [...] they can pass [as] white Anglo Saxon [...] which produces immense problems for them.” The “immense problems” for “travellers” mentioned in this quote refers to the wide-spread rejection of the notion that Romani and Pavee families can experience racism if they look “white Anglo Saxon.” To tackle this issue, Romani and Pavee groups were included in the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act* (2000) with the Commission for Racial Equality producing their own report entitled: *Common Ground*, which focused on the challenges (including racial discrimination) faced in the UK by Romani and Pavee families (CRE 2006).

The acknowledgement that Romani and Pavee families are distinct ethnic groups will continue to take time, although progress is being made with one LA recording ‘1330 Travellers’ living in the district and a subsequent policy document notes: ‘[1330] equates to 1% of the 2005 district population and makes [Travellers] the largest ethnic minority group’ (SCDC 2010: 7). In other words, in some districts in England (especially in the East of England – cf. EERA 2008), ‘travellers’ are believed to make up a sizable portion of the population as their own demographic. However, policy documents also consistently juxtapose caravan-dwelling groups with a so-called ‘settled community.’ For example, document one states that one of its main intentions is: ‘to recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional way of life of gypsies and travellers, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community’ (ODPM 2006: 5). Document two states: [Gypsy and Travellers] have responsibilities to [...] respect the interests of the settled community’ (DCLG 2007: 5). Document five states that: ‘There should be a commitment on the part of agencies to apply the same approach to Gypsies and Travellers as they would to the settled population’ (DCLG 2010: 8). Finally, document six states: ‘This package of measurements will ensure fair treatment for those in traveller and settled communities who play by the rules’ (DCLG 2011b: 8).

A clear distinction is being made here between house-dwelling and caravan-dwelling communities in policy, presumably to make it clear to the reader, which members of the community the text refers to. Using ‘settled’ and ‘traveller’ does not necessarily have to imply an intended sense of belonging for one and not for the other, from the perspective of the writer. However the repetitive use of the terms ‘settled’ and ‘traveller’ are problematic as they become normalised across every policy document written in the arena of caravan site provision. Interestingly,

although all of the caravan-dwelling research informants self-identified as either Romani or Pavee, the term “traveller” was used by them more commonly to refer to caravan-dwellers at large throughout interviews, indicating an interaction with this identity construction by families (cf. Silver 2010). Acknowledgement of mobility within Pavee and Romani communities is of course fundamental here; having said this, the terminology conjures an image of consistent inhabitancy and constant movement, which is a misleading impression of both communities. For example, as is stated in document four:

‘The courts have made clear that travelling is not a defining characteristic of the groups but only one among others [...] nomadism and living in a caravan is a reflection of Gypsies’ and Irish Travellers’ cultural heritage and not simply a lifestyle choice that can be ignored,’ (SCDC 2010: 8).

Public political discourses tell a different story as shown by Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman who claimed: “We need more authorised sites. The travelling community should be indeed travelling. The problem with our authorised site is people come and they stay, so it fills up the site.” (Caroline Spelman quoted by BBC News UK 2011: 2). Here, Spelman illustrates the simplistic perception that all “travellers” should be in constant movement rather than settling, which causes sites to “fill up”, especially where LAs are not prepared for their arrival through the provision of land for caravan pitches. EP1 stated that based on her experience working with caravan-dwelling families that a number of misconceptions exist pertaining to what Pavee and Romani culture consists of. She explained that: “If you go into a house you’re automatically adopting [long pause] a **non-traveller** lifestyle” (emphasis added). Regarding her current accommodation status, Ruby explained: “We **built** our own house [...] I keep my touring caravan up at my mum and dad’s” (emphasis added). Ruby lives in both a house and a trailer, and therefore at some point would become subject to policies regarding caravan site policy depending on where she and her family would choose to travel. Any self-identified distinction goes beyond living in a caravan or house or even travelling as a way of life. However, in the 2011 UK Census, Romani and Pavee groups were not distinguished apart from other ethnic White groups, part from in Northern Ireland where individuals were able to check the box ‘Irish Traveller’ (The Information Authority 2011).

An important factor when discussing the social rights of caravan-dwelling groups is that a large proportion of this broadly heterogeneous community is viewed as being of Pavee descent (ITMB 2011a: 14), providing another angle of discrimination. Ethnic discrimination of Irish or Pavee people in England has been prevalent and widely viewed as acceptable since their work related migration of the

mid 15th century. Coupled with their enduring “folk devil” status, Irish Travellers have been the target of vicious bouts of racism, especially through the media, giving them an unsteady basis to demand social rights or powers (Lucassen 2005: 40-41). Some informants of Pavee descent even went as far to state that their own ethnic origin was the reason their planning applications has been denied, and that had the family been Romani they would have had the land passed: “What’s wrong here is in the last three years, 74 plots were passed for Travellers and not one Irish was passed [...] This council here is the most racist council in the whole of England.”

The above quote is from Mr. Murphy, who was appealing his LA’s decision to evict him and his wife from their own land. Mr. Murphy also described his arrival in England in the late 1950s and discussed during the interview the racism he experienced at that time. He noted that whilst the social environment has improved for other ethnic minorities from an era where it was common-place to see signs stating “No Black, No Irish” (CRE 2006: 2 and Cooper 2008: 41) – these blatant modes of exclusion for Pavee communities are still in operation (CRE 2006: 2).

The caravan-dwelling community as a whole (including Showmen and New age families) encounter high levels of *NIMBYism*²⁶ and discrimination for following alternative lifestyles than those who are part of the non-Romani or Pavee house-dwelling communities (Richardson 2006: 81-83). However, the implication that Pavee families are the only group to be challenged by unfair or inconsistent planning decisions is misleading. People of Pavee and Irish descent experience it more often (Lucassen 2005: 32), but the idea that accommodation discrimination is exclusively aimed at the Pavee community is simply not true. Whilst conducting fieldwork, other families of Romani heritage demonstrated how they too had come up against similar hurdles in the planning process, which they perceived to be unfair. Also, analysis of documents revealed numerous procedures that have shaped the current laws regarding caravan sites are proof enough all caravan-dwelling Pavee and Romani families are effected by prejudices towards living alternative lifestyles. TLO1 stated:

“In England now, if I were to sit here and be racially abusive to you for example [...] you could go out there, call the police [...] and those police would [...] probably arrest me. If I was abusive to a Gypsy [...] the police would probably say “Oh, I can’t” [...] it’s

²⁶ NIMBYism - which stands for Not In My Back Yard – is socio-political resistance to controversial land developments also to newcomers (Miles and Phizacklea 1984: 49; Lucassen 2005: 125; Richardson 2007b: 33).

not thought of in the same way and the only way that people will start to sit up and recognise is when there is a consequence to them behaving in that way.” – Interview 2010.

In this quote, TLO1 - who works closely with caravan-dwelling families and understands the way that they are sometimes treated by house-dwelling communities - claims that individuals discriminate against Romani and Pavee people because of lack of “consequence” to such behaviour. Her observations at work and beliefs regarding the action that should be taken against racial prejudice directed towards Pavee and Romani families, works its way into policy documents drafted by the organisation that she works for. References are made to the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)* throughout the document, in addition to the explicit message: ‘Our objectives are to [...] eliminate unlawful discrimination,’ (SCDC 2010: 5). Both TLO1 and the policy document refer to racial abuse as “unlawful”, however the report *How Fair is Britain? (2010)*, also concluded that Romani and Pavee groups ‘have only limited confidence in the system’s ability to protect them’ (EHRC 2010: 124). Although both groups are identified as ethnic minority groups in the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)* and are therefore protected by legislation (SCDC 2010: 18), TLO1 insinuates that the legislation is not implemented when discrimination occurs. Despite the social persecution has been directed towards Pavee and Romani groups for centuries (cf. Hawes and Perez 1995 and Templer 2006), disregard of Romani and Pavee ethnicity and the discrimination targeted towards them, will take time to reverse.

In spite of a lack of acceptance of Romani or Pavee ethnicity, collectivity remains an important element to everyday life for some families. It has been suggested that religious movements - such as Evangelism - have been instrumental in bringing various Romani groups from all over the country together, as commercial fairs and festivals have done in the past, giving a sense of collective identity (Sarup 1994: 95). However, fairs such as Appleby and religious festivals have been challenged in the media, by the wider-community and by LAs, who have tried to prevent such events from proceeding for fear of potential adverse effects on neighbouring towns and villages (cf. Acton 2007). Shelly explained the social importance of collective identity:

“I find it a lot harder [...] to mix and make friends and just be yourself [...] all my friends live all over the place. When you’re up and down you’re always stopping next to someone, there’s always new people near you all the time [...] it’s just different really. Better than being settled.” – Interview 2010.

From Shelly's point of view, having the right to move "up and down" throughout the year is fundamental to maintaining existing friendships as well as forging new ones. In other words, she conceptualises a sense of community through being on the road rather than settled in one place. Establishing links and being herself is harder living a "settled" life, although she acknowledged that: "When you moving up and down and you haven't got electric and you haven't got water" – potentially highlighting a dilemma faced by others who are not settled in one location.

Authority over Allocation of Sites and Pitches

Through interviews with caravan-dwelling families an understanding developed of their interpretation of allocation policy and the distribution of power. They demonstrated how the current distribution of power within LAs and in local communities already has an influential hold over the implementation of policy. For instance, in one interview it was stated that LAs: "[G]ive the temporaries to people whose come out of an house [sic]." In other words, when new pitches are allocated by local councils, families that are either homeless, i.e. living "up and down the sides of the road", or those "doubling-up" on LA sites, should be first in line for the space. One policy document states that:

'There is an urgent need to address the shortage of accommodation suitable for Gypsies and Travellers. This shortage of accommodation creates additional problems for the Gypsy and Traveller community in terms of health, education, employment [...] It can also create tensions over the use of pitches without planning permission' (EERA 2008: 6).

The repetitive warnings throughout caravan site policies linking the lack of adequate provision with unauthorised developments does not seem to have had an impact on the actual building of sites in the last five years, with *Planning for Travellers* stating that 'about 20 per cent' of all caravans in England were located on unauthorised land in 2010 (DCLG 2011b: 49). Also, 90 per cent of planning applications made for caravan sites are denied compared to 80 per cent of house-dwelling applications that are accepted (Richardson 2006b: 18). In short, the families on unauthorised sites, in part due to lack of LA provision or passing of private applications, are effectively breaking the law.

The fact some families feel as though they have been "turned into criminals" (Townsend 2012: 1), by their local councils due to the lack of LA provision in some areas, also supports this argument, since LAs punish families with court battles, fines, evictions and even prison without the promise of alternative locations to set

up homes. Through this process, identity construction is taking place, framing caravan-dwelling families as a 'potential [...] nuisance for local residents' (SCDC 2010: 9). Therefore, when legitimate alternatives arrive, families already living in precarious circumstances look for a legal solution to alleviate their perception of the construction. However Dennis explained that families are even prevented from helping themselves: "[T]hey give permission all round us, but when we try and get permission - and we're not going anywhere - they don't [want to] know [...] they've passed loads of land round here [...] there's no one living on it."

It is suggested here that planning permission was granted to individuals for land that they were not living on, in some cases next door to families who having been fighting for planning permission for 20 years. Also, families of Romani and Pavee descent who have been in housing for many years but had wanted to go "back on the road" were also found to be first in line for new pitches, despite the fact that they already have a secure home compared to those on the road, on unauthorised sites and also in spite of policies to ensure that new pitches are established to deal with 'urgent need' (EERA 2008: 6).

A counter argument to this is that some families are forced by circumstances to move into houses when they can no longer remain on an unauthorised development or encampment. If a member of the family is sick and in need of regular medical assistance, the family then requires a fixed location with an address, leading to some families accepting council housing (EERA 2008: 4). Informants told stories of families being torn apart after moving into houses as well as the unfamiliar environment – in some cases - leading to depression, divorce or suicide. One informant was initially excited about building her own home with her partner and moving away from the LA site where she had grown up. Within a year of living in the house, she had suffered a nervous break down. This transition of lifestyle from caravan to house is not a cause of angst for all families who have experienced it. However, for those who do find the transition difficult, emotionally and/or socially, it is unsurprising they eventually choose to move back into a more familiar environment as soon as possible. Nevertheless, what happens to the others who remain essentially homeless? When asked why allocation was not always appropriately administered, caravan-dwelling families responded it was down to the fact that decisions were often made with little or no input from the experts: caravan-dwelling communities themselves. To quote one informant on her opinions of the way decisions are made: "They don't know who the hell they're dealing with [...] They haven't got a clue about who they're putting in there. They're about two

years behind the times [...] Shouldn't there be a different way they could sit down and talk about it?"

This quote relates to the lack of political power, families have over their own fates. That said, it was expressed if research and consultations were to be carried out in a sufficient manner then it would provide LAs with the facts they need to allocate sites and pitches properly. Nonetheless, individuals living on their own private plots did not feel that research was being conducted properly by LAs or that TLOs and planning officers knew enough about caravan-dwelling communities to be able to do their job well. According to some, it was inevitable that caravan-dwelling families' needs and expectations for a decent quality of living are not taken into consideration when no one is speaking to directly to them, interacting with them or learning about who they are. When discussing the role of LAs in site planning and management, Aunty advised: "I don't think they understand it well enough to want to do it themselves really. You've really got to understand the job."

The implication here is that LAs do not understand how to create spaces for families and more interestingly that they do not want to learn. It is understandable from this perspective how caravan-dwellers' needs could be misinterpreted, underestimated and over-simplified by inexperienced, naïve officers (cf. Okely 1983 and Liégeois 2005). It is also hinted at in the above quotes - as it was mentioned throughout fieldwork and something witnessed within organisations - that LAs are unwilling to admit they cannot cope with balancing site provision and the demands of their predominantly house-dwelling electorate, who often present signs of NIMBYism when it comes to local and national caravan site planning and allocation (cf. Elcock 1986: 22). LC1 claimed that: "Wherever you propose sites you're always [going to] spark controversy [...] so I can understand how LAs are having a great difficulty dealing with it [sic]."

Jim went on to describe in his interview the "political opposition" faced by councils that are planning to build or extend new plots, claiming: "1000 people turn out for what is very early stage planning in a small village. I think that illustrates the extent of the problem we face." Jim's claim insinuates that large numbers of people are against the provision of new sites, thus putting political pressure on LAs not to build new sites or accept planning applications for private ones. This has been reinforced further by the policy documents that have claimed: '[T]here have been more applications for private gypsy and traveller sites, but this has not resulted in the necessary increase in provision,' (ODPM 2006: 4).

The current government's attempt to abandon the RSS - which applies pressure to local governments to proactively plan for the accommodation needs of

their caravan-dwelling populations (ODPM 2006: 4) - sends a very public message on the attitudes towards caravan sites in politics. This abolition illustrates how political inequalities affect LA policy and decision-making; i.e. the planning balance is in the majority or house-dweller's favour since they ultimately have political control over their LA. Therefore they also have the power to prevent caravan site provision within the vicinity of their homes. As has been shown above, informants felt it is unfair for LAs to evict families from land when there is no alternative. Previously in one district, unless the LA in question could prove that alternative locations do exist, the family would be granted temporary permission to remain on LA owned land: 'for a period of up to 28 days' (SCDC 2004: 1). However, policy changes that took affect in 2012 will lead to the evictions of many unauthorised developments across England, leaving many families homeless where there is no LA provision, especially if LAs (and those neighbouring) are no longer legally bound to find adequate accommodation for caravan-dwellers (cf. Hargreaves and Brindley 2011).

Fundamentally, families are weary of the constant political discussion regarding more site provision, particularly when caravan-dweller consultation comes across as 'tokenistic community participation' rather than a balanced decision-making interaction to improve accommodation facilities (Lipsitz 2007: 20). At this time, families are eager to see policy action after much prolonged dialogue and anticipation. A compelling remark was made by Aunty - who has worked with LAs and allocation policy - arguing caravan-dwelling families are more than capable of providing for themselves and finding their own land, although they are publicly problematised as a group who are constructed as "sponging off" benevolent taxpayers. She stated that: "There's no shortage of land, time, space or money" - there was however a lack of "political will and human kindness" to transform land, time, space and money into homes for caravan-dwelling groups. Indeed, the land for families to live on appears to exist as has been pointed out in policy:

'Solving the problems of the shortfall in accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers should not be difficult. The total area required to accommodate all Gypsy and Traveller caravans on unauthorised sites in England is about one square mile of land' (DCLG 2007: 13).

In spite of the document pointing out that LAs should have the space to accommodate families and the RSS allocating funds, four years later provision had not improved: 'The number of unauthorised developments has been increasing

steadily over recent years with 728 recorded in January 2000 and 2395 recorded in January 2010' (DCLG 2011b: 10).

The necessary resources are available and caravan-dwelling families are as prepared as ever to provide homes for themselves, albeit illegally, contributing to the rise of unauthorised developments. However, they are being denied the opportunity of self-reliance through the complexities of land allocation and grass-roots political power.

Planning Law and Policy

In interviews with caravan-dwelling families it was discussed how planning policy is interpreted at local and central level and how families experienced the direct repercussions on their communities and their access to land. A reoccurring argument from the interviews consisted of questioning why LAs were prepared to continue paying out excessive amounts to evict families from their own land and tear unauthorised developments apart whilst they refuse to provide more pitches. For example, Mr. Murphy claimed: "I think it's £4m that's been spent on Travellers, I was speaking to the council and said "'Till [sic] they find such place to put people on, why don't you stop the evictions? Because you'll not improve nothing [sic].'"

This quote suggest a general opinion that finding new plots for families would be cheaper and more effective in countering unauthorised encampments and developments than continuing evictions (Richardson 2007b: 43). For instance, the total cost of the Dale Farm eviction and subsequent dismantling of the site (which was initiated in 2011) to date is at least £8 million (Basildon Council 2013: 1), while many of the former residents remain homeless.

Whilst very little authorised provision is available, families with the aim of establishing their own private pitch were at a loss for how they would be able to obtain planning permission since they felt it was near impossible to get. There had been cases where permission was "turned down flat", especially if the application was made retrospectively. It seemed this was in fact a deliberate political tactic employed by families that were sure their planning applications would be turned down anyway, and considered it harder for officials to move them on once they had settled on the land and begun developing it. Informants also raised cases where permission had been granted but revoked due to the public opposition Jim describes above, another driving force behind retrospective planning applications. Silver describes in her research with African American single-teen-mothers who at times engage with the constructed 'welfare mom' stereotype, in order to cross a 'cultural borderland, which turns out to be successful in getting the help they need or access

to public services' (2010: 288). Residents of LA sites also felt that the standards and requirements of neighbourhoods made up of houses compared to caravan sites differed substantially, with Julia's father, Charlie commenting, "Just have a look at this site then have a look at your street. You'll see that every house has its privacy and the gardens, each one is separately innit [sic]?" Julia added to the conversation by giving the following example:

"[I]f it were one house on a street [...] they'd perhaps kick the door in but they would only deal with the people that it involved - they wouldn't kick your street in [...] There was the case when a man was accused of something and it took 150 officers to go down there to surround and keep that site [...] they realised it wasn't the right person." – Interview 2009.

Charlie and Julia imply they do not feel their homes, right to privacy or way of life is respected by LAs and this manifests itself in the way that sites are built, with very little room in between each plot. Also, the lack of respect for caravan-dwelling families leads to mass raids in caravan sites, which Julia suggests would not occur in housed neighbourhoods. This treatment could imply that caravan-dwelling communities are not treated as individual families who make up a diverse populace, emphasising how LAs construct them as a problem group. The idea here is that certain groups are entitled to create a discourse based on meta narratives that will lead to lived consequences for entire communities, while others cannot make basic decisions about their own homes. However, having kin close by and lots of space surrounding one's home remained an important element of lifestyle choice for the families who participated in this research. The physical distance from house-dwelling communities may be more than asserting difference and wanting to be left in peace. The space from village to caravan site may also represent control over their own lives and lifestyles.

A constant message heard through interviews, "Traveller" media and organisations (CREDS; FFT; ITMB; Showmen's Guild) was that planning and provision is taking too long and too much money is being supplied for other efforts such as evictions, rather than providing good homes for families. The *Traveller Times Online* (TTO) stated: 'Just weeks after the Conservative and Liberal government took power news has emerged that they won't be spending more money²⁷ extending and repairing Britain's crumbling network of council-run Gypsy sites' (TTO 2010a: 1).

²⁷ *Planning for Traveller Sites* (2011) announced that £60m would be allocated for caravan site provision (DCLG 2011b: 12).

Caravan-dwelling families held their LAs responsible for providing homes for members of the community, which they consider themselves to be. A strong sense of entitlement and injustice formed a critical part of the narratives. It was strongly felt that caravan-dwelling communities are never considered by local or central government until it came to planning policy, finding ways to work around them rather than taking more inclusive approaches. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the caravan-dwelling families were hardly ever consulted when it came to making planning decisions or drafting policy. They accused those charged with the authority to make decisions as disinterested in the actual people living on sites and only carrying out the job to “tick boxes” rather than help people. Some individuals felt that policy can and should be changed where it is having a detrimental affect on families, and where there can be benefits gained with adjustments – for instance by having caravan-dweller consultations (cf. Fox 2007 and Lipsitz 2007). It was felt that planning law is used as an excuse and was manipulated to suit the LA in order to deny families’ access to their own land. The “excuse” of Green Belt and conservation are common in rural areas, especially since urban expansion has made these areas and the natural resources found there more valuable (Banzhaf et al. 2010: 771). Also, being “too-visible” or “obstructive on the landscape” was a common reason families had been given for having their planning applications denied, which they did not see as a valid or fair reason for refusal. ‘Noise nuisance’ is associated with caravan-dwelling families in one policy document, as it is listed as a form of anti-social behaviour, which can ‘blight people’s lives and damage communities’ (DCLG 2010: 5). The same document was drafted: ‘[T]o support local authorities, the police and other agencies [...] to tackle anti-social behaviour associated with Gypsies and Travellers [...] and sets out the powers and tools,’ (DCLG 2010: 5).

‘Power and tools’ are given here, in the text, to ‘local authorities, the police and other agencies’ to tackle the behaviour of caravan-dwelling families interpreted as ‘anti-social’. The ‘other agencies’ are not specified here, also leaving this up to interpretation. The vagueness of policy actions leads to the conclusion that planning rules and laws can be manipulated to suit the prejudices of local councillors. A further example of this was the denial of a young couple - Dennis and Emma - to develop the other half of their land to establish a home of their own. They viewed the decision as nothing really to do with protecting the visual environment of the area, since no one would be able to see them anyway. According to the couple, the decision had been made in order to prevent the growth of their family: “If they had their choice though we wouldn’t be here [...] they’re not making it easy are they? [...]

so what other reason is there [...] apart from the fact that we're here and there could be more of us here?"

Caravan-dwelling families not only experience inconsistencies concerning when and how they will be granted access to land; after disputes are settled who is actually responsible for the maintenance of the land can also become a point of contention. Take for instance the ongoing conflict described in 5.3 over who should repair a pot-holed road leading down to several privately owned caravan pitches. Whilst the council have told residents it is their responsibility to fix the road since the homes either side of it are privately owned, the residents (both caravan and house-dwelling), maintain that the road is public bridleway and is also used by individuals from the nearby village and therefore the council should be responsible for it. The argument intensified when residents explained the emotional ordeal and financial sacrifice they went through in order to get planning permission in the first place. It is possible that after a long battle over the land, the council is equally bitter, to the extent that they will refuse to carry out some of their own duties, potentially in the hope that the families will eventually leave.

Re-occurring inconsistencies in the planning system have arguably encouraged caravan-dwelling families to deliberately plan to develop their land over bank holiday weekends when council offices are closed and LAs cannot interrupt development (see 5.3). Councillors, bureaucrats and the general public, have noted this pattern expressing even more resentment towards caravan-dwelling groups as they appear to "flout" planning law (Richardson 2007: 42-43). LC1 seemed to disagree with this popular perception, claiming: "[Travellers] know the law and they will go after 28 days." However, if caravan-dwelling families do disregard planning policy, it has little to do with having no respect for rules or wider society. It has more to do with having little respect for rules they feel are only drafted and implemented to control them and make their lives more difficult. Other methods of avoiding planning laws is communicated through anecdotes depicting "knocking [local authorities] off the scent [...] pikey fashion [sic]", such as the following:

"I had this enforcement [officer] used to come and see me from the council and he said: "Look Mrs. you haven't got permission for these people in this field." I said, "I know, but it's only temporary. Have you got anywhere for them to go?" He said "No." I said "Are they being a nuisance?" he said "No." So anyway we chatted like you do and I used to give him tea and coffee [...] I was knocking him off the scent, you know like pikey fashion [sic]!" – Interview 2009.

The mode of distraction described here in the form of good hospitality functioned to prevent the eviction of families with nowhere else to go. This tactic did not last however, and eventually Aunty was told that action would be taken against her if she did not at least apply for planning permission to establish a permanent caravan site on her land. She described the application process as arduous and complex and stated that she was not offered much help from the council to fill out the necessary paperwork and thus suffered from “form blindness.” The challenging nature of planning applications was another common theme to emerge from interviews and an off-putting element to gaining permission to have access to land. The procedures can be long, daunting and expensive and families eventually tire of them. In other cases more guileful methods are used to get around planning decisions, rather than out-right disregarding of the law. For instance:

“My dad’s been fighting for building permission now for [...] the past 15 years. Nearly every other year, he’s been applying for building permission, costing thousands, and they’ve put him down every time [...] it was “you’ll spoil the historical nature.” We live in the middle of nowhere [...] there’s a brand new barn conversion next door to us for God’s sake! [...] He then went back to them and said: “I will build it out of old bricks. [...] I know it’s going to cost me a fortune but you go and choose what you want me to build my house out of and I will build it.” No. Won’t have it. They said to him you couldn’t build a house so he had a chalet built [...] the councillors then come down ‘cause when it was put on the land, they said, “You’ve built a house!” He said, “I haven’t built a house, it’s got wheels under it.” [...] He had to take them round the back, open up the shutters and let them crawl underneath and let them see that it had got wheels [...] because they were [going to] take it off.” – Interview 2010.

This example illustrates how individuals feel that planning law is being implemented to make life more difficult for caravan-dwelling communities and they are put into a position to work around it by engaging in a ‘cultural borderland’ (cf. Silver 2010). Every caravan-dwelling individual spoken to agreed if an individual had enough money and local political influence then they would be granted planning permission to build wherever they wanted, however in cases for ordinary families who did not have connections in local government, planning laws tended to not favour them so much. Ordinary, low-profiled, house-dwelling families might also face similar barriers in getting planning permission to build wherever they wanted, albeit at a disproportionately lower rate than caravan-dwelling families. Nevertheless, until the mid-1980s LAs were involved in intensive planning and building of council housing (Spencer 1995: 145). The current government intends to encourage this once more with the *National Affordable Housing Program* (2011-15),

arguing this new legislation will re-establish decentralised funding initiatives, although this strategy could still be viewed as a top-down approach to persuade local governments to provide homes to lower socio-economic groups.

Management of Unauthorised Sites

One of the most contested areas of site provision is how to manage unauthorised encampments and developments as these are the two types of pitches that upset the general house-dwelling public the most, leading to pressure on LAs to take harsher action against caravan-dwellers. Negative experiences of encampments and developments such as establishments on public and private land increases social disinclination to accept proposals for new sites or pitches, therefore it has become a LA priority to “deal” with this issue effectively. It is also considered by some to be a “vote winner” to see that caravan-dwellers’ “flouting” of planning law is not tolerated. However, there is a different side to this story and the experience of unauthorised and illegal pitches from the caravan-dweller’s perspective.

Shelly discussed how she had never lived on a LA site in her life. Her upbringing had consisted of moving around, stopping in groves, lanes and lay-bys for a week at a time, sometimes being moved on by police. She also indicated that throughout her young life policy has changed regarding unauthorised encampments:

“I think it’s seven days and then you got to move [...] we go to missions and conventions and [...] if the people in the village have problems with you, even if you buy or renting the land for the week, the people’ll have problems and you’ll have the police down and the council down trying to shift you off [sic].” - Interview 2010.

Whilst Shelly goes on to state she could understand how large numbers of trailers could be found to be intimidating for small villages that had no previous interaction with caravan-dwelling groups - “300 new people in a village probably smaller than here, sometimes you can understand where the people are coming from” - she also communicates that she does not understand how the same laws applied to unauthorised encampments can apply to authorised events. There was a lack of acceptance amongst families that planning permission could be denied when land belonged to a family, especially if there was no intention or evidence of causing a nuisance. Dennis’ wife Emma claimed in defence of their decision to appeal the LA’s refusal to allow development on one half of their land: “We’ve already been here. It’s not like [...] we’ve just moved here as a new family, we’ve already been in the village.” In similar instances, whilst families are aware of planning laws, they felt exceptions should be made, especially when there is no other alternative available.

The public rhetoric to these situations, upheld by MPs is that: “people should work within the law”, even when it comes to finding a home in arguably un-balanced circumstances. The simple solution to those families who have not been able to find suitable land to buy and settle on or else rent from their LA, is to move into council housing or else buy their own house. The solution should not be to establish unauthorised sites and pitches, and publicly there appears to be little compassion shown when caravan-dwelling families do take this course of action.

Tales were told of families that had been resident on their own land, without permission for years, but were now facing eviction. For instance, Ruby explained that she had grown up in a caravan by the side of the road, after she and her parents were evicted from her grandfather’s land:

“He brought a massive house in the village, with acres and acres of land thinking we could all pull [the caravans] behind this big house, but they wouldn’t let us [...] so we had to go on the roadside – literally. The police daren’t come and move us on ‘cause it was the council’s fault that we were put there!” – Interview 2010.

From Ruby’s perspective, her family ending up “on the roadside” was the fault of the local council, who denied the planning application that would have allowed them access to her grandfather’s land. We see here, as we did above, another example of how caravan-dwelling families interpret LA policy to make rules that leave some families without an official accommodation status. During the Labour Government administration (1997-2010), the attitude towards retrospective planning could be summarised as: ‘[I]ts removal would create more problems than it would solve’ (DCLG 2007: 27), especially in the face of evicting families with young children who were settled and integrated within local communities and offering them no alternative place to go. This is not to say that families enjoy living on land that has not passed its planning application. In fact these circumstances are just as uncertain and precarious as a life on the road with no fixed location or official address. For instance, while a family does not have the legally required permission to live on the site, they definitely will not have the permission to build and therefore improve their own environment or install necessary utilities such as running water, sewerage, gas or electricity.

Also, whilst an LA has the discretion to grant temporary permission to remain on a plot based on personal circumstances that may require a case to be reviewed, they also have the discretion to remove such rights (cf. SCDC 2004). At any point the LA could decide that they will no longer grant temporary permission and evict the family from the pitch, regardless of how many years they may have been appealing their case or how settled they might have become in the meantime. The option to

appeal decisions is available and in some cases has proved successful with the right reasoning, but even this process is not trouble-free. It is costly, time-consuming and intimidating, with many caravan-dwelling families finding it difficult to seek out professionals who are willing to give them the support they need. The situation involving unauthorised sites was thus described by Jim as a “catch-22” for families.

Other issues complicating matters are the various different legislations that have been introduced over the past 40 years and their prevailing attitudes towards what can and cannot be suitable land for caravan-dwelling families to settle on. By the late 1960s, all enclosure initiatives over public land were completed when the government had permanently reclaimed *common land* and hence traditional stopping places for caravan-dwelling families in rural areas were no longer available. Anyone found to be camping on such land could be arrested for establishing an unauthorised encampment (Puxon 1973: 10-11). This began a system of “moving on” families when they stopped on land considered to be unauthorised, regardless of whether or not the same families had previously used the land on a seasonal basis. To compensate for this change in policy regarding land usage and rights, LAs were henceforth obligated to provide caravan sites for those families living in their districts and counties (Taylor 2008: 191-192). However, anti-Gypsy sentiments were high within communities and permeating into LAs, thus many reluctantly built inadequate sites, which were badly managed by apathetic councils (Regan 2009: 3), although many more did not build any sites at all (Taylor 2008: 204).

Public debate and perceptions of issues surrounding council owned caravan sites had become as convoluted as some unauthorised encampments, and in 1994 when the *Criminal Justice Act* was introduced by the Conservative government, LAs were officially supported in evicting all caravan-dwellers from public and private land, as well as criminally convicting those who did not co-operate (ibid: 203). Needless to say this legislation was popular for many LAs, especially when it was revealed that they were no longer legally obligated to provide sites, leaving caravan-dwelling families in the most parlous situation they had been in for several decades. The aim was to encourage families to invest in their own land and establish their own sites; this only worked to a certain degree as families began their long battles to obtain planning permission. Lack of adequate understanding of caravan-dwelling groups, as well as gross underestimations of their standards of living have no doubt had an impact on planning officials, who had not considered families would want to develop their land in such a way that involves concrete or bricks (Liégeois 2005: 131). The argument presented by caravan-dwelling individuals during interviews is

that these features are too permanent for many LAs, who do not actually want a permanent, settled caravan-dwelling community:

“[I]f they were happy with us here, quite frankly us passing that bit of land would make no difference to them, they can’t see it, they’re not [going to] use it for anything [...] so what other reason is there [...] apart from the fact that we’re here and there could be more of us here?” – Interview 2010.

In trying to cope with limited options, families have tried to get around planning policy. During the New Labour era, various legislation - such as the OPDM Circular 01/2006 - were introduced and re-developed at regional and local levels (e.g. the RSS) to cope with a perceived problem of wide-spread unauthorised encampments and developments, and attempt to keep up with the growing caravan-dwelling populations. However, some local councillors were unimpressed by the notion of region assemblies, preferring a more local, community-based approach to leadership. Localism was discussed at length by LC1 in particular:

“Regional development agencies are going and we’re setting up what is called local enterprise partnerships, which means [...] the community’s shaping itself [...] the way that local government is run will change completely over the next few years. Previously local government was] too overburdened, too centralised!” – Interview 2010.

Recent policy documents have sustained the claim of impending localism, ‘It is important that local planning authorities are given the freedom to plan for the future of their communities,’ (DCLG 2011b: 3) and: ‘[T]he Localism Bill also contains a range of measures to strengthen the powers that local planning authorities have’ (DCLG 2011b: 14). Whilst the RSS may have been resented by some LAs and house-dwelling communities alike, it led to a state of confusion, which prevails today. Families remain confused about what the law actually states and how their local council will deal with the unauthorised development with members of one family having had their planning applications accepted and revoked, only to be accepted and then revoked again, it was exclaimed: “How many times did you have to go to court? Time and time and time again and you win your case and then they can still find a reason to take [the plot] off you!”

The uncertainty and anxiety expressed here relates to the previous discussion regarding the emotional stress experienced by families. Having said this, there is evidence to suggest, that LAs are just as unsure about how to proceed in this area of planning policy.

7.3 Local Political Power

Throughout interviews various LA agencies - with TLOs and councillors alike - it became clear that the political climate of the organisation and local community would ultimately have an impact on the nature of policy and its implementation despite the intentions of individual bureaucrats or councillors. PW1 commented that: "I am employed by this organisation [...] we are required to follow through certain commitments and there is a code of conduct and everything else that we need to follow and we also need to be politically neutral." However, being completely "politically neutral" is difficult to achieve while working in a political environment, such as a local government building. LC1 made it clear that:

"[T]hose of us that stand for election on a four year period, we set out our stall. We set out what it's [going to] cost and we deliver it and if we don't deliver it, the electorate have got the right to chuck us out. It's as simple as that! Local democracy, localism [...] it's quite exciting!" – Interview 2010.

For good leadership, a vision or agenda that relates to the needs and aspirations of the people is required of those shepherding the community (Leach and Wilson 2000: 15). For instance, the closer to grass-roots one became, the closer to home the issues. At some points it seemed that councillors were unwilling to remove their own personal ambitions from what would be best overall for the community. LC1 went on to describe the aspirations he has for his district:

"I were born and bred [in the district] I suspect I'm fourth generation [...] I would like to think that my children [...] would be able to say: "Oh, this is good place to live!" because it's easily accessible, communications are good, education is good [...] jobs are there and plentiful. [...] And that's what people want!" - Interview 2010.

His interpretations of what the people want stems for his own hopes for this children and their future, making his efforts personal and heartfelt. On the other hand, the further away from grass-roots the more disconnected and disinterested politicians seemed to become towards individual families and issues, relying on those who are closer to home to reinterpret their policies in order for them to be applicable. A recent policy stated that: *'The Government's overarching policy objective is fair and effective provision of authorised sites [...] whilst respecting the interests of the settled community,'* (DCLG 2011b: 16).

In line with the accompanying *Localism Act* (2011) 'the interests of the settled community' would arguably be for to local councillors to decide. LC2 told me: "We want to give more power to people locally and I think that fits with both the liberal tradition and the desire to empower which is at the heart of the Conservative tradition, that's why I am a Conservative." This can have a negative impact on the

policy process, which becomes complicated and lengthy due to being handled by various councillors, policymakers and bureaucrats, each of whom have their own view of the social climate, values to follow and priorities or strategies to support (Wyld and Jones 1997: 469; Héritier 1999: 87; Osborne and Redfern 2006: 126).

Interviews with LC1 indicated that the whole running of LAs was set to change with the new government's incentive for more localised councils. In other words, decisions about planning and funding allocations were to be made at a more grass-roots level giving local communities more power and more input into decisions that will affect them and their futures. Considering caravan-dwelling individuals are part of ethnic minority groups and in most districts, advancing the idea of more caravan site provision is a source of antagonism, some have worried that councils will not have the personal incentive to expand site provision since they will not have the political backing of their communities (Regan 2009: 2). Bureaucrats responsible for drafting and implementing community cohesion and site management policies were regretful that the RSS would be abolished, especially since it seemed to support the long-term assertion from activists and the travelling community the gypsy problem was not a political priority. Some bureaucrats argued that under the previous government progress was being made by the successful implementation of recent policies regarding site provision and they feared that their work would be undone as other districts slipped back into their habit of complacency. PW1 claimed:

"The [...] planning document which came out in the regional spatial strategy under the Labour Government has been shelved [...] it means that we can't deliver the sites that we want to - and we're still in limbo [...] as to what the future holds so in effect the process has come to a complete standstill." – Interview 2010.

PW1 did not state that caravan site provision would proceed without central government pressure. The process was in his own words at 'a complete standstill'. Speaking of local and central Conservative governments, Jim added:

"[Conservatives] will [...] make it easier for councillors to refuse planning permission and [...] enable councils to decide how many Travellers they're [going to] accommodate in an area, which means that the allocation numbers, which have been developed through regional planning system, which has been abolished [pause] few days ago - they will be ignored. It was looking fairly positive but it's very negative now." - Interview 2010.

Taken at face value there are many positive attributes to consider if LAs become more localised and are thus able to shape themselves. On the other hand, grass-roots politics can be class-based, personal and incestuous, with power being

inherited and therefore distributed unevenly (Jackson 1958: 344 and Pestieau 2006: 148). For instance, LC1 had been involved in politics for over 30 years and within that time has also been a governor at his children's primary school. Additionally, he explained that he had only entered politics as a young man in the first place as he observed how it was being controlled by the farming classes: "I felt that local government around here was run by the wrong people for their own and mainly the farming classes. You look at all the old councillors - that's all they're interested in."

An arguable fear could be that if councillors are to now become "masters in [their] own houses" they will back-slide into prioritising the needs of the powerful over those of the politically weak, which in this case could be disastrous for caravan-dwelling communities, who already suffer from power inequality. One text seemed to confirm the strong political role held by head councillors, especially when deciding the fate and welfare of caravan-dwellers: 'The Council Leader is responsible for the council's overall approach to Gypsies and Travellers,' (SCDC 2010: 28). This statement confirms the role one individual can play in the lives of many and the implications of this become more meaningful when one considers the lack of socio-political power currently held by caravan-dwelling communities in England. LC1 admitted that when he entered politics he had his own agenda and was continuing to pursue it stating: "My aim and the policy that I'm following is to raise the standards and to raise them through education, through training, through skills, through infrastructure [...] That's the policy agenda I've set and nothing less will do."

It was clear that his initiatives reflected an aim to provide "younger people" in his district with "the same opportunities as everybody else" in the county, as well as bring the small, rural, remote towns up to the same standard as their neighbouring successful cities. It was also clear that he found it easier, as an individual, to relate to those members of the community that shared his lifestyle and values. Although LC1 had grown up in an area with a long history of English Romani families as seasonal workers and settlers, and was thus accepting of their right to remain living the way they "choose" to. In this sense, LC1 is in line with policies that have supported caravan-dwelling communities: 'At the heart of many of these issues is a crucial message: accommodation for those Gypsies and Travellers who live in caravans may not be delivered through bricks and mortar, but is about delivering homes' (DCLG 2007: 18).

Having said this, LC1 did not seem to really understand their culture or acknowledge their ethnic difference. His lack of awareness for their difference could indicate that he does not discriminate (positively or negatively) or differentiate between any local citizens, regardless of their background. Nonetheless, the

councillor found it amusing that there appeared to be a high level of political apathy on a LA site that he visited during canvassing season: “I once went canvassing round there for an election [laughs] four of them actually registered on the electoral role [...] I [don’t know] if they came out and voted [sic].”

A report published by the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*²⁸ (EHRC) claimed that voting was lower in Romani and Pavee communities (EHRC 2010: 581). Whilst LC1 acknowledged that it was every individual citizen’s right not to vote if they did not wish to, he did not show an awareness that as a group, the residents of the local caravan site were being penalised for it within his own district, although he commented it may well be the attitude of other councillors in other parts of Europe.

“[N]ot conforming is okay [...] the fact of the matter is, once one of the elderly becomes ill or needs medical treatment, they’ll soon be up the doctors surgery and asking for that! So you know, let’s be fair, you either [want to] be part of society and take part in what society provides or you don’t, and that is the perception [sic]. Now morally speaking if one of those children is ill on that site, whether they pay taxes or not, whether they’re registered to vote [...] as members of the human race we have a duty of care to make sure those children [pause] or anybody else who becomes ill is cared for [...] In some other countries, as the French are doing at the moment [they] would say, “Sod off!”” – Interview 2010.

LC2 added in his interview that: “Once you’re elected, you’re elected to represent everyone and that includes people that don’t vote for you [...] I think that’s a really important principle – it’s one I feel very strongly about.” Despite the strong feelings attached to the principle of universal representation, LC2 would maintain throughout the interview that he also felt that it was important for “people to always operate within the law” with regards to land. When discussing whether or not the law was right, he referenced Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and the Suffragette movement as historical examples of individuals “courageously” acting “in a peaceful way [...] where the law [was] wrong”. Through not linking these movements to the current plight on caravan-dwelling families in England, LC2 insinuates that planning law (in this case) is not wrong, and there is no excuse for unauthorised developments and encampments. This assertion also implies a lack of recognition for the authenticity of caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee families’ distinct ethnicity by defending other minority groups’ right to *civil disobedience* “when the law is not right,” then stating that other groups should abide by the law if they expect aid and cooperation from their local councils.

²⁸ Previously called the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

LC1, adamantly claimed that he had always defended caravan-dwelling families as part of his community as well as their status as citizens and an indigenous part of the area. His lack of concern for the discrimination they faced seemed to have been based upon his own tolerance for them as a distinctive and unconventional group. However, this was not as alarming as the lack of concern shown further along the political party line by his colleague (LC2), who is based in parliament. His main concern revolved around adhering to planning laws, without paying much attention to issues of homelessness or discrimination stating: “So a minority view has to be protected but at the same time there is a responsibility on the minority to also play by the rules and observe the law and not for example [...] to take over a site and flout planning laws.”

This idea is in contrast with the lived experience of disproportionate planning application rejection in caravan-dwelling communities, as well as earlier notions of tolerance in policy documents: ‘[I]f people had no alternative but to camp in unauthorised locations, enforcement could do no more than move the problem from one place to another,’ (DCLG 2007: 9).

Having said this, the district represented by LC1 and LC2 does not encounter the same volume of unauthorised pitches as neighbouring counties and districts, which is in excess of 20 per cent in some parts of the country (DCLG 2011b: 49). Therefore, one might understand how he can overlook issues of insufficient LA provision. However, as LC1 acknowledged, “Roads don’t stop at the county boundary,” his parliamentary counterpart refused to discuss how families in other districts might be affected negatively by Conservative policies, preferring instead to compare the Conservatives favourably to the Labour party:

“Conservative councils [...] have provided significantly more sites than many of the Labour and Lib-Dem councils [...] there needs to be a comparison between the sites being put forward by Conservative councils and those being put forward by Labour and Lib-Dem.” – Interview 2010.

Furthermore, LC2 seemed withdrawn from local ideas and sensibilities regarding caravan-dwelling communities, their needs, aspirations and struggles, perhaps due to a lack of a hands-on role with members of these communities, gaining his knowledge on a second-hand basis: “[W]hen I put the question to my district council “how many pitches do we have?” – I got a very clear answer.” LC2 relies on “clear” answers from those working in the district council, who may have a more informed approach to their work. It only seemed to be the case that individuals working for organisations within a role which required regular visits to caravan sites (for

example, educational out-reach workers or LA TLOs and site wardens) that could relate to the families in a personal manner as well as give an accurate insight into their experiences. TLO1 explained some details of her job description:

“My main role in the council is to manage county owned traveller sites [pause] but I also have a wider remit in that I become involved really in anything to do with Travellers because I’m the only resource within the council that really has contact with the Travellers and Gypsy community.” – Interview 2010.

This puts the welfare of many caravan-dwelling families in the TLO’s hands, who - despite her unquestionable experience - did not self-identify as either caravan-dweller, Romani or Pavee and therefore may find it difficult to speak on behalf of minority groups in order to uphold their needs (Young 1990: 14). Having said this, an increasing number of bureaucrats, councillors and policymakers are emerging from caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee communities, thus these communities are gaining some power and authority over decision-making (Johansson and Hvinden 2005: 104). Organisational mobilisation is essential for minority groups to shape and effect their own ‘social policy environment’ (Friedman 2006: 487). British Romani and Pavee communities, have shown they are capable of collective social action with the development of the Gypsy Council, ITMB and TLRP. Whilst it became apparent that LC1 and LC2 deny the problems associated with managing caravan-dwelling communities, those who have sprung from caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee backgrounds neither deny the social issues nor remain overly absorbed in them in searching for solutions. EP3, who is of Romani descent, explained:

*“[T]his year was the first year they did a proper sports day at the school – they’ve never had a proper sports day at the school. All the Traveller parents went - all the dads went ‘cause I went round and told them all to go [laughs] The school would send out a letter and stuff but half of them can’t read or write [...] So they wouldn’t know – and I was like: “Yeah I’m going, I’ll pick you up if you want to go – I’ll take you down there.” [...] It was **brilliant** and the school was like: “Oh!””* - Interview 2010 (emphasis added).

The school’s surprise at the presence of caravan-dwelling parents at a school event is indicative of the assumption that caravan-dwellers do not like intergration or value education. This example shows how at times communities feel more confident about a social setting when they are surrounded by others that they know and trust (Lukes 1991: 89) and also a supporting factor in why LAs arguably need more caravan-dwelling representatives to achieve the social inclusion of these

communities (Page 1985: 163-164), which is an ongoing policy agenda (cf. DCLG 2007).

Management and Allocation of Caravan Sites

TLOs and wardens are employed to manage caravan sites in some counties. TLO1, who works alongside two wardens in order to manage two caravan sites, stated that her line of work was very interpretive. The guidance she received from the LA at the beginning of her employment included observing her predecessor on the job for one week and a vague, brief job description document. She explained:

“[T]he management side I had to learn myself and I had to put a lot of things in place that weren’t in place [...] you try and continually improve the service you provide and work against the challenges that put before you. So really [...] I just learn as I go along.” - Interview 2010.

This is relatable to Lipsky’s claims that street-level bureaucrats, who find themselves with a considerable amount of autonomy in their workplace, redefine their job descriptions and the rules accompanying, as they act out their roles on a daily basis (1980: 14-15). Prior to taking on the role, TLO1 had had no previous experience working with caravan-dwelling communities; her only relatable experience being working in the housing department of another LA. She argued that her experiences working for social housing had helped her mould her new role, but she felt a lack of support while carrying out her work within the community on a day-to-day basis. The main problem TLO1 cited with enlisting her colleagues’ assistance lay in the fact that few people are willing to interact with Romani and especially Pavee families.

Although she ultimately has the most contact with the local caravan-dwelling communities, she seemed to have little influence over how the policy documents referring to their way of life were written, only becoming involved at the consultation stages to contribute comments:

‘A copy of this consultation will be sent to local planning authorities and bodies representing travellers to ensure that those who may be affected can comment’ (DCLG 2011b: 6).

Arguably, even when TLO’s are involved in the consultation processes to provide input on behalf of caravan site residents, this does not necessarily have implications for the way that policy texts will be executed. Nonetheless, TLO1 demonstrated in interviews a good relationship with PW1 who is employed by the same LA. He had little to no contact with caravan-dwelling communities, relying on

reports from his colleague and research conducted by outside agencies. A recent strategy document claimed its vision would be: "To ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities enjoy equality of service and are part of cohesive communities within which people from different backgrounds participate together and share equal rights and responsibilities' (SCDC 2010: 5).

Despite these sentiments, residents living in the district this document was produced to target have become fearful since the general election in 2010 that once again the issue of new caravan pitches will be ignored on planning agendas whilst the eviction of illegal developments will remain a priority. Jim argued: "I don't see the Tories really doing anything [...] they will continue their policy of ignoring the problem and addressing the ills which they see [sic], which are illegal camping and people building in Green Belt."

Added to these worries is the widely regarded view among caravan-dwelling individuals that the government only regards Pavee and Romani communities in the context of caravan site planning and management, when in fact caravans are a very small part of what being Pavee or Romani is all about (Ward-Jackson and Harvey 1972: 65), thus showing how unfamiliar councillors, officers and bureaucrats may be with this section of the overall population. This could further hint at why policy implementation in some areas of England is ineffective. Jim went on to claim the refusal of caravan-dwelling families to "toe the party line" was the cause of such contempt being directed at them, not only from the public but also the authorities: "It makes people uncomfortable [...] they really can't cope with any group [pause] that are avowedly different [...] and Britain is a very xenophobic country."

The above statement accounts for the amount of effort that seems to be put into assimilating caravan-dwelling families, rather than accepting their differences. At the time of fieldwork, the main priority of a TLO would have been to ensure the site(s) in their charge are well maintained and that the welfare of residents is seen to on behalf of the LA through regular visits and also collaborating with wardens. Their main purpose involves providing:

"[A]n element of security for people that live on the sites and they feel quite comfortable having somebody there who is from the council and who basically has the overriding authority on the site if there's ever a problem."

TLO1 maintained that constant supervision and management in the form of wardens was not "a prerequisite to a good site." Alongside this, she also holds responsibility over managing unauthorised encampments and illegal developments. Research in the past suggested that caravan sites are generally badly located, poorly

maintained and not managed to a high standard by LA staff (CRE 2006: 12), and even in districts where councils are confident that their methods are effective, members of caravan-dwelling families did not always share their high regard. For instance in one district where fieldwork took place, there is currently full pitch provision available according to targets set by the EERA in 2008. In addition, the opportunity to build new sites and provide other services based on need rather than targets was welcomed by LC1: "If we were to expand our numbers [of caravan pitches] that would not be through new sites, that would be probably add onto existing sites, where there are no problems and the infrastructure is already there."

LC1 continued to revel in the fact that councils would finally be able to set their own targets for communities based upon local demand and stated that housing and infrastructural development for the area would be at the top of his new agenda. However, there was no mention of how this infrastructure and housing development would affect future plans for the growing caravan-dwelling communities in the area, which he himself sustained were indeed part of the indigenous population and had a right to choose how they wanted to live, as did any other individual or family in the community. Leaders from the caravan-dwelling communities, as well as representatives of the activist groups ITMB and FFT have stated the attempt to strengthen eviction powers with the abolishment of the RSS proves that accommodation needs of some members of society have not been considered in these policy changes. The ambivalence of councillors to these changes potentially shows how caravan-dwelling families are not considered to be an integral part of the community and that perhaps public animosity has also impacted political decision-making. Jim argued:

"Travellers are in an impossible position. On the one hand the planning says they [going to] be near to services like everybody else [...] access services, access education all the rest of it in terms of location, but when they try or when plans are made to try and accommodate this so they're fairly near settled population [...] there's all hell let loose." - Interview 2010.

The recent changes to central government and LA relations will no doubt solve some issues experienced by councils in providing services to local communities. However, these changes will also no doubt put more pressure on already under-supported TLOs. Their quest to ensure the well-being of caravan-dwelling Pavee and Romani families to some extent lies in authorised pitch allocation (cf. DCLG 2007). With there already not being enough pitches available and mass evictions of unauthorised developments being planned for neighbouring counties (cf. ITMB 2011a), managing

an increasing number of unauthorised encampments and developments alongside existing authorised pitches will prove to be a stressful activity. PW1 commented on the possible ramifications of a planned mass eviction of a large illegal development nearby:

“[T]here’s likely to be [...] some aftershocks from that because if all the residents currently residing there do have to move on, which is looking likely then they’ll need somewhere to go and um it might have been that they travel [...] to set up a new home here.” - Interview 2010.

In a separate interview with Julia, she added: *“I ain’t [going to] ask you where they’re **going**, I’m saying where they **coming** [sic]?”* - Interview 2010 (emphasis added).

Existing LA sites have been found to be poorly located and the subsequent cause of environmental problems affecting the families detrimentally as well the wider community. The same can be said though for unauthorised sites established by the families in desperate circumstances. However, here one must also acknowledge the problems this may create for the residents of neighbouring villages and towns, thus applying pressure not only to traveller liaison teams but also other members and employees of the LA.

Behaviour Management

Document five focuses on anti-social behaviour associated with caravan-dwelling families, encouraging decision-making at LA level as well as strengthening the existing powers of councillors and bureaucrats when it comes to dealing with anti-social caravan-dwelling families. Specific anti-social behaviour that the document gives guidance on handling is fly-tipping, noise nuisance, as well as intimidation and victimisation within the community, in order to proactively promote community cohesion and decrease legal action. Although there is acknowledgement that caravan-dwelling families are often victims of forms of anti-social behaviour, such as harassment or vandalism to their sites, the implication that residents are harassed by fellow site residents rather than members of non-Romani or Pavee communities is made more explicit by this policy. Therefore the caravan-dwelling community is framed as almost always being at fault, since the possibility of “hate crime” is mentioned in the document only twice.

Firstly: ‘There needs to be good co-operation between local authorities and other agencies such as the police [...] in cases of hate crime,’ (DCLG 2010: 7) and secondly: ‘It is important that Gypsies and Travellers are confident that they can turn to the police to support them when they are victims of [...] hate crime,’ (DCLG

2010: 9). If it is the case that ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ are the targets of ‘hate crimes’ - as implied by the document - and it is also vaguely suggested that families lack confidence in the police (as explicitly stated by TLO1 earlier in this chapter), why does this document not feature more information regarding this issue? If there can be an entire document detailing caravan-dwelling families’ transgressions into anti-social behaviour, then why not a document by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) about discrimination? All six documents typically use the term ‘exclusion’ rather than discrimination to discuss the challenges families face, even as participants described instances of bullying at school, such as Ruby’s example of receiving bad yoghurt at school. Shelly explained:

“I got fighting all the time - especially ‘cause I’m the oldest one [sic] - to look after my little sister [...] I think they still experience it in the school today. The children always come back to the house [saying]: “Oh such and such called me that or the other!”” – Interview 2010.

Jim – whose son married a woman of Romani descent - also discussed the treatment of his granddaughter at primary school: “My granddaughter had a very bad time in school [...] because she was a traveller [...] of course the teachers were not supportive. I mean she stood up for herself and it was her fault [...] she left in the end - effectively forced out.”

Jim describes his granddaughter’s experience in a matter-of-fact manner, stating that “of course the teachers were not supportive” and that she was “forced out” of the school. Interestingly, both Jim and Ruby’s stories imply some level of discrimination by adults. In an indirect way, Shelly’s comment that caravan-dwelling children “still experience [bullying] today” insinuates some level of apathy by school staff to prevent the bullying from occurring. Trevor Phillips of the EHRC went as far as claiming that the level of discrimination targeted at Romani and Pavee families is comparable to the racism experienced by African Americans in the southern states of the USA in the first part of the 20th century (Richardson 2006b: 80). Whether or not this comparison is fair, despite the lived reality of discrimination – especially for children at school - document five mainly focuses on controlling caravan-dwelling behaviour through a system of ‘acceptable behaviour contracts’ (ABCs – DCLG 2010: 9).

It may seem like an obvious observation to make since the document’s title addresses anti-social behaviour related to ‘Gypsies and Travellers’, and thus the authors only discuss social issues that are relevant to one group. However, since so little attention is paid to the fact that many families also experience the detrimental and unsettling effects of anti-social behaviour due to the actions of the house-

dwelling community, one is led to assume that some bias has played a role in the way policy has been interpreted in order to write the document and will continue to guide the implementation process. Also, one should question why the DCLG felt it was necessary to single out one group when discussing the nature of anti-social behaviour, its negative impacts on communities and the many possible proactive ways to deal with it. Is it because caravan-dwelling families are more likely to transgress than other groups (Prior 2005: 360)? LC1 discussed crime in his hometown, commenting: "Yes there's a raid down there occasionally, but that's no different from what you find on one or two of the estates." Community cohesion may rely to some extent on tackling anti-social behaviour, which in turn relies on there being some form of community cohesion in the first place (Bleas 2005: 13).

Policymakers should be questioning if singling out one already vulnerable group and solely assigning them moral responsibility is the most effective way to handle community issues. On the other hand, it may only cause more social friction. The language may be perceived to be slightly patronising in order for the writer to discuss how "agreements" that have previously been proven effective for children and young (DCLG 2010: 9) people may also be useful to re-socialise caravan-dwelling adults. Acton argued that dominant ethnic groups use stereotypes of subordinate groups in order to prove them inferior and exploit them (1974: 53). The stereotype of the 'Gypsy' as wild, unsanitary and rebellious is clear and influential in this text: 'Other statutory nuisance potentially emanating from Gypsy and Traveller sites might include smoke, fumes or gases emitted from premises and animals kept in a manner that might be prejudicial to health' (DCLG 2010: 22).

The fact that caravan-dwelling families now have their own document on this matter suggests two possible perceptions of their way of life on the part of bureaucrats. The first is that the document is meant to relate more specifically to their own form of anti-social behaviour than other forms of policy or legislation that may not bear in mind the lack of site provision and other social tensions caravan-dwelling communities. The second possibility is caravan-dwelling communities are seen as the main culprit for these forms of anti-social behaviour and mainstream legislation was not viewed as effective enough to deal with incidents, thus something more specific and relevant needed to be written. Either way, advocacy groups viewed this policy document as a direct attack on Pavee and Romani caravan-dwelling communities and their right to establish caravan sites, thus increasing the intense controversy surrounding pitch and site allocation by highlighting possible environmental issues that will come along with them. However, this document does seek to establish a better working relationship

between caravan-dwelling families and LAs, including the police: 'Building confidence in the police amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities is a core area of work,' (DCLG 2010: 9). If a better working relationship is eventually established, it could eventually lead to numerous benefits in policy processes, as far as dealing with discrimination is concerned. Furthermore, the frequent usage of the word 'individual' makes it clear that this policy should only be applied to individuals rather than whole groups (DCLG 2010: 13-14).

The Writers of Policy

As stated earlier in this chapter, those who write policy or strategy documents in the domain of site and pitch provision for caravan-dwelling at LA level often do not have much face-to-face contact with families. Subsequently they do not have any tangible references to their way of life, instead relying on the recorded accounts of others. Two authors (PW1 and PW2) were working for separate organisations occupying the roles at district and county levels respectively. Whilst one regretted not having enough contact with caravan-dwellers to do his job effectively (Borrow 2006: 573 and Cooper 2008: 221), the other stated that LAs had conducted plenty of research and it was time to give the people what they had asked for:

"How do we make sure that Travellers are consulted without having this endless merry-go-round continuing? [...] Travellers had been consulted many times before about what they want and it's up to a professional agent now to get on and do it." – Interview 2010.

PW2's sentiments conflict with PW1's, who when asked about liaising with local caravan-dwelling families claimed, "We liaise with them all the time. You have to." PW2 added that it was necessary to strike a balance between councillor initiatives and wishes of the people, for only paying attention to the former would lead to policies not reflecting the welfare of the public, whilst merely observing the latter would lead to making policy that would not ultimately be implementable. For PW1, he stated that working closely with his LA's traveller liaison team was how he felt he was able to draft effective documents about people he admitted that he had never met. He explained: *"In an ideal world I would spend all my time in the community listening to views and trying to implement those views into actions."* In document four it is stated that:

"The emerging community engagement strategy focuses on ensuring that communities shape and influence Council practice by developing integrated systems to engage all local communities appropriately [...] To be honest, open and transparent in

communications with the public to ensure there is easy access to relevant and clear information,' (SCDC 2010: 15).

Unlike LC1 and PW1, PW2 insinuated deciphering need is a one-off event, and now that the 'professional agent' has consulted with families they 'should get on and do it.' PW1 indicates that assessing needs within local communities is an ongoing process, both through written and verbal interactions. He claimed that he believed the definition of a decent policy was one that could clearly identify local need and stated that he made "decisions based on need". However, he could not comfortably tell me in either interview conducted with him whether or not local need had been addressed sufficiently within the district that he worked for. Instead, PW1 suggested that the TLO, who is engaged with the community on a regular basis, be asked more about local need. PW1 also showed the researcher documents as evidence that monitoring was in place to ensure that policy was being implemented effectively, however it was also clear that monitoring only took place four times a year.

Interviews with other officers in the educational sphere indicated that local councils receive information from various sources. Since the passing of the 1968 *Caravans Sites Act* there has been a government-based initiative to not only ensure caravan-dwelling children have access to education but also remain in formal education beyond primary school. The issue of schooling within caravan-dwelling communities has been the object of great fascination and preoccupation of various commentators over the years. It is commonly thought that caravan-dwelling families have avoided sending their children to schools due to not wishing to conform to society norms and also due to not valuing education. Guaranteeing children are receiving an education has been the responsibility of both TLOs and those working for LA teaching assistants. Due to the high level of interaction with families that both LA roles require, TLOs and teaching assistants usually have a much better insight into the day-to-day realities for caravan-dwelling families. Thus at times they can appreciate why education is not always viewed as a priority alongside finding a place to live and managing health issues. In this regard, it is crucial for policymakers to be able to consort with knowledgeable colleagues, is crucial in order to write a policy that will have proactive and successful outcomes (Torgerson 2007: 20).

It has been noted in several recent studies that the educational achievement of caravan-dwelling children lies not with their parents' disinclination towards conformity; rather the lack of stability and security the experience in their home environment is more fundamental (CRE 2006: 2; DCLG 2007: 13; DCLG 2011b: 13; Hargreaves and Brindley 2011: 1). EP1 explained that:

“Everything overlaps [pause] we’ve said for a long time as have other people involved with traveller education that [pause] planning is the linchpin really because unless someone’s got a safe, secure place to be [...] the connection between that and still accessing adequate health care, accessing education, accessing all the other services is tenuous.” – Interview 2010.

Currently, student teachers receive training on how to guarantee equal treatment of children from “ethnically diverse” backgrounds. EP2, a young primary school teacher who had recently completed his training and was due to begin teaching, remarked:

“I was a trainee teacher on a general primary PGCE course and [...] we had a whole block of lectures on diversity and education and educating children from diverse and different social backgrounds [...] and one of the backgrounds that was covered was those children who are part of Traveller groups.” Interview 2009.

Therefore, alternative lifestyles and Romani and Pavee cultures are considered to be of increasing importance within various local institutions.

7.4 Summary

Power and authority appear to play out in a variety of ways in caravan site policy, usually leading to potentially harmful consequences for the families subjected to it. Decision-making over uses of land lies with the LA, who give options that have been shown to be favourable to house-dwelling communities. This occurs through the disproportionate rejection of planning applications from caravan-dwelling families to build on their own land as well as a lack of regular and adequate LA site and pitch provision. The result of this is families who are living on unauthorised camps or developments are homeless and well as criminalised. Due to their “minority” status and potential lack of political engagement (and subsequent power), caravan-dwelling families hold a subordinate position to dominant groups when it comes to in narrating their own story, constructing a collective identity and resisting discrimination and law enforcement. The control of space and authority over homes in this case cannot be separated from the discrimination faced by Pavee and Romani people.

Caravan-dwellers could be helped by an increased awareness of their statuses as ethnic minority groups within racial equality legislation, if the legislation were to be enforced. However, LAs on the one hand acknowledge this status in policy texts but on the other, not in actions. Pavee and Romani families appear to be deprived of the authority to self-identify themselves as a different ethnic groups and thus have their claims of racial discrimination taken seriously. Individuals and organisations with power (e.g. planning officials, police officers and adults working

in schools) do not always intervene in order to prevent discrimination, therefore indirectly obscuring Romani and Pavee access to public services. TLOs and policy writers are acknowledging that racial discrimination towards caravan-dwelling families can and does occur, however, they are not in a position to effectively implement preventative or protective policies.

In the case of planning officials, if they would stand up to local communities who oppose plans to build and expand new sites, then families would not be left homeless and without access to services such as healthcare and education. The police could protect families from hate crimes, setting a precedent that could influence future attitudes and rhetoric surrounding caravan-dwelling lifestyles as well as curtailing opposition to new sites in the long run. Those working in education could continue this process amongst young people.

Individuals working within public service institutions have an important role in informing dominant narratives, which have an indirect effect on identity construction (cf. Lawler 2008 and Silver 2010). These narratives have powerful implications for the standard of living for all members of community. They set a boundary of who can belong and under what conditions; for example which lifestyle choices are acceptable versus which lifestyle choices are anti-social. The notion of belonging – and how belonging is acquired – needs to be pursued to a greater extent in order to understand how narratives operate in including and excluding caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee families from a dominant social discourse. Therefore, the next chapter will explore the theme of citizenship and social duty.

8. Analysis of Themes Part 2: Citizenship and Social Duty

Introduction

In earlier chapters the relationship between the development of the welfare state, social policy and their impacts on ideas surrounding citizenship and subsequent entitlements and duties have been discussed. The latter theme frequently emerged during fieldwork, as did impressions of good and bad citizens, which have been important characters in the production, development and consumption of the welfare state since its creation at the end of the 1940s (see *Background* chapter).

The notion of citizenship is as old as the 'settled human community' although what it means exactly has been reinterpreted to various extents by different societies at different times throughout history (Barbalet 1988: 1). Modern explanations can be appreciated from two main perspectives: the first having legal connotations and understood to be in relation to nationalism (Gilroy 2002: 45-46); the second in relation to individual contributions to the nation state (Lister 1990: 8). When discussing citizenship here, these two notions do indeed overlap, however this thesis mainly focuses on the latter perspective since this policy area does not involve questioning the legal status or nationality of caravan site residents. A definition of citizenship to bear in mind here is: 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed' (Bottomore 1992: 70-71). In other words, to be considered a citizen, one also has a social duty to obey rules, collaborate with others and participate in aspects of public life, making them a full member of the community (Stivers 1994: 435 and Scott 2001: 20).

There have been recent notions of the citizen as 'self interested consumer' – i.e. members of the public having a financial stake in the direction of government practice(s) (Bang 2005: 159). Thus, community cohesion between groups from various backgrounds with diverse aspirations and values to each other depends on the ability of individuals to band together or 'bridge social capital', as much as to adhere to the duties and accept the rights thrust upon them (Cooper 2008: 152-153 and Harris and Young 2009: 519). The most relevant definition of citizenship to this research is the 'socially constructed concept grounded in the moral values and legal framework of the society' resting upon the expectation that individuals will support dominant values and work together to 'sustain a democratic way of life' (Schneider and Ingram 2007: 329-330).

With regards to these definitions – which correspond with the comments made by some informants one should question what it takes to be perceived as participating

fully in one's community, what duties are expected of citizens, what are the rights they would become entitled to and what are the implications of subordinate groups such as ethnic minorities and 'underclass' groups in terms of belonging? Bottomore argues some families and individuals inherit the status of 'second-class citizen', limiting access to services and social rights due to being culturally peripheral, which can impact political involvement in addition to socio-economic factors (1992: 71). Throughout interviews it became clear that ethical decision-making relies on notions of entitlement, which in turn relies on the above definitions of citizenship and thus belonging within a certain community (i.e. district, county or nation).

8.1 Who is a Citizen and what are their Entitlements?

Prior to and during fieldwork, regardless of the governing party of central government, Conservative local governments led the two districts in England that this project has focused on; thus, local councillors were in favour of the "local-for-local" management, realised by the *Localism Act* (2011). A more localised division of political power would enable councillors to offer their constituents the chance to decide how local money is spent and planning decisions carried out (cf. DCLG 2011a). LC1 agreed with the aims of the act, stating local funds should be spent to improve the lifestyles of local people: "We shall be able to raise the money ourselves [...] and we shall be masters in our own house on **how** we use it!"

LC1 discussed his plans for better homes, education, employment possibilities and improving the infrastructure to accommodate advanced leisure facilities as well as enhancing mainstream services. This would be an appealing plan of action for any district, but in particular to younger generations. However, as already demonstrated, it became clear at times that these local developments were only intended to touch the lives and homes of specific members of the community, and whilst others are not actively excluded, the tacit expectation was put across that they will not be included in such plans for progress. In written policy, the social exclusion faced by caravan-dwelling members of the community is highlighted as an issue that should be dealt with by LAs, for example: '[M]embers of the gypsy and traveller communities should have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen,' (ODPM 2006: 4) and:

'All available data suggests that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the most excluded ethnic minority groups in British society today [...] without an authorised pitch for Gypsy and Traveller households to call home, it is difficult to see how significant progress can be made,' (DCLG 2007: 50).

A distinction is made here between the 'rights' of citizens and those rights that enable participation in citizenship in order to take on 'responsibilities'

(Barbalet 1988: 69). It was acknowledged in interviews with caravan-dwellers that because of their presumed nomadic status, they are not considered to be normal or full citizens, thus they claimed that less effort has been made by authorities to provide them with the services that all citizens would normally be entitled to. In addition, it has been acknowledged by researchers, politicians, and the general public through local media and online forums, that being a citizen is not simply living in a place; it is participating in society and contributing to it. Without contributing to and participating within local social and political arenas, an adult individual forfeits their right to consider themselves a full citizen; i.e. one deserving of public services. However, the fact that so many Romani families are no longer mobile, moving into houses in rural areas from the 1960s and participating in all forms of local activity discredits the rationale that all 'Gypsy and Travellers' are socially excluded, although it raises questions regarding specific attitudes towards caravan-dwelling lifestyles (Kenrick and Clark 1995: 32). EP3, who works extensively with caravan-dwelling families on behalf of a county council claimed that:

"A lot [of people] on sites these days [...] are older generation [...] have lived there all their lives [...] don't even travel anywhere [...] probably go [to a fair] once a year [...] and the younger generation [...] have either got their own plots of land or are all in houses [...] kids go to school as they should, along with everybody else." – Interview 2010.

Furthermore, according to English caravan-dwelling informants being a citizen worthy of local social rights and conveniences simply requires being from or located within an area for an extended period of time. Ideally one should be born or living within an area for 10 years or more and should indicate a longing to stay. Assertions of citizenship from various caravan-dwelling participants were made:

"I've been living here 22 years!"

"I've [pause] been in the village since I was 15."

"I am Romani Gypsy and basically lived in [area] all of my life."

"I been coming up and down this road since I was a baby."

With regards to how long his family had been resident in Britain, one Romani caravan-dweller commented: "We got a family tree that runs back to 1771." LC1 agreed to some extent with this interpretation of citizenship status, acknowledging that many of the Romani families living within his district had been part of the community for generations, going on to argue that since we live in a democracy,

individuals of all backgrounds should and do have options about how politically and socially involved they will be, without forfeiting their right to access public services. Nonetheless, he admitted while discussing local democracy that not all councillors or constituents viewed citizenship or social rights in this way and that this obstructed caravan-dwellers' access to services at times:

"We don't do that, and I would never [want to] see that altered. Never! Now some people would argue with me about that [...] you could argue that as they live in an area [...] probably they should take part in the democratic process by voting." - Interview 2010.

It was acknowledged by some officers in the research that generally caravan-dwelling families do not feel accepted by the rest of the community and this has a knock-on effect on how much they participate in local life, as well as how likely they are to make use of the mainstream services available to them. EP3 explained her recent project, which involved encouraging young families to make more use of their local swimming pool:

"From the research we've got from families saying: 'Why can't we use the swimming pool?' And I just say to them: 'Well [...] why don't you go up there?'" [They say:] *"Oh, we can't go up there because other people will be looking at us."* [...] *It's trying to build that bridge across and working with [the swimming pool]"* - Interview 2010.

Here the families demonstrate a social barrier they experience in accessing local services and facilities (EHRC 2010: 35). Document three also comments that: 'The experience of exclusion reflects attitudes in wider society,' (DCLG 2007: 50); therefore caravan-dwelling families are possibly excluded from public services by sensing the public prejudice directed at them.

Some caravan-dweller interviewees questioned the poor treatment they experienced by LAs and fellow local residents along with the lack of facilities for their communities. Their very presence within the same villages or towns for generations entitles them to sufficient and high quality services and accommodation facilities. They argued in interviews that as long as a family is "known" by their LA, then they should be considered as belonging to the local community and thus have their social rights acknowledged. On the other hand, recognition of belonging within a community by LAs can serve purposes beyond making social rights more accessible to families or individuals, such as rendering certain groups invisible, so that their problems do not have to be dealt with if they are not part of dominant agendas or *meta* narratives (Said 1993: 75). When speaking about the LA support of the caravan site she once lived on, Julia said:

“They know me well, they know me for eight year [sic]. When there was fights and riots they backed off and didn’t want nothing to do with it and then they say: “We don’t know you [...] the only person you’ve ever spoke to is pest-control [sic].” Well if you only ever send the rat man, no wonder you don’t understand Gypsies!” - Interview 2010.

Above, Julia demonstrates her lack of confidence in adequate services – namely protection from the anti-social behaviour and violence of other residents – provided for her and her family by the LA (cf. CRE 2006: 9 and EHRC 2010: 124-125). She implies that they ought to have provided such services as she has been a resident within the district for almost a decade and the LAs are aware of that fact. She went onto claim that: “[T]he government don’t know their indigenous families [...] they’ll put them out [...] and leave them for years in squalid situations while they’re saying they haven’t got adequate funding and really they have.”

The verbal narratives as well as those written into policy texts concerning the lack of adequate provision and its link with access to services has already been extensively explored. However what are the implications for managing social duties? The above quote suggests that the status of those “indigenous” to an area equals a deserving and full citizen. Similar comments were made by other caravan-dwelling individuals throughout fieldwork as well as their lack of mobility when attempting to reiterate their citizen status. The families interviewed in this research were aware of the rights attached to citizenship, at least when trying to gain access to locally provided services. There was also some level of awareness that the more mobile families are, the more their status of full citizenship is challenged due to public perception that mobile individuals and groups do not contribute to the state as they should. LC1 explained:

“[T]he reason that people choose to be travellers [...] not conform to the norm as we think of the norm [...] that’s fair enough [...] once they register for something they then become part of the system and you see – let’s be quick frank and candid about it – how they finance themselves, how they raise their money, whether they [want to] be part of the tax paying culture or whether they don’t and how they [want to] stay out of that, that’s their decision [sic].” – Interview 2010.

This statement gives the impression that there is room in the UK concept of citizenship, based on both rights and responsibilities, for individuals and families to “choose” how they want to live and to what level they will participate in society. Indeed, policy documents have hinted towards opportunities for caravan-dwelling families to develop their own businesses on authorised sites, with local planning

authorities being encouraged to identify 'sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses' (OPDM 2006: 14). However, the level of choice alluded to here is debatable. Even in cases where it appears that families have made a choice to settle and integrate, by upholding their social duties and responsibilities by adhering to laws and contributing to the state, efforts are still made to remove them from their homes. Mr. Murphy explained: "We spoke to [the council] and said we had nowhere else to go, the children are at school, that we're paying poll tax and everything else, but they've spent all this money just to get rid of these people."

Like Mr. Murphy, families who had settled in the area felt that they were prevented by their LA from achieving full citizenship by denying them access to their own property through the manipulation of planning laws, which in turn has led to the restriction of access to public services. The "choice" of the kind of lifestyle one wants to lead has been restricted in other ways. Since the implementation of the *Criminal Justice Act* (1994), harsher laws against unauthorised camps have been in place, making travelling for work much more difficult due to the threat of fines and prison as well as families ultimately being permanently split up. To quote Aunty: "It was not illegal to travel but illegal to stop." During this policy phase, families were encouraged to privately buy and develop land. According to documents written since then about provision for caravan-dwellers, this is the preferred arrangement of many families: '[F]eedback from Gypsies and Travellers suggests that most would choose to live on small, authorised, privately run sites,' (DCLG 2007: 13).

Some informants also claimed they preferred to live on small clan-based pitches, rather than the larger council run sites where anyone could potentially become your neighbour. From her own experiences, Julia commented: "If you've got one [neighbour] that's not [going to] live as a community and pull together with all of the others it'll make everybody else's life a misery!"

The disadvantage facing families who are willing to buy and develop their own sites lays in the value of land conservation spreading through rural communities, intending to save natural aspects of their surrounding landscapes, leading to government sanctioned 'Green Belt' and 'Brown Belt' categories (cf. Richardson 2007b: 33; Banzhaf et al. 2010; CHLG 2010: 1-3). Of course, the differences between Green Belt and Brown Belt are not the only influencing factors considered by planning officials and are sometimes not an issue at all. Occasionally the land is simply not suitable and it is better for the family or families' well-being not to remain there. Also, there are political factors, such as the wider community contesting the decision to pass the application. Complicating the situation for local families - who feel as though they should belong to an area based upon their

genealogical roots, are the other families who have been arriving recently from other parts of the country. These “outsiders” have come to buy houses as well as gain unhindered access to mainstream services. LC1 explained after the 2010 general election had taken place:

“[F]unding is [going to] change dramatically [...] to incentive building rather than targeted building. If we build affordable homes [...] we will be allowed to keep 125 per cent of council tax plus for a six year period [...] and we can spend that money wherever we like on whatever we like [...] because we could use that money, not just for providing infrastructure [...] good high quality homes at a reasonable price with jobs and opportunities on the doorstep [...] That’s what’ll get people to come here.” – Interview 2010.

The councillor implies here that he wants to make his district more appealing to families coming to the area as well as giving the existing communities an incentive to stay. With the new strategy for raising and spending local money²⁹, he illustrated his council can achieve this. Of the improvements he discussed, cheaper homes were a prominent priority. However, whilst caravan sites have been included in this central government initiative to encourage more affordable housing (DCLG 2011c: 12-13), LC1 did not refer to any plans to increase local caravan site provision beyond immediate need. In fact, the plans for improvement in the district seemed to apply to everyone except the caravan-dwelling communities, who he felt should just be left to get on with their unconventional way of life, set apart from the town, on their small LA pitches, if that is what they choose.

On the other hand, as soon as new families buy brick and mortar homes in the district they have already taken a big step towards becoming part of the community, assuming they adhere to dominant social norms (EHRC 2010: 32). Residents of caravan sites often argued, albeit indirectly, that they were being discriminated against for being different – i.e. living an alternative way to the majority population. An out of date document to guide working with the ‘Gypsy and Traveller’ community states: ‘Volunteer-based support for Travellers who have moved into housing could generally improve community relations’ (CCC 1998: 1). By suggesting support will be needed for caravan-dwelling families to move into houses they acknowledge that there are difficulties associated with this transition. There are implications in a more recent policy that to be mobile compromises one’s belonging and rights: ‘A more settled existence can prove beneficial to some gypsies and travellers in terms of access to health and education services and employment

²⁹ This is part of the *New Homes Bonus Scheme* (2011).

and can contribute to greater integration and social inclusion within local communities' (OPDM 2006: 7).

Almost as an afterthought, the above statement is followed by: 'Nevertheless the ability to travel remains an important part of gypsy and traveller culture' (OPDM 2006: 7). Interestingly it is 'culture' and not 'cultures', conflating many different families with a diverse range of backgrounds to each other (cf. Eriksen 2010: 174-175). Another impression given here is the drafter imagines just the few 'gypsy and traveller' individuals who cannot or will not acknowledge the undeniable benefits of settling down, be it on a permanent caravan site or in a house. This perhaps relates to the lack of contact policy writers have with the communities they write about, as has been discussed in chapter nine.

One may be denied the right to be treated as a full citizen if they are not fully part of a community and being fully part of the community appears to be the result of a house-dwelling existence. Having said that, if families are not able to settle within a community (because of unsuccessful planning permission or plot shortages), how can they become a part of it? Some families have inhabited their plots illegally for several years whilst an ongoing planning battle has ensued to allow them to continue living within the towns and villages that have become – or have always been - their homes. Moreover, in order to strengthen their cases, families often argue that they are already well integrated into the communities they live amongst and therefore it would be unfair to force them to move, especially when they would have nowhere else to go. Dennis elaborated on his struggle with the LA over passing the second part of the private pitch he lives on with his family: "I'll be 35 soon, I moved here when I was 12. This [land] is passed [...] for life. We been trying to get that back plot because we wanted to move on there and put this chalet on there and they're saying: "No" because this is passed."

In cases where families are forcefully evicted from unauthorised encampments and developments (such as Dale Farm in 2011), it seems to be the case that LAs are unable or unwilling to offer them an alternative dwelling. Sometimes the option of moving into a house is accepted by families, however in other cases it is a last resort for families (CRE 2006: 4). As one policy document points out: '[T]he majority of Britain's Gypsies and Travellers live in conventional 'bricks and mortar' housing. Some do so by choice, others because of the severe shortage of Gypsy sites' (SCDC 2010: 8).

Participants told distressing stories of the outcomes of this decision, involving occurrences of harassment from neighbours, alcoholism and other forms

of substance abuse, depression and anxiety and suicide. One story in particular was recited several times during interviews:

"I know a young man [...] he went in a house [the council] thought he could live there and thought: "Oh well, he's in a house he'll be comfortable." It wasn't any comfortable [sic]. He got so nervous and so depressed and so stressed out with himself that he hung himself in the back shed and left 10 children. So - the stress related problems of them coming into houses and having Gorgers round [them] all the time - they don't strive very well."

Document four also states: *'While 26% of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed on sites had formerly lived in a house, only 12% said that they would do so again. While there were advantages of leaving the hardships of the roadside life, this was accompanied by the loss of close-knit community ties and shared values, physical isolation and loneliness,'* (SCDC 2010: 25).

It is arguable based on these accounts that although many people of Romani descent do live in houses, the rumours of one family or another's challenges deters many other families from taking the offer of a house rather than living illegally on the side of the road or in a field. Additionally, the families who participated in the research argued that it is their culture to be connected with the land and to be able to have their families around them and therefore living in a stretch of terraced houses would feel stifling.

Considering how long caravan-dwelling Romani communities have been part of British society, the families questioned why caravan sites are not accounted for when councillors and MPs plan to extend accommodation needs for towns? The lack of engagement some individuals feel with regards to their LAs has been illustrated above with regards to the inconsistencies in pitch allocation and provision for caravan-dwelling families. Informants expressed their contempt not only for those families being provided for above those who really need help, but also to the decision-making strategies of the LA. From the point of view of caravan-dwelling informants, those in need of social aid are more deserving citizens than those taking care of themselves; an idea that completely contradicts the more commonly held definition of a good citizen. Arguably, if caravan-dwelling families were considered more in town planning strategies - or had more control over their accommodation - then they would be provided for, perhaps become more socio-economically stable and could actively participate within their communities and would subsequently rely on their LAs, thus becoming "good" citizens.

8.2 Community Living

It became clear that whilst maintaining their own ancestral cultures through language, festivals, rites of passage traditions and life-style choices, most Romani families (caravan-dwelling or not) are well integrated into non-caravan-dwelling communities. Those who did not feel part of their community articulated a desire to be more integrated as well as expressing confusion over why being culturally different should be an obstruction to that. Aunty observed:

“[W]hen the town plan goes out, if you haven’t got less than 1 per cent of the population on that town plan, send it back! I’ll work my way towards that, so that we will be provided for ordinarily, like anyone else. Everyone else is provided for but not the Gypsies. It’s the last stand, the last bastion really for racial prejudice, because they can’t do it to black people, they can’t do it to all sorts of people but they can to the Gypsies.” - Interview 2009.

Here, the Aunty illustrates the sentiment that the right to be a fully accepted member of a community is routinely being denied to caravan-dwelling families, regardless of their (legal) citizen-status within a district. Furthermore, the additional sentiment that caravan-dwelling families are targeted as one group and denied their rights whilst members of other ethnic minority groups (e.g. those of Afro-Caribbean and Asian backgrounds) are not, despite research findings to the contrary (EHRC 2010: 32-35). Policymakers recognised that there is a need to demonstrate caravan-dwellers’ status to other members of the community, who currently dispute it, and claim their right to be accounted for, as PW1 explains:

“[P]ersonally [pause] I firmly believe that Gypsies and Travellers were deemed to be an afterthought [...] they’re human beings [...] they deserve to be treated with respect just like I expect to be treated [...] People don’t appreciate that you know, their needs and aspirations might be different to other people [pause] ‘cause the view I generally hear is, “Why can’t they live in a house?” [...] I just think it’s [pause] a lack of knowledge which is fuelled by the media and effectively fear.” – Interview 2010.

Members of house-dwelling communities arguably refuse to accept that caravan-dwellers are able to experience a sanitary lifestyle while living on a camp or site and therefore do not support improvements to site provision and maintenance because they see it as a waste of resources (cf. Platell 2011). As EP1 points out, the general opinion that a clean and safe existence can only be achieved by living in a house:

“I’m absolutely sure that not enough consideration is given to the fact that this is a lifestyle, a cultural choice. It’s not about [...] living in a trailer because they can’t get a house. It’s [...] living in a trailer ‘cause [sic] that’s how they’re choosing to live;

they don't want particularly to go into a house [...] people don't get it [...] you hear this sort of patronising: "Oh they'd be much better off." - Interview 2010.

These services and rights would be more accessible if caravan sites were properly maintained and allocated. With reference to the above quote, some families demonstrated despite their living within a community for several generations and participating in community life alongside non-caravan-dwelling people, they are prevented by the LAs from over-coming social exclusion and prejudice all together. Also illustrated above is that some policies suggest firstly a settled existence and secondly living in a house would be better in some way, however they admit that lifestyle preferences have to be tolerated.

Fieldwork revealed some of the problems arising from this issue, for instance the young family on their private plot. Dennis is of Romani descent and had met his wife when she moved to the village where he had been living for almost two decades. She was also originally from the area and when the couple decided to start a family the decision was made for her to move to his caravan site, as Emma explained: "We want [our daughter] to have our family around. We don't [want to] be pushed off to a house where she even doesn't see her granddad [sic]." Julia said of Emma and Dennis' relationship:

"Not only Gypsy children but [Gorgers] turn their back on their own and this is a perfect example of a family that's lived in a local area and settled down so well here that they're marrying into the local community. How can the community turn it's back on one of its own because she's now classed as one of us?" - Interview 2010.

It is claimed here, whether you meet the standards of a full citizen – by contributing to and participating within the community - or not, if a "Gypsy", one will be denied access to services. Even if one is not descended from a Romani or Pavee background, Julia seems to assert that by pursuing a caravan-dweller lifestyle, for instance by marrying a person of Romani descent or moving to a caravan site, they will also become excluded. In this sense, citizenship through cultural belonging is not a given. The main problem in this example seemed to be that the family had not moved into a house; instead they had opted to settle in a caravan. When applying for planning permission for the other half of their own land so that they may live on it, they were denied permission for several reasons, the most striking being lack of room for more children in the village school. Emma told me:

"One of their reasons was that there weren't any room for any more children in the schools [...] I've like been in the village since I was 15, he's been in the village since - for like 20 years [sic] - and at the end of the day, all the children on new estates and

stuff that are going up, got a place no problem [sic]. So I don't see why my daughter and people down here shouldn't have places." - Interview 2010.

The explicit message here is that new house-dwellers to the area are guaranteed more mainstream services than those caravan-dwellers who have worked and grown up in the area over the years. The more implicit message is that it is acceptable for some women to be mothers and contribute to population growth of local communities, and not acceptable or desirable for others at all, depending on where or how she lives; therefore social rights and services based on citizenship become restricted for undesirables to either prevent or discourage families from growing (Roberts 1997: 8 and Zack 1997: 151). One can only wonder had Dennis moved with Emma to a house, if their daughter would have been denied entry into the local school. Furthermore, those that have not integrated into Gorger families (i.e. continue to live on caravan sites), have practical reasons to be evasive about their cultural backgrounds. Below is an excerpt of an interview with Shelly, about ethnicity screenings in job applications:

Shelly: I think as soon as you [...] fill the little forms in for [...] what kind of origin you're from [sic] it's like: "Oh yeah, really?!"

Bel: Have you ever thought of [pause] just [...] putting 'other'?

Shelly: Yeah I have just put 'other.' That's how I got the job where I am now [sic] and as soon as I told them they were like: "Are you really? Oh!"

Bel: So, why do you think that it is? Why do you think people have such a problem with it?

Shelly: I think [...] it's the same with everything. Gorger people [...] like to look at someone and say: "Right, you're not like me. That's it!" That's basically it. - Interview 2010.

Shelly communicates that she does not feel at ease around her colleagues, who appeared surprised when they found out that she lived in a caravan and was of Romani descent. She suspected strongly had she been completely honest about her background from the beginning, she would not have been successful in her job application. The story reveals that individuals from (white) minority groups have a better chance at gaining employment being an ethnic anomaly than they do actually

stating their ethnic background due to the perceptions employers may have about a particular group (EHRC 2010: 381). It is also considerable that ethnicity does not only inform planning decisions, employment patterns or anti-social behaviour policy. A school in Essex neighbouring the infamous Dale Farm caravan site, has become known as a “Gypsy” school due to the disproportionate amount of children of caravan-dwelling Pavee or Romani descent to children of other ethnicities (Platell 2011: 1). This has happened, according to TLO1: “[B]ecause [...] all the local house-dweller parents have pulled their children out of that school.” She elaborated:

“Now, tell me where was anybody saying: “This, you cannot do this [...] this is the catchment area. That’s the school the child should be attending and no you cannot pull that child out just because there’s Gypsy children going there.” There’s all these teachers [...] they’re educating on some days [...] 22 kids in school. Now, where was somebody saying: “This cannot be allowed.” ?” – Interview 2010.

Education, in many ways, provides a doorway for young people to obtain their full and active place in community life. The *Caravan Sites Act* (1968) was intended among other things, to provide the opportunity for families to settle down and send their children to school on a full-time basis (Adams et al. 1975: 108). The implied worry of a lack of education for young members of society has continued to preoccupy policy documents:

Document one: ‘Gypsy and Travellers are believed to experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England,’ (OPDM 2006: 4).

Document two: ‘Unless the pace of delivery increases, it will fail the children who today have nowhere to call home, no base from which to access education or healthcare, and whose families have no stake in the economic success of their communities,’ (DCLG 2007: 11).

Document three: ‘This shortage of accommodation creates additional problems for the Gypsy and Traveller community in terms of access to health, education and employment and other opportunities,’ (EERA 2008: 6).

Document four: ‘The Office of Educational Standards in Education has shown that Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group. This is not a new issue,’ (SCDC 2010: 26).

Document five: 'Local authorities need to regard issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers as a corporate responsibility [...] including housing, planning, education, health, social services, and environmental health/protection,' (DCLG 2010: 7).

Policy 6: '[S]chool attendance and educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils has been considerably lower than their peers at every key stage,' (DCLG 2011b: 13).

EP2 explained that during his training, encouraging caravan-dwelling children's attendance was also a high priority:

"There was [...] something like a traveller liaison officer who went out to the sites [...] trying to encourage the parents to send their children to school no matter how long they were going to be there, whether they planned to be there on the site for [...] a year or whether it was only for a week. They emphasised that they'd always get the children into school." – Interview 2009.

Given the existing struggles that apparently discourage some families from sending their children to schools, in combination with house-dwelling parents boycotting schools when caravan-dwelling children join, it is arguably a segregated and stigmatising experience. Also, non-Pavee or Romani and/or caravan-dwelling children are potentially given the impression that their Romani and Pavee peers do not belong in school and should not share their resources. The simple fact that so many children left the school in the first place, as well as being virtually condoned by the LA, reaffirms that some groups in society have more choices than others. Additionally, it instils the specific message that dominant populations feel they should not and will not share public services or spaces with certain minority groups.

As has been shown above, it is not necessarily the case problems stop once caravan-dwelling families move into houses. Some individuals who marry members of non-Romani or Pavee house-dwelling communities and later move into houses keep their ethnicity a secret from new neighbours, colleagues or acquaintances, encouraging their children to do the same to avoid discrimination. For instance, Ruby, who built her own home with her Gorger husband, told of the troubles her youngest son faced when he started primary school. Ruby had deliberately sent her son to a school where she believed no one knew their family and would therefore not be aware that her child was of Romani descent. However another mother, who happened to be a governor on the school-board, recognised the family and told her own son that his new school-mate was "a Gypsy".

“[H]e was left two days and got beaten up and got set about and name-called [sic] and had huge problems and he’s five years old [...] I said: “Look, he’s telling me they’re older children, they’re bigger than him [...] I [want to] know who’s done it [...] I [want to] know what you’re doing about it.” [They said]: “Oh no no, it was just a little accident!” I said: “His nose is pouring of blood he’s got scratches all over his face, he’s bruised on his ribs, and you’re telling me it was a little pushing incident [sic]. He’s told me he’s been pushed over and kicked in the head [...] If I sent him into school like that, you’d get social services on me [sic]!”” - Interview 2010.

Eventually this situation was resolved, nevertheless more followed when the young boy’s teacher would not accept that the family owned their own house. Evidently, this is exactly the kind of scenario Ruby was trying to avoid when choosing to send her son to the school that she did. Governments have tackled the discriminatory issues faced by ethnic minority citizens - who are vulnerable due to their minority status - with the implementation of affirmative action or accommodation policy (cf. Cunningham 2000; De Zwart 2005; Harris and Young 2009). The effectiveness of such policies, which account for the cultural and ethnic diversity of communities as well as potential socio-economic inequalities, is debateable and at odds with countries such as France where little space is made for diversity in the Republic. For instance, the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy demonstrated to the world how he would deal with disenfranchised, ethnically different groups if they would not live up to French standards by repatriating an entire community of Bulgarian and Romanian Roma families living in squalid – and apparently un-French – conditions in the south of France in July 2010 (cf. Dejevsky 2010; Phillips et al. 2010; Thorpe 2010). The Conservative ministers accept that political relief should be offered to minority groups who are denied societal rights due to discrimination. However, in the case of caravan-dwellers LC2 would only go so far stating:

“[P]eople need to operate within the law [...] Sometimes that is not helpful to the goodwill and the response of residents [...] A minority group has to be protected [...] whilst the majority voice is important it’s not the only issue. So a minority view has to be protected but at the same time there is a responsibility on the minority to also play by the rules and observe the law and not [...] take over a site and flout planning laws.” - Interview 2010.

As seen in 7.3, LC2 claims that minority groups have a right to try to change the legal system “when the law is not right”, referencing the likes of Mandela and Gandhi. However, when discussing caravan-dwellers, no excuse seems to be afforded families who break (planning) laws, even if the law is arguably detrimental

to their well-being. In the field opposite Emma and Dennis' home, three other families were raising their children without functioning sewage systems. Their planning permission was given on a temporary basis and thus developing the land in order to install sewerage facilities would complicate the process of turning the land back into a field when the families have inevitably been evicted. Apparently such conditions are acceptable for families. Similarly, Julia appealed some years ago to her LA to find her a pitch so she could escape the animosity and intimidation caused by families fighting over the inadequate number of plots available. She recalled the LA's response: "[The council] told me: 'We have positions for you [...] on the piggery.'" But when we approached the pig farm, the man said he's not giving up his lease and his pigs are still living in it. And they said that would be an ideal space for them to provide for Travellers." – Interview 2009.

It is unsurprising, having been given options such as those presented above (e.g. living with pigs, extreme violence and uncertainty or unsanitary conditions), that many families have given up waiting for pitches from their LAs, taking matters into their own hands to develop homes with or without permission so that they can begin to partake in community life. However, ironically this distances caravan-dwellers even more from dominant populations.

8.3 Divisions and Belonging

During interviews with self-defining Romani families, they often described themselves as "true" Gypsies, distinguishing themselves from other caravan-dwelling groups (Richardson 2006b: 89). At times they seemed resentful that they are compared or confused with these other groups, and this was reflected in statements, which revealed they prefer to live with their "own" people (McLaughlin 1980: 8-9), as pointed out by Aunty who recalled the effects of the 1968 Act: "We got lumped together with every vagrant and every vagabond and every beggar that ever there was." The "we" here is in reference to Romani caravan-dwelling groups. Julia often discussed religion in relation to living amongst people with different cultural backgrounds: "In my mind God creates everything on Earth [...] They ought to stick to God's laws and not man's laws because man-made laws are only suited for men that [want to] live in the same tribe." – Interview 2010.

Julia's claims that men (and women) write laws specific to their own cultures, thus putting cultural minority groups at a disadvantage. This is her explanation of why various caravan-dwelling groups do not get along at times when they live together on LA sites, although it is not the case that mixing is impossible. Aunty described the diversity of one of her sites: "I had a young man who was Irish and he was married to one of the families on here, so he moved on [...] and then we

had [...] another Irish boy got married into a Romani girl and he moved on here [sic]. We got on well together – everybody did.” – Interview 2009.

Caravan-dwelling families also discussed their choice to have some geographical distance between themselves and the Gorger or house-dweller community (“We don’t want to live in a town!”). There have been examples throughout the thesis of inter-cultural marriage (e.g. Jim’s son, Dennis and Emma, Ruby), as well as individuals choosing to live in either houses or caravans to be with their partners. Julia added to her reasons for not wanting to live amongst Gorger families: “If somebody was ill down here, family’s looking out for them, but you ain’t [going to] get that if he’s ill in the street [sic].”

The tensions between caravan-dwelling Romani and Pavee communities over available pitches on LA sites as well as space on unauthorised developments has allegedly escalated to “fights and riots” and thus caused a fractured relationship between two groups that would probably be more politically and socially powerful if they worked together. The antagonism between the two groups was felt in recent reactions to the *mockumentary* aired on Channel 4: *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. The main complaint from Romani journalists via Traveller Times Online (TTO) was that the show was dubbed to be about authentic “Gypsy culture” in Britain, however it predominantly featured Pavee families, exhibiting Irish cultural customs (TTO 2011: 2). Discrimination towards Irish immigrants in England prevails by targeting their descendents, illustrating a notion of ancestral belonging to a land and the use of the cultural marker of “Irishness” as a proxy for “outsider”, distinguishable from other caravan-dwellers and house-dwellers (cf. Essed and Trienekens 2008; McDowell and Wonders 2009).

Additionally, perceptions of citizenship within caravan-dwelling communities differ from more general understandings, which link citizen status with socially conforming behaviour or understandings of the nation state and who should benefit from it. It has also been stated by Jake Bowers (2009) that Roma(ni) communities have more of a spiritual connection to land and nature, rather than a connection to any state or property in particular, which separates them perhaps from other groups and their ideas about land, property and citizen rights. Potentially, traditional Roma(ni) families might have a strong connection with their natural environment rather than buildings and cities, with Aunty explaining her views on a virtuous existence: “We need to come back to our roots [...] respect for every living thing. If you look after nature, nature will pay you back always. And that was how we brought up and that was how we lived.” – Interview 2009.

From this perspective individuals care more about investing in land than contributing to local communities in order to be good or bad citizens. These two perspectives of citizenship – as residents of Britain they can legally claim a nationality and spiritually through their use of the land – are not mutually exclusive; although a belief in belonging based on ancestral heritage or spiritual connection to the land is not necessarily enough to be more accepted when living alternative lifestyles.

8.4 Rights and Duties

Each document analysed in this thesis at some point discusses rights and responsibilities, making the point that the two go hand in hand. It is acknowledged in some texts that without firstly having access to all social or civic rights, an individual would be unable to completely fulfil his or her social duties (cf. DCLG 2007 and EERA 2008). However, not all policy documents seemed to necessarily agree with this formula. Document five for instance, provides little emphasis on the struggles encountered by caravan-dwelling families: ‘The Government’s policies on Gypsies and Travellers are set within a framework of rights and responsibilities in which everyone’s rights must be equally respected and equal standards of behaviour are expected from all,’ (DCLG 2010: 5).

The document moves onto set out what the ‘standards of behaviour’ within communities should be, while providing advice and support to LAs in ensuring ‘social justice and a fairer society’ (ibid) for all. Essentially, the objective of this policy strategy can be summarised as: ‘Where an ASBO is sought against a group or individual where problem behaviour has been taking place for years [...] close monitoring will be required in order to ensure that those behaviours are modified or minimised,’ (DCLG 2010: 12).

As discussed in chapter seven, hate crimes directed at people of Pavee and Romani descent is acknowledged in this policy document, however it is not explicitly listed as a type of anti-social behaviour that the strategy attempts to eliminate. The document remains vague in phrasing how ‘intimidation and harassment’ are to be dealt with, merely stating: ‘The public – whether part of the settled or travelling community – rightly expects to live free from intimidation and harassment,’ (DCLG 2010: 5).

The document uses explicit language stating members of British society have a responsibility to behave a certain way and how to manage transgressions of anti-social and potentially harmful behaviour. Therefore, it can be read that the correctional sanctions for those who live unconventionally and/or cause a nuisance, is prioritised above ensuring all members of society have access to their social

rights. Without diverting too much attention here to ethics (see chapter nine), it is arguable for these reasons caravan-dwelling people feel that their very existence is under threat through the passing of – as they see it - unfair and discriminatory legislation.

LA bureaucrats and policymakers have been criticised by articulate members of the Romani community in particular for taking a long time to acknowledge that cultural traits such as caravan-dwelling and nomadism are a very small and - to some extent - irrelevant part of Romani culture and even for those families now living in houses, they are still true “Romani Gypsies”. They expressed that politicians are preoccupied with trying to move families off the road and into houses, rather than just providing caravan sites, because they believe Romani culture will dissipate altogether when the all families are housed, and therefore assimilation will be achieved. However, individuals of Romani descent warned that it would take more than forcing families into houses to change their culture (Ward-Jackson and Harvey 1972: 65 and Hill 2010: 1).

Motivation behind encouraging families to integrate by moving into social or council housing may lie in the desire to correct their behaviour, social attitudes and contributions to the state – the overall goal being to make them better citizens. It could be seen as a bargain of sorts: caravan-dwelling people agree to be normal and participate fully in their neighbouring communities by physically moving into them and in return their LAs provide them with safe affordable homes, amenities and grant families with access to mainstream services that they may have previously been denied (DCLG 2011b: 10). In addition to anti-social policy strategies, others also allude to a responsibility to community cohesion, as seen in document one:

‘The Circular comes into effect immediately [...] to create and support sustainable, respectful and inclusive communities [...] where there is mutual respect and consideration between all communities for the rights and responsibilities of each community and individual,’ (OPDM 2006: 5).

Document two claims that: ‘Providing more sites is crucial, but it is also essential that those sites support community cohesion,’ (DCLG 2007: 47), while document four adds: ‘The key priority areas for action are [...] Promoting community cohesion,’ (SCDC 2010: 5). Finally, document six states that: ‘There is a perception among many that currently policy treats traveller sites more favourably than it does other forms of housing [...] this has led to tension and undermined community cohesion,’ (DCLG 2011b: 7).

It is clear that ‘community cohesion’ is high on central and local governmental priorities, to such an extent that at times it seems as though policy

initiatives disregard the multitude of obstacles caravan-dwelling families might face in upholding their social responsibilities. In addition to issues of space and accommodation privilege, families who are not seen as active contributors to community cohesion are rendered invisible from social landscapes through use of meta narratives, which uphold space and accommodation privilege, politically disfavoured caravan-dwelling lifestyles (Lipsitz 2007: 12). Certain individuals were in concurrence that social cohesion plays a significant role in citizenship; i.e. that a family should be able to live alongside others in a community in order to belong somewhere: “Some of the campsites haven’t got a heart. If you’ve got a heart [...] they can pull the community together. Our families can make a community on a lay-by, in a field [...] so surely they can do one on a campsite.”

In the meantime, strategies have been introduced to increase community cohesion with the inclusion of caravan-dwellers, while policy texts show inconsistencies with regards to lifestyle conformity. The impression given in many cases is that families should conform one way or another to be socially accepted.

8.5 Summary

Social systems of inclusion and exclusion operate based on complex notions of rights and responsibilities that we are each expected to fulfil in order to enjoy full citizenship – that is, belonging to and benefitting from political structures that drive dominant social narratives. The responsibilities or duties that we should each attain range from living in accordance with the law, being politically conscious and active, as well as integrating into existing communities. While policy texts seem to make it clear that community cohesion can be achieved regardless of whether one lives in a house or a caravan, and that rights and responsibilities apply to occupants of both forms of accommodation, it is not necessarily the case that all those who do fulfil their social duties have access to their rights or feel as though they belong.

Whilst there does remain a substantial amount of poverty within caravan-dwelling communities, Ruby’s case has shown three generations of caravan-dwellers of Romani descent (her grandfather, her father and herself), who went onto buy their own land and houses out of choice, possibly suggesting a certain level of affluence amongst caravan-dwellers based on the experiences of those who do move into houses of their own accord. When and if families cease to live in caravans it is assumed they are no longer “gypsies” at all, which has been demonstrated above to be untrue, while little appreciation is paid to the ethnic and cultural differences between Romani and Pavee groups, as well as their differences to other caravan-dwelling groups. Whilst Irish, Welsh, Scottish, Showmen, New Age, Roma and Romani peoples (to name a few), are collectively referred to as “Travellers” or

“Gypsies”, everyone else is referred to (again collectively), in media, policy documents and strategies, by bureaucrats and politicians as “settled” or “the local community,” implying “Travellers and Gypsies” are neither settled or local or part of community, which is incorrect. This in itself illustrates how membership to a minority group juxtaposes one’s position in society to that of members of dominant, majority groups (Kirton and Greene 2000: 8).

The notion that belonging is earned rather than given prevails to the extent that some members of society may come to be viewed as undeserving. In the same way that dominant narratives construct desirable behaviour, it also constructs community. The undeserving becoming excluded while their access to services (and in this case, land) becomes more restricted, and this is justified by the responsibilities-before-rights mentality that has been explored above. This ongoing process sets apart those who refuse to conform to the dominant narrative social structure from those who inherently conform, as well as those who have already been forced to. Maintaining the gap between the community conformers and “undeserving” members of society are the ethical arguments underpinning these notions of citizenship and belonging in the first place. The language used throughout the documents and discussions to consider rights and responsibilities, is heavily imbued with value and norm terminology. In the final analytical chapter, we shall examine the role that ethical discourses play in constructing social narratives and identities within communities. This chapter will also consider the lived experiences and subsequent ethical implications of policy drafting and implementation that is textually woven with dominant narratives.

9. Analysis of Themes Part 3: Values, Norms and Ethical Reflections of Policy Texts and Concrete Landscapes

Introduction

Having examined how perspectives of power, authority, citizenship and social duty become part of *meta* narratives, as well as a caravan-dwelling life experiences, we can now begin to think about how personal and organisational values and norms shape the narrative and how that narrative becomes part of a contentious policy discourse. An ethical narrative can be considered to be part of LA discourses, which dictate right or good ways to live among others within a community as well as the lived experiences of LA decisions, which have ethical implications. As we have already explored above (and shall continue to see below), caravan-dwelling families at times view LA policy actions as “unethical.” This chapter illustrates how families come to feel this way, while outlining the ethical justifications for policy actions from the perspective of LA practitioners.

Whilst the power within communities can be considered to be the underpinning of how authority is transferred when social policies are implemented, an understanding of the values of all the people involved in this bureaucratic process is important to understand not only the spirit in which implementation is delivered, but also more importantly how it is received and endured. Through the observation and reading of ethical narratives, we can familiarise ourselves with how the dynamic between different groups in society produces an ethical dialogue when one group is able – through policy - to decide how another should live. The more powerful group(s) within a society also have the authority to determine when and in which context this ethical dialogue takes place. Ethical dialogues provide an insight into the ethical dilemmas of LA employees who have professional (and political) roles to fulfil but do not always agree with how their role should be acted out. TLO1 said:

“I find one of the frustrations is working within a political environment where I have to take politics into consideration because to me it’s all about the people I work for and with you know – they’re the ones that count – the outcomes, the changes, the difference it makes to [...] their lives really.” – Interview 2010.

The TLO articulates the importance of the needs of “the people [she] works for and with” – i.e. the families. If it is up to her, she will always put the needs of the families above the political interests of the organisation, because “they’re the ones that count”. Here, one can witness an ethical dilemma taking root, with a

practitioner on the one hand explaining what she thinks is right based upon her own values, compared to what she must do based on the values of her job.

The list of values and norms that emerged from the language used in both policy documents and found in interview transcripts is not exhaustive; however, the most recurrent values articulated are analysed throughout the remainder of this chapter, while both the themes of power and citizenship re-emerge to remain naturally woven into arguments.

9.1 Valuable Vulnerability

Of all the values that were articulated throughout interviews, caring for the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. women, children, minority groups, the sick and the elderly) remained of paramount importance to all individuals, regardless of the background of the speaker. The prominent focus in documents on the welfare needs of and educational provision for children is reflected in the Labour government's *Children Act (2004)* to eradicate child poverty and want (cf. Harker 2005).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, document one links lower educational achievements and health in caravan-dwelling communities to the 'lack of good quality sites' (OPDM 2006: 4). Similarly, policies written in the last 10 years have been concerned with the provision of pitches and sites for caravan-dwelling families as well as ensuring caravan-dwellers are recognised as more disadvantaged than any other in England. There efforts have been made to ensure appropriate and decent homes along with access to public services for families (DCLG 2007 2006: 5).

However, despite their perceived vulnerability, caravan-dwelling families seem to prefer a lifestyle of independence and privacy, aiming to own their own land with their immediate and - at times extended - family (Okely 1983: 67 and DCLG 2007: 13). Also, in spite of the negative associations made with caravan-dwelling groups expecting a hand out from the state (cf. CHLG 2010), there is reason to believe - based on the interviews - that many families would prefer a 'hand up' (Harker 2005: 263). Strategies are put in place to help the socially deprived and excluded although this is not without cost. Individuals and groups aided by welfare policy are expected to work towards community cohesion by being active members in building a society we all can benefit from.

While one policy claims: 'The Government is committed to ensuring the members of gypsy and traveller communities should have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen,' it also claims its objective is to: 'To recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional travelling way of life of gypsies and travellers, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community' (ODPM 2006: 4-5). Can the

two objectives be successfully upheld? Current Prime Minister David Cameron would not argue so:

“Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream [...] We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values,” (David Cameron quoted by the New Statesman 2011).

Cameron implies by allowing different ethnic, cultural or religious groups to live alternative lifestyles from ‘the mainstream’, they are offered the opportunity to undermine core British values, which in turn may lead to anti-social behaviour, fracturing social cohesion (Cooper 2008: 152). The *Respect Agenda* (2006) was drawn up specifically to target such occurrences (Cooper 2008: 134), and also protect minority groups: ‘Many mainstream policy initiatives will have an effect on Gypsies and Travellers [...] the Respect agenda and work on race equality and community cohesion all have important parts to play in tackling the social exclusion face by Gypsies and Travellers’ (DCLG 2007: 58).

The ‘work on race equality and community cohesion’ consists of allowing minority groups to believe that they have the authority to express their ethnic identities, and is manifested in cultural celebratory months, such as *Black History Month*, celebrated each year through October; or to be more relevant *Traveller, Roma, Gypsy Month*, now celebrated in June in the UK. In this manner groups are allowed up to five weeks out of the year to be proud of and promote their cultural diversity, whilst others from “outside” the group have an opportunity to learn about histories and traditions they perhaps were not aware of as well as participate in cultural events. In this way, Britain as a nation is able to celebrate the diversity of its people, by bringing them together to learn about the various cultures and histories that make British society what it is today. The experience can thus be rewarding for all members of society, actually aiding “minority” groups’ integration who are in turn expected to assimilate for the remaining 11 months of the year (Oommen 1997: 24-27). On the other hand, it might also be arguable that a single month out of the year is not sufficient, and that assimilation is an undesirable way for a multicultural society to move forward. For caravan-dwellers, part of this assimilation could be considered to be a formal education up to the age of 18 and then becoming part of the conventional labour force. In this light, LAs would be able to preside over cohesive communities while reducing the reliance on the welfare state of those who do not or cannot economically provide for themselves (Johansson and Hvinden 2005: 103 and Harker 2005: 264).

Some caravan-dwellers blamed LAs for not providing enough space for them to establish their own homes and cited this as the primary cause for dependency and destitution some families experience. While the official status of 'homeless' only applies to approximately 20 per cent of families, poverty seems to be considered commonplace amongst these communities. It was articulated strongly that if families were more accepted within their communities then they would be given more space (physical and social) through planning decisions, thus avoiding the aforementioned social issues. Subsequently, they would not be dependent on LA services for allocated provision if the spaces families found and developed independently were granted planning permission more often (Marsland 1995: 28). Additionally, caravan-dwelling families argued they would be living in better conditions with heating, electricity and other modern-day conveniences that are historically and inaccurately thought of as too advanced for nomadic groups (Liégeois 2005: 135). Aunty told a story from her school days about being teased for being a "dirty Gypsy": "[W]e prided ourselves on being clean and I said: "Father, a boy called me dirty Gypsy today." [Father said:] "Did he? [...] You did laugh didn't you? Tell me you laughed." – Interview 2009. EP2 also discussed the materials used by a traveller education officer in his diversity training:

"I don't really remember what the actual traveller education officer spoke to us about [...] what he did have was a selection of resources [...] They weren't used to support the education of Traveller children. A couple of the books in particular portrayed Gypsy children [...] they're only cartoons but [...] they were shown to be dirty [pause] poor looking, quite povertous almost in their appearance [...] it's very striking and it's being used to teach about Gypsy children." – Interview 2009.

Finally, TLO2 described the current welfare issue, based on his experience working within caravan-dwelling communities:

*"I think that far too many people make the assumption that all Travellers **need** help. **Some** of the Travellers need help, some of the Travellers just want some of the more basic things in life and that is to have a good, sound place to live, which is a legal place to live [...] from there they can move on. Having said that there are still a large proportion of people that do need that help and who need [...] agreed interventions to make sure they can access mainstream services and provision, which the rest of us just take for granted." – Interview 2010 (emphasis added).*

The idea that caravan-dwelling communities should be more independent and able to support themselves is a wide-spread view, among the research participants, throughout the media as well as in political forums. However, there are conflicting approaches on how those families who are currently dependent on state

aid should be helped as well as how far independence should go. The tale of the lane illustrates profoundly how families (house or caravan-dwelling) rely on support from their LA, while the LA asserts that maintenance of a road lies with the residents living either side of it.

To return to social vulnerability, the quotes above provide evidence that caravan-dwelling people have historically been seen as dirty and un-kept, even when this is not the case and more interestingly, when they do not view themselves in this way. Aunty's father asked her if she laughed at her school-mate when he called her a "dirty Gypsy" due to how ridiculous he thought the claim was. In Aunty's account, her father went on to respond: "You know those children you go to school with [...] They come out of rat-infested slums, and he called you "dirty Gypsy"?"

EP2's account of his diversity training illustrates how far reaching moralistic rumours that involve stereotypes of minority communities prevail in working their way into legitimate teaching materials (Fine and Turner 2001: 55). The image of the "dirty gypsy" always in need of a hand-out remains pervasive, despite being an unrealistic portrayal of caravan-dwellers' lives, according to TLO2. The show: *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (which was intended to give an insightful window to a "secretive" group), has done little to answer or correct the accusatory myths surrounding Pavee and Romani families (Bindel 2011: 1 and McDonald 2011: 1). In fact, the show not only enraged members of Pavee and Romani communities and academic scholars who have worked with caravan-dwelling people, it has given rise to a more inflamed and yet pillared hatred for a perceived group who appear on screen to not pay council or road taxes, to live on illegally developed land, do not work or attend school but who can afford to indulge in an extravagant wedding (Freeman 2011: 1 and Richards 2011: 1). For those working, paying taxes and living on legally allocated land, or in houses, the untrue perception that most Romani and Pavee families live illegally fuels resentment:

'It is clear that [the Government] will not tolerate abuse of the planning system by a small minority of travellers who set up unauthorised developments which create tension, undermine community cohesion and create resentment against the overwhelming majority of law-abiding travellers who do not live on unauthorised sites,' (DCLG 2011b: 13).

The above policy quotation demonstrates that central government understands there are 'a small minority of travellers' living in unauthorised and contested spaces, however this statement shows a lack of empathy for the accompanying hardships many families in this situation face. Also, one could argue with the given figures - 3636 caravans on unauthorised sites (DCLG 2011b: 10) -

that 20 per cent is not a 'small minority', indicating how some narratives are distanced from conjuring images of masses of homeless families, making the issue of unauthorised sites seem minimal and manageable if dealt with presently.

The constant link in other documents, such as two and three, between unauthorised encampments or developments and unfair planning decisions, makes the above policy statement paradoxical. The use of the word 'abuse' conjures a sense of unethical behaviour, thus linking ethics to legality and the criminalisation of caravan-dwellers on unauthorised sites. However, councils have also broken the law and with insufficient caravan site provision therefore, there appears to be abuse of the planning system behind office walls regarding site allocation and planning permission. One finds themselves asking, which abuse is worse? The answer to that in ethical debates might be to look at the lived experiences and material consequences of both decisions (Rachels 1999: 108). Also, if we are unaware of the material consequences of the decisions that we make, can we still be held accountable for the action? What is one to do when faced with a conflict of values? LA initiatives have been constrained by other value-based duties as stated in the objectives of one document: 'To seek to manage unauthorised camping in an efficient and effective way, having regard to the welfare requirements, rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers, the environment and the potential level of nuisance for local residents' (SCDC 2010: 9).

The objective presented above is to deal with unauthorised camping, however there is also a necessity to uphold other objectives that are presented throughout the same document as well as other documents, which could each conflict with each other and exacerbate the problem if not handled in the right way. For instance, finding acceptable homes for caravan-dwelling families in a manner that does not upset other members of the community but also working with 'Travellers and Gypsies' in order to take 'account of cultural issues or specific requirements' (SCDC 2010: 9). Upholding the welfare of a family living in a small field could have detrimental effects for the surrounding natural characteristics. As for the potential nuisance caused to local residents, this is subjective and thus constantly problematic for local officials to calculate. Document five provides powers to LAs and communities through means of consultation to decide whether or not caravan-dwelling families are being anti-social, based on the subjective nature of what is and is not annoying (cf. DCLG 2010). Inevitably, such an objective in policy will lead to ethically conflicted decision-making.

As has been discussed at various stages of this thesis, by offering hand-outs, the 'welfare state' has become economically burdensome to the public and it has

been widely considered that it would be a much more effective system if decisions on who to help were not only more discerning, but also if aid was delivered in a manner that would stimulate people to help themselves (cf. Marsland 1995). In this sense, individuals and families should be working their way out of poverty and into better health, productively giving back to their communities and removing strain from the state, all for the greater good of the community. The emphasis on enabling caravan-dwelling families to take up their own responsibilities in order to improve community cohesion in documents is an example of how this becomes part of a policy discourse. Of course, groups who are not able to help themselves through education, employment or overall lifestyle choices continue to lean ever heavily on the welfare state (Barnett 1986: 304), whilst others in the same position become increasingly trapped by their marginalised position, slipping through the cracks of selectivity. It seems to be acceptable to have an underclass of people out of the sight of the general public and out of reach of mainstream services if it means that the welfare state will reach its full - practical rather than ideological - potential (Fraser 2003: 267).

Arguably, England's caravan-dwelling communities are some of the groups who continue to slip through the welfare net, perceived as non-contributors or participants in illicit activities. The problem here is that despite the current policy discourses that seem to reassert caravan-dwellers' rights for a decent standard of living, the rhetoric over the past five years has not been consistent, indicating that political will and ideology - both heavily imbued with values (Hawkesworth 2006: 161) - are strongly influenced by public constructions of vulnerability and need in dominant discourses. For instance it has been claimed that: 'Gypsies and Travellers were expected to provide for themselves but many lacked the means to do so,' (DCLG 2007: 11), and: '[S]ome amongst the settled community may take the view the Gypsies and Travellers "play the system" to get away with actions that would not be tolerated for other parts of the community,' (DCLG 2007: 18). In 2010 TTO reported:

'When yesterday's edition of the Sunday Express hit the shelves, word spread quickly through the community that the tabloids were rubbing their hands at the latest wave of legislation designed to make life even harder for Britain's Gypsies and Travellers. "GYPSY CAMP CRACKDOWN" was the front-page message, and Travellers were warned that "the good times are over." If journalists think it's been good times for our community in recent years then reality must have passed them by,' (TTO 2010c: 1-2).

In the same year, protesters in the English village of Meriden took a stand against the caravan-dwelling families who had recently arrived, feeling that their own 'human rights were infringed' (TTO 2010d: 1). An article in the *Daily Express* demonstrates perfectly the concept and reality of ethical narratives in contested landscapes by reporting:

'Patsy is part of a group of villagers trying to stop a gypsy development on a beautiful meadow in the once peaceful community of Meriden [...] "There seems to be one law for them and another for us," says Patsy [...] "We also handed in a letter of protest signed by West Midlands MEP Nikki Sinclair." Ms Sinclair said: "It is obvious to everyone that in this instance the settled community of Meriden has had its right to a private and family life fundamentally breached by this unethical attempt at development. Not only that but the planning system and laws put in place leave people feeling powerless and frustrated."' (Webster 2010: 1).

By 2011, a policy strategy draft stated that: '[T]he Government wants to tackle unauthorised development in all its forms. It is clear that it will not tolerate abuse of the planning system,' (DCLG 2011b: 13). It is clear from the quotes taken from document two and TTO that for some members of the caravan-dwelling community, having 'the means' and access to accommodation has been difficult. Families without stable homes have experienced additional difficulties, such as poorer health and lower educational achievements. It is made clear by these examples and the following two that certain members of society feel that caravan-dwelling families "play the system" in order to enjoy "good times". In particular, the Meriden protesters claim that planning law is unfairly implemented as fair as caravan-dwelling communities are concerned.

The piece by Fiona Webster for the *Daily Express* conjures a typical 'beautiful' and 'peaceful' rural image, destroyed by the wandering undesirables. The article is an ideal example of how *meta* narratives express the experiences and expectations of dominant social agency, as well as how this can influence and become part of local politics and subsequently policy. Narratives essentially tell us about an event or a series of events, which have led to the deviation of the natural order of things (see 3.1). Webster first presents to the reader how things used to be as how they should be - 'a beautiful meadow in the once peaceful community'. Webster goes on to elaborate that the way things are is not how they should be by showing empathy towards the protesters while conjuring more pleasant and comforting imagery: 'It's not hard to see why the protesters feel so protective. Meriden is set against the rolling countryside in the exact centre of England [...]' (2010: 1). The quotes from protesters that she chooses for her story are typical

examples of the preoccupation some members of society have with the nature of the planning system as well as their misguided perceptions of caravan-dwelling families.

These quotes also reveal a “them versus us” mentality, casting caravan-dwellers as “them” and house-dwellers as “us”. More importantly it is the “us” and “our” view that ultimately counts when deciding how “everyone” in society should live. The “us” has a right to “private family life” and also to be counted as a local, political voice, as Sinclair is exclusionary in her statement that “It is obvious to everyone [...]” Evidently, it is not obvious to the families living in the contested meadow, however these families are the “they” and “they” do not have an influence in this matter, because “they” are not represented of Sinclair’s ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 2006: 6). The consequence of deviating from how things *should* be, results in an “unethical development” and the rights of house-dwellers being “breached”. There is no discussion whatsoever in Webster’s article about the rights or experiences of the families who had settled in the meadow; instead the house-dwellers of the village are framed as the vulnerable victims. To be more specific, the protesters feel “powerless and frustrated” as is illustrated in another quote from the article: “[T]his used to be a beautiful, peaceful part of the village. Now they’re taking that away from us,” (Webster 2010: 1). Despite caravan-dwellers facing more social exclusion and discrimination than any other minority group (EHRC 2010: 231) here they are shown to provide the source of frustration and powerlessness for the villagers of Meriden, at least according to the accounts seen here.

This form of narrative, which is heavily imbued with ethics, culminates in the second policy passage provided above, which comments on ‘abuse of the planning system’. Notwithstanding lack of access to land and arguable discrimination towards caravan-dwelling communities within the planning system, the focus in the document is on the abuses of the system caravan-dwellers carry out, and is therefore in line with public perceptions of caravan-based lifestyles and preoccupations with planning rights. This examples illustrates for us how ethical narratives, political decisions and policy discourses overlap and how various groups in society can be constructed in both processes as either vulnerable victim in need of protection or the abusive perpetrator in need of punishment.

9.2 Environmental Awareness

Many values were communicated during interviews and respect for the environment – which has implications for the right way of using land as living space – was one that reoccurred several times for a variety of reasons. The condition and location of private and authorised sites in relation to the availability of land was raised as an environmental issue in interviews with caravan-dwellers. The final

enclosures of common lands took place throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s followed by the failure of many LAs in England to provide adequate caravan sites. A pattern of sites emerged in inaccessible locations to those on foot. LC1 argues: “[W]e actually put the sites where people wanted to be,” whilst site residents argue: “You are definitely isolated up here [...] compared to in a house.” These two quotes, which refer to sites located in areas with different district councils reveals two different organisational approaches to implementation of environmental policy. The first quote illustrates the willingness of councils and – presumably by association – communities to allow families to remain on land established as their home when allocating land for the building of an LA site. However, it is not to say that access to the site in question is either convenient or safe as more modern developments have taken place on the land around the dwelling such as the building of a busy by-pass.

The second quote by Emma refers to the pot-holed lane her local council had refused to allow to be repaired with tarmac for conservation reasons. The LA also refused to help residents repair the road on account of the fact the residents had chosen to live there; in other words the families’ lack of access to services and the rest of the community due to decreased use of the road was not the problem of the LA, since the road maintenance should be the responsibility of the residents.

The expectation that transient individuals and groups would be able to dispose of their waste properly if living on a LA site – rather than by the side of the road with no waste facilities - was one of the main influencing factors in the design of the 1968 Act (Adams et al. 1975: 18-22). Growing concerns since the 1960s and 1970s over endangered species, pollution and loss of natural features of the landscape have fuelled numerous conservation initiatives, which in turn have led to the government sanctioned usage of *environmental impact assessments* before building can be carried out, increasing limitations of what type of land can be built upon (cf. Garb et al. 2007). The prominent belief (as was illustrated by the residents of Meriden) is that communities should value the natural, surrounding environment and do their utmost to take care of it. Other areas that do not boast treasured natural characteristics are reserved for large-scale development, as LC1 hinted: “We got plenty of land that can be developed and that’s why we’re going for growth”. Nonetheless, whilst certain caravan-dwelling families indicated human need should not be disregarded for the conservation of land, they also illustrated we should value our natural environment and do our best to preserve it.

Organisational values regarding the environment are reflected in legislation and anti-social behaviour policy. While throwing rubbish in the street is punishable with a fine, fly-tipping is also illegal for all members of the community. In order to

ensure individuals do not dispose of their waste ineffectively, councils ensure that rubbish is collected regularly. There is a strict protocol on exactly how to present waste on a specific day. Communities are also provided with designated sites for leaving certain items that waste personnel are unable to collect, and in more recent times, households have been provided with colour-coded wheelie-bins in order to separate their waste according to material for recycling. Homes typically have one bin for general waste, one bin for food and garden waste and a third bin for paper, plastic and tins (FDC 2011: 1). Households are expected to dispose of their glass independently, with each parish having at least one glass disposal unit available for public use (ibid). Thus there is no excuse for anyone to not dispose of all the waste they generate in and around their home accordingly since the district council has taken every measure to ensure there are the means to do so. The reason for this lay not only in increasing awareness in environmental issues associated with not disposing waste efficiently - for instance, the spread of disease from the contamination of land and water (DCLG 2010: 16-19). In policy documents, the environment is mentioned in reference to waste collection; for example:

'The Government's good practice guidance on site design provides valuable information on factors that should be considered when developing a new Gypsy and Traveller site to ensure [...] well-organised and legal waste disposal and discourage fly-tipping [...]', (DCLG 2010: 16).

This same document goes on to state: 'The Environment Protection Act 1990 [...] provides the main powers to deal with fly-tipping and can be used by local authorities, the Environmental Agency and the Police,' (DCLG 2010: 17). Unauthorised waste disposal (or fly-tipping) is indicated here to be a threat to the environment, as well as going hand-in-hand with 'Gypsy and Traveller' households on unauthorised sites, as shown in other documents: 'Problems with access to waste disposal services are one simple cause of fly-tipping by Gypsies and Travellers,' (DCLG 2007: 37). Green Belt land is also considered to be under threat by caravan sites in policy discourses. One document claims that:

'Circular 01/2006 states that new sites in the Green Belt are "normally inappropriate development" [...] The inclusion of the word "normally" could give rise to applications by travellers being treated more favourably than applications from members of the settled community,' (DCLG 2011b: 19).

It is later suggested in the text that the word "normally" be removed from further site allocation strategies to ensure 'fairness in the planning system.' A later policy document simply claims that: 'Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development,' (DCLG 2012: 5).

These 'special circumstances' are not elaborated on in the document, leaving them open to debate and interpretation by local planning bureaucrats. While the special circumstances that would warrant access and development of Green Belt land are left ambiguous, what is quite clear through use of language is the ethical nature of debates surrounding use of land. The terms 'fairness' and 'harmful' are utilised here when discussing planning decision-making as well as land use, implying that there are right and wrong (or good and bad) ways to access landscapes and treat the environment. This is being decided by policy drafters in central government, who authored documents such as *Planning for Traveller Sites* (2011), and *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (2012). However, the *Localism Act* (2011) gives LAs and central government the right to decide what the special circumstances should be in order to allow access to Green Belt land or tolerate fly-tipping.

Such categories are part of the already extensive list of planning requirements to develop land to be inhabitable. For instance, land would need to be dug up, perhaps gravelled or concreted, fences erected and electricity, water and sewage facilities plumbed in for the site to be suitable for a family. In order to carry out such actions, one would need to legally attain planning permission from their LA. Normally, planning permission can only be granted if the land is categorised as Brown Belt, however when the RSS was introduced, some regions chose to interpret the urgency for sites as more important than conserving Green Belt land: 'Local Development Documents should consider [...] the alteration of Green Belt boundaries where necessary to make required levels of provision' (EERA 2008: 6).

Where some Pavee and Romani families have bought Green Belt land before applying for planning permission and, LC1 stated: "We refuse planning permission, and then [...] we'd use enforcement powers to shift them off [...] it's up to them to do what they like with [the land]." In other cases, families are well aware of the distinction between Green and Brown Belt land, however do not agree with the categorisation certain pieces of land have been assigned: "Granddad [...] wanted to build himself a house [...] and they wouldn't give him permission [the LA said] "You're on Green Belt" [...] which it's not! Because it's houses either side of that piece of land [sic]." – Interview 2010.

Ruby's account of her family's struggle to develop on their own land shows the perceived inconsistencies regarding the categorisation of Green or Brown Belt land, which are supposed to be implemented with the aim of protecting countryside

(Elcock 1986: 22; Grayson 2010: 3; Twinch 2010: 1) and 'having regard to [...] the environment' (SCDC 2010: 9). More recently, since the change in government, policy plans have included: 'We will align planning policy for traveller sites much more opening with policies for other forms of housing and in doing so will provide greater environmental protection,' (DCLG 2011b: 3) as well as: 'When considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to [...] sites being [...] soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment,' (DCLG 2012: 6-7), and: '[P]rovide a settled base that reduces the need for long-distance traveller and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment,' (DCLG 2012: 4).

Rhetoric is presented in the most up to date planning policies and implies a more mainstream approach to building caravan sites in areas apparently closer to communities, which in turn would improve access to public services, ability to participate in community life and opportunities to take up citizen rights and responsibilities. However, this rhetoric is couched in language that points towards environmentally friendly aspirations. Aunty had her own interpretation:

"The council need to find land [long pause] and when they say: "We haven't got any land" - there is land! Even in these special circumstances [pause] even if it's in the countryside or if it's Green Belt land or whatever - this could be looked at." – Interview 2009 (emphasis added).

What is insinuated by Aunty's statement is that whenever LAs say they "haven't got any land", the situation equates to a special circumstance, in which case, they should seriously consider Green Belt land as accommodation for caravan-dwelling families. Above examples claim that (especially unauthorised) caravan sites are a breach on the social rights of house-dwellers for "private, family life", whilst these policy examples demonstrate how caravan sites instigate a breach to the respect of environmental issues.

Most interestingly, an insight into lived experience of the planning system or the environmental issues faced by caravan-dwelling families is missing from the policy-based discussion on what is harmful and what is fair, illustrating once again how exclusionary dominant and public discourses can be towards minority voices and interests. Caravan-dwelling groups were critical of sanctions they argued encroached on their livelihood and subsequently their well-being. For instance, references to the longstanding enclosure policies were made by older members of the caravan-dwelling Romani community such as Aunty, who felt these policies had caused unjust harm to the lifestyle of their families:

“[A]t that time we didn’t have to steal [...] the Gypsy [...] were really good, skilful people that knew how to earn a pound and they didn’t need to steal. But when the enclosure happened the games people [...] They were poachers themselves [...] They had the law on their side. So if they caught you, or your man or your boy, they’d drag them, you’d have to drag them back, ‘cause they’d beat them within an inch of their lives.” – Interview 2009.

With “enclosure” Aunty is referring to a series of policy actions that were put in place to restrict the movement and incur settlement of transient groups. Aunty - who grew up during the various phases of these policy initiatives - states her frustration that families were prevented, albeit indirectly, from providing for themselves by the restrictions of land accessibility. The *Hunting Act* (2004), which incriminates all hunters unless they have an official pardon (UKPGA 2004: 2) has left some members of the mobile Romani community outraged at the prospect that the rights of animals should come before the needs of humans, especially humans who are already socially marginalised and at times located quite a distance from a supermarket:

“Because some people [want to] be vegetarians, and some people think it’s against the animals’ rights for men to go hunting we’re [going to] stop other men going hunting. What we should do is let the country people go hunting as they’ve always ever done – all of their life [...] as God intended him to do.” – Interview 2009.

Here we are introduced to the conflicting values of those who have essentially given animals an extended domesticated role within society as well as transferring their values into [legal] norms, with those who would prefer for animals to remain in their “God given” place (Franklin 2001: 3). Julia’s family in particular were against the banning of hunting and the implementation of the enclosure acts due to the potentially detrimental effects for caravan-dwelling peoples, but were also against large-scale development and discriminatory planning. Arguably, there is some overlap between the restrictions posed by hunting laws and the restrictions in planning and development laws, all affecting the ‘traditional’ way of life of caravan-dwelling Romani families, although it might be too simplistic to state that hunting and land restrictions are all that this issue boils down to. However, anthropological research has shown that farming and elite classes alike, have also suffered from more recent and specific bans on farming, due to losses of sources of livelihood and leisurely pursuit respectively (cf. Hurn 2007). Aunty also showed disdain for the domestication of animals, explaining that:

“When you travelled there was everything in its place [...] we wasn’t allowed to keep a dog unless the dog could keep us [sic]. There wasn’t no such thing as pets [sic].

We had a very respectful love of animals that was non-sentimental. You see, everything had a job to do and it was vital.” – Interview 2009.

By claiming that “we wasn’t allowed to keep a dog unless the dog could keep us”, Auntie implies that animals were only kept in her family if they had a functional role. They fulfilled a “non-sentimental” role that did not warrant domestication, in spite of the “respectful love” Auntie claims her family held for animals. However, as with hunting, there is room for debate and discussion over the way animals should or should not be kept, especially depending on the kind of animal. Furthermore, documents specifically relating to caravan-dwellers seek to manage their relationship with ‘live-stock’: ‘The settled community can be adversely affected by the way in which livestock, particularly horses, are handled by Gypsies and Travellers on a small number of sites,’ (DCLG 2010: 23), and: ‘Some local authorities that experience straying livestock on a regular basis run “swoop and impound” operations, in order to control the movement of straying livestock [...] that are allowed to run wild’, (DCLG 2010: 24).

It is made clear in these quotations that ‘livestock, particularly horses’ can be burdensome to members of the so-called ‘settled’ (or house-dwelling) community and that LAs have methods to manage cases where livestock is not being kept under proper control. While the retaining of livestock and access to authorised waste disposal may be restricted, families living on unauthorised encampments do not always have access to electricity or heating facilities and so may make bonfires to provide light and heating, which in some cases is annoying to neighbouring communities and considered anti-social. Document five notes that:

‘Other statutory nuisance potentially emanating from Gypsy and Traveller sites might include smoke, fumes or gases emitted from premises [...] where a local authority is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, an abatement notice can be served. Where there is failure to comply with the notice a person may be liable to a fine,’ (DCLG 2010: 22).

As has been seen with unauthorised developments, in the face of application discrimination or lack of enough pitches, families can be punished for causing harm to the environment through the use of ‘smoke, fumes or gases’, without mention of why families are using certain forms of energy. The passage does advise ‘an abatement notice’ in the first instance of a ‘statutory nuisance’, perhaps giving the impression that policy drafters are aware of the difficult circumstances certain families face and therefore, trying to give them a fair chance before punishment. However, the interpretation of a ‘nuisance’ is left with the LA and the ‘settled’ community, who are constructed as those who will suffer the ‘nuisance emanating

from Gypsy and Traveller sites'. Also, the document claims a 'notice can be served' arguably giving the LA the choice to decide when a warning will be given before a fine and when it will not.

It seems preoccupations with upholding the value of environmental awareness has lead authorities to target specific minority groups with policies related to their lifestyle, in order to monitor their behaviour (Grayson 2010: 3). For example, the DCLG's *Guidance on managing anti-social behaviour related to Gypsies and Travellers* (2010) – printed on 75% recycled paper – was commissioned to 'curb unacceptable behaviour by groups of unauthorised campers' or 'nuisance neighbours' for the good of their surrounding communities and land (DCLG 2010: 11). Certain LA individuals expressed that upholding the conflicting needs and values of the public exacerbating, and here we see the conflict between the environment related values of some members of society and the needs of another (DCLG 2007: 19). There is yet to be a policy document that recognises typical Romani environmental awareness values and seeks to protect and uphold them. Although their lifestyle is considered unconventional, and the appearance of caravan sites is often considered unsightly or an "obstruction to the landscape" as an informant once claimed, caravan-dwelling families also take pride in their homes. As a value, cleanliness of the home and the surrounding environment is widely considered by anthropologists, gypsologists and historians to be a corner-stone of Romani culture across the world (cf. Adams et al. 1975 and Okely 1983). Aesthetically pleasing living spaces are of equal importance to modern caravan-dwellers as to the middle-class house-dweller (see appendix a, figures 6 and 8). Mary Ann McCarthy (a caravan-dweller) told one journalist reporting on her home: "It used to be a dirty scrap yard, but we cleaned it up [...] All we want is to be left alone" (Mary Ann McCarthy quoted by Lanchin 2010: 1). Within this research, residents of private and unauthorised developments claimed that attempts had been made to create a surrounding area that would be a nice, spacious and safe place to live permanently, for their children and grandchildren and yet LAs have refused the necessary planning permission to make this happen. Mr. Murphy described his accommodation circumstances as: "It's not free and if you look out it's not very pleasant. We're not allowed to do nothing here [sic]. That little plot next door I got that from my nephew and [wanted] a playing field for my grandchildren, and they said I can't do it." - Interview 2009.

Mr. Murphy's claim that "It's not free" is not an economic reference, but rather a reference to the decision-making choices he feels he does not have with regards to the surroundings of his home. Here he talks about making a playing field

for his grandchildren next to his home but the LA have said he “can’t do it” implying another dimension to the extent of control applied to caravan-dwelling families from LAs as well as another way to think about environmental values, as there is the implication of space management (Lipsitz 2007: 20). Shelly elaborated on the conditions of her family being granted planning permission and access to their private plot: “We’ve [got to] put so many trees around that have to grow so many feet, before we’re allowed to stay there [...] so we’re not such an obstruction to the [long pause] public [sic].” – Interview 2010.

Evidence from media resources, policy documents and informants suggests that caravan-dwelling families are not seen as part of the “public”, therefore their actions and presence can be construed as an “obstruction” or ‘nuisance’ to the public, and measures need to be taken to manage the possibility of this. Arguably, caravan-dwelling families are viewed as possible obstructions because their lifestyle departs from the normality the so-called “public” approves of.

9.3 Educational Values

The value of education can be viewed as both a means to an end for the encouragement of assimilation, and can also be viewed as beneficiary to families if they integrate within local communities successfully. LC1 claimed within his district education was one of a number of priorities: “[The area] will be able to offer good high quality homes at a reasonable price with jobs and opportunities on the doorstep. Good education, good health facilities, good infrastructure - that’s what’ll get people to come here.” He went on to state:

“The new generation of Traveller parents are keen to get their kids some kind of education [...] To me in many ways that’s not a choice, because the law of this country says that kids should be educated between the ages of 5 years old and 16 years old [...] Life’s more complicated nowadays and I think they recognise that children need a mainstream education to cope with the modern society. I mean driving a car, you’ve [got to] pass a theory test; well if they can’t read and write you can’t do that.” - Interview 2010.

The above quotes illustrate that the local councillor views educational facilities as an asset an area should be able to provide and that everyone should benefit from. Above, the councillor also presents arguments that suggest literacy skills are necessary to adhere to the law as well as become a fully functioning citizen (EHRC 2010: 300). Arguably, as parents within the caravan-dwelling community alluded to, for a minority group who are generally left behind in mainstream culture, education can also provide a source of liberation and empowerment (cf. hooks 2004: 40 and Lawler 2008: 56). LC1 states on the one hand that from his experience

“Traveller parents” do want at least a basic education for their children, while on the other he argues that where families are reluctant to send their children to school, the council should intervene.

Regardless of the function education undoubtedly plays in caravan site provision and allocation, it was important in its own way to all informants of this research. Of course, formal education is a legal requirement and along with the venture to clear up littered, roadside camps, ensuring all mobile caravan-dwelling children - regardless of their ethnic background - would be educated between the ages of four and eleven was of paramount importance to the achievements of the 1968 *Caravan Sites Act* and other policies caravan-dwellers had been subjected to beforehand (Adams et al. 1975: 7). The value of a single educational curriculum in England has been the foundation for early 20th century legislation, making education free for all (Gladstone 1999: 42). Parents can be prosecuted for not sending their children to school and establishing other educational arrangements for them. Adams et al. argues that part of the overall objective of the *Caravan Sites Act* (1968) was indirectly how to curb travelling within caravan-dwelling groups and more directly how to prevent illegal camping by the side of the road (1975: 22), with the hope that prior obstructions to educating children being brought up on the road would be removed when their parents settled down. The idea that some families had other issues with conventional schooling that would lead them to prefer educating their children themselves was not accounted for at the time.

The gradual and additional acknowledgement that those families who did want to send their children to school were prevented from doing so due to racially motivated discrimination has led to the formation a number of educational agencies aimed at improving access to educational services. The Cambridge Racial Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) for example aids primary and secondary schools in developing equality and diversity policy and well as undertaking their own investigations on behalf of ethnic minority students where claims of discrimination have been made (SCDC 2010: 27). Of the many issues Romani and Pavee parents have with formal education, racial discrimination has been at the forefront of their reasons for not sending their children to school, as claimed by EP3: “Especially in [the county] their kids are in school, the same as anybody else [long pause] they’ve got the racism and all the rest of it that goes on, they have all these issues which is what CREDS deals with.” – Interview 2010.

A striking example of the discrimination faced by caravan-dwelling children within educational settings has been given in 8.2 by TLO1, who described the removal of many house-dwelling children from a school once local caravan-dwelling

children joined. Policy text examples were also given there (but not repeated here) regarding the connection between a lack of sufficient accommodation for caravan-dwelling families and a lack of educational achievement. Despite the discrimination she faced at school (see 7.3 and 8.3), Ruby went on to attend 16th form college and send her own children to school. However, she tried to make sure they would avoid the discrimination she faced at school, as she recalled:

“Them teachers are still there and if they did that to me, 25 odd year ago do [sic] that still sticks into the back of your mind [...] I sent my little one to a school [...] where nobody knew who I was [...] It was down to the governors ‘cause obviously the governors know my family - we’re a big Traveller family in the area and [long pause] it was playground chit chat basically [...] People go home and kids over hear things and that’s what it had stemmed from when we got the truth out of it and [...] my little one had got beaten up.” – Interview 2010 (emphasis added).

Thus, bad treatment from peers and teachers alike has made some parents reluctant to send their child to school (7.3), when the alternative to keep their child safely at home is also an option. The counter-argument – provided by LC1 - is due to the nature of modern-day English society, everyone needs some basic level of literacy and numeracy skills in order to get on well in life. On the other hand, the exclusion faced by children makes one wonder how necessary the experience of a formal education really is. EP1 explained the hassles and exclusions associated with education for transient families:

*“If they come back they’ve not got a place there anymore so you have to start with admissions and it could take another [pause] month to get them into school. [Parents] get so fed up with it and some parents [...] aren’t the sort of parent that are [going to] really make a fuss [...] they don’t bother to tell anybody when they’re back, they don’t bother to go into school and you can **completely** understand why and it also gives a huge message to the parent and the child that they weren’t really wanted at the school in the first place, otherwise they’d have kept their place.”* –Interview 2010 (emphasis added).

Here, EP1 demonstrates that with some schools there is an admissions issue for children not settled in one place all year round and she insinuates the reason access is made difficult for the children is due to their background. Consequently, parents are discouraged from sending their children to school at all. As illustrated above, Dennis and Emma described their daughter’s premature rejection from the educational system when planning permission for their second plot of land was denied, making the exclusion of children of certain backgrounds more explicit.

The above examples of discrimination indicate an issue with accessibility to education as far as certain members of society are concerned. Whatever the value of education may be, the fact seems to remain that certain individuals are not viewed as worthy of the benefits of education. The other side of this accessibility issue is that even for parents eager to comply with education laws, caravan sites are not always located suitably so that children can walk safely to school. In fact, when pedestrian safety is not so much at stake, it can be the case that the caravan site is simply too far away from the nearest school for a child to be expected to walk. The home situation of the family may not always allow for a parent to be able to take their child to school each day, and the thus school is seen as an unnecessary hassle. Of course, caravan-dwelling families are not alone in feeling like this; however, like home recycling, LAs have thought of a solution for any child caught in such a situation.

The *Education Act* (1944) eradicated school fees for all and pledged to provide more opportunities to pupils based upon merit rather than class, opening up educational opportunities (Gladstone 1999: 42-43). Whilst this policy change reflected the sentiment to reinvigorate the British public after the horrors of the Second World War, the attitude of the time has become internalised and normalised since then. Education remains important for all, but not in order to for the government to motivate general population; rather so that we socially motivate and mobilise ourselves (Fraser 2003: 289). A major part of making mainstream schooling more accessible to all would later involve policies stating that children of school age are eligible for free transport to and from school if they live a distance considered to be too far to walk or if they have physical disabilities (Jewell 1975: 37). Since the original introduction of such measures from central government, LAs have re-interpreted such policies to make them relevant to their own communities (cf. CCC 2011).

From an obligatory stand-point, LAs are expected to aid citizens to make the best of the opportunities available to them and also have the best quality of life; basic literary and numeracy skills gained from formal education can help lead to such aims. Caravan-based communities are aware of these factors, although in the past it was thought that caravan-dwellers were dubious and ignorant about conventional education. Although there is some research to suggest that widespread resistance to formal education for children was once the case within some caravan-dwelling families (cf. Smith and Marsh 2009), since the 1970s there has been equally sufficient evidence that many families have since submitted to LA pressure and

encouragement by settling in one place and registering their children with local schools (cf. Taylor 2008).

Having said that, there is no single approach or attitude to education from family to family regardless of cultural background. For example, Aunty showed immense pride in her education: “I used to read to the children, there wasn’t many that could read like me because I was a clever little clogs and I started early at school.” Mr. Murphy also asserted that: “Education is important for all Travellers in this country. Without education you’re lost.”

However, life skills were also viewed as crucial to the development of young people, even at the expense of further educational qualifications. By life skills, references were often made to employment, caring for the family as well as understanding Romani culture, as equally important forms of education for youngsters to formal schooling. Ruby explained that her family decided she should leave school at the age of 11 before returning to college at 16: “I only went to school until I was 11 [...] then I went back into college at 16 [...] it was like: “You’ve done your schooling, you can read and write,” you know? I would have actually gone on.” - Interview 2010.

Here, Ruby communicates that although she would have preferred to continue her education, her parents felt that she had learned enough in school since she could “read and write”. LC1 seemed to agree that individuals could benefit from learning more practical skills: “[T]here’s too much emphasis on getting kids into university. You can’t put 50, 60, 70 per cent of people and turn [them] into academics. It’s not practical!” - Interview 2010.

In addition, insinuations were made by caravan-dwelling Romani families of a fear for the immoral lessons children may become exposed to in state schools, thus preferring to educate their children at home:

“As each one of my daughters has got to 11 I took [them] out of school [sic]. The simple reason is [...] young women was coming out there expecting babies; they was coming out there on drugs; they was coming out there smoking; they was coming out there drinking [sic]. Now are they learning education or are they ruining their life completely? I wasn’t against education, but I am disgusted about the way Gorger people are letting their standards drop.” - Interview 2009.

There are parents of all backgrounds who probably also feel that their personal values are threatened by outside influences. However, while Julia might condemn the potentially negative influences schools might offer her children, she did not deny the value of education itself or the important role it plays in a young person’s development. To argue that caravan-dwelling communities and families do

not value education or want to send their children to school seems to be a bold and misguided statement, considering almost every caravan-dwelling informant had sent or intended to send their children to school at some point. Such a perception becomes distrusting, especially taking into account the difficulties families face just gaining access to educational institutions for their children.

9.4 Notions of Home and Family Values

Kinship values inherent in our understanding of family are important to all societies across the world. However, family values were not explicitly referred to in policy documents or by bureaucrats, policymakers or councillors, although vague references to family life were made. References to family life were central to several of the discussions with caravan-dwellers on notions of home. For example, Mr. Murphy expressed a preoccupation with building a playing field next to his home so that he could be with his grandchildren more often. Ruby also described her experiences living with her grandparents:

“The plot which is now [area’s] site belonged to my granddad. The whole family lived on there. My dad’s got seven brothers and sisters. We all lived on there, Granddad and Granny, plus any other Traveller that had nowhere to go, all went on there.” – Interview 2010.

Here, Ruby communicates the strong sense of kinship she shared with her extended family as well as other members of her community as she grew up with her “whole family” and “any other Traveller that had nowhere to go”. Both cases illustrate how important it was for the research participants to stay close to their families. Aunty also recalled a woman from her childhood (who she was not related to) whom everyone simply called “Mother”:

“So I came home from school one day and this woman was sitting around the fire. Her name was Mother - she had another name [long pause] I don’t remember what it was because everybody called her Mother [...] I’ve kind of modelled myself on her, without even knowing it really and the same with my mother and father.” – Interview 2009.

Arguably, through the relationship she had with her, Aunty saw “Mother” as a role model for her future, in a similar way to how she saw her own parents. She describes in detail, the loving a motherly way she was cared for by this lady one day after school:

“I said, “I don’t fit in anywhere really,” and she laughed and she looked at me and she pointed and me with her finger [...] she gave me pudding and tea and she told me those lovely words about [sic]: “Don’t ever try to be like them, be proud of who you are” [...] I’ve never forgotten it [...] it meant the world to me.” – Interview 2009.

Whilst taking the socio-historical context into consideration, this personal narrative epitomises a caring and familiar environment, where the meaning of “family” extends beyond nuclear units and blood ties. Furthermore, separations between family members due to lack of authorised plot space can cause emotional hardships to the individuals involved as one interview revealed:

Dennis: The youngest brother’s not here anymore and the sister’s moved away [...] at the moment ‘cause there’s no room.

Julia: But she wants to come back and it’s heartbreaking to see this young girl split up from her father when her father needs her the most.

Dennis: She’s living in a chalet with her other half [...] somewhere. We never really hardly see each other anymore, we used to see each other a lot, because she was obviously here but then it come to the crunch [sic]. – Interview 2010.

In addition to his brother and sister leaving, Dennis and Emma discussed at length the challenge they were faced with to stay on his father’s land and get the planning permission to build a second plot for their own young family. According to Emma, moving away to another site was “the option that we’re not willing to do” due to their intention to keep the family together.

As we can see above, the importance of the extended family for the research participants is communicated against a backdrop of LA contempt or misunderstanding, depending on which way one chooses to interpret the situation. Mr. Murphy was prevented from building a playground for his grandchildren; Ruby and her immediate family were evicted from her grandfather’s land; and Emma and Dennis continue their battle with the LA to stay with Craig. Aunty demonstrated the likelihood that LA officials simply do not understand alternative family units, recalling the beginnings of her first privately owned caravan site:

*“The enforcement officer used to keep coming and seeing me [...] He said: “Now look Mrs! Your hospitality is second to none [...] but the fact remains, you’ve got 21 families in that field!” [giggling] [...] But there wasn’t 21 **families**, there was 21 **caravans**, but we do look a lot don’t we [sic]?”* – Interview 2009 (emphasis added).

In this quote, one can see how the “enforcement officer” mistook 21 caravans for 21 families, living on Aunty’s land. With her correction of his estimate, she reveals the potentially larger size of the extended families, travelling and stopping together. Since Aunty established her site officially, policy documents have

taken note of the possibility of extended family groups living together on caravan pitches. For instance: 'Some communities of gypsies and travellers live in extended family groups and often travel as such,' (OPDM 2006: 7). Other policy documents are more vague regarding the idea that extended family groups may live and travel together, as seen in policy definitions of 'pitch' such as: 'a space on site for one family. On average, each pitch will have 1.7 caravans stationed on it,' (DCLG 2007: 66) and: 'A pitch is an area of land where a Gypsy or Traveller household can reside; typically this may contain a building, parking space and one or more caravans. The average number of caravans per pitch is currently estimated as 1.7,' (EERA 2008: 15).

A more comprehensive explanation of family life for some caravan-dwelling communities is featured in document four, which claims some families: 'still want to live in a caravan, surrounded by their extended family' (SCDC 2010: 8). Documents two and three are textually more simplistic in their implications of caravan-dwelling family units. However, their front covers illustrate a more complex narrative of caravan site life. The image from *The Road Ahead* (see appendix b, figure 3) shows three children looking out of the window of a caravan, perhaps signifying family as mother, father and children. The images used on the *Draft Policy: Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England* (see appendix b, figure 4) show people of numerous age groups and are disconnected perhaps indicating a broader community life, or reflecting the wider concepts of family within caravan-dwelling groups. Interpretations of the meanings behind the images on the covers of these documents are reinforced when also reading the quotes from the respective documents.

While policy texts and lived experience narratives do show a desire amongst caravan-dwelling communities to retain family ties in their living environments, it is suggested that through the definition of a pitch, a more limited understanding of family units may apply in policy action. While document two does claim that: 'feedback from Gypsies and Travellers suggests that most would choose to live on small, authorised, privately run sites,' (DCLG 2007: 13), the concept of the extended family is absent here. Possibly, extended family groups living together is a far-fetched reality to LA bureaucrats and therefore caravan pitches are not designed to accommodate them. It is noted in *The Road Ahead* – and other recent reports - that overcrowding of caravan sites and the establishment of unauthorised developments and camps are a direct result of too few LA spaces or accepted planning applications for private sites (DCLG 2007: 13 and Hargreaves and Brindly 2011: 52). Nonetheless, little attention is paid to the possibility that this is also caused by the

growths and movements of extended families, despite policy-based warnings from the Department of the Environment (DoE) in the early 1990s: '[I]t must be noted that [...] the right of gypsies to a nomadic lifestyle, and hence [...] numbers in any LA would fluctuate over time. Natural increases will lead to further changes in site requirements [...] The situation should be regularly reviewed,' (DoE 1991: 4). Aunty revealed more details about the possible nature of an extended family life:

"This has happened organically really [...] one of these fellas said: "My aunt and uncle [want to] pull on." And I said: "Well, I need to interview [them] if they're not troublesome and if I can manage [them] I'll have [them]." [...] So they moved on [...] and the next thing you know, she said: "My daughter wants to pull on." And it was her daughter that came. The next thing you know, "My cousin wants to pull on." – Interview 2009.

None of the local authority officials interviewed during the research discussed the natural increases or changes to the size of pitches and sites as a factor for consideration in site management, pitch provision or in deciding what "appropriate accommodation" should be. PW1 commented:

"I think for Gypsies and Travellers to be accepted we need to make a clear stance um that [...] proves to the rest of the community that these people are entitled to [pause] clean, safe, appropriate accommodation like everyone else that lives in a house." – Interview 2010.

The term 'appropriate' is difficult to decipher depending on the family, however the definition of 'appropriate accommodation' seems to be defined on behalf of caravan-dwelling families in some policy texts, to only include immediate family, regardless of their circumstances. The impression given in discussions with caravan-dwelling families is that there is generally no separation between well-being (i.e. a good and safe home, access to mainstream services and being part of the community), and the family. Interviews illustrated that family life is part and parcel of their well-being. It is probably not the case that the bureaucrats and politicians disregard caravan-dwelling family values altogether – as has been illustrated by the imagery in policy documents, although it is arguable that LA officials may not personally relate to alternative conceptualisations of family life and thus unwittingly enact policies that directly fracture consangual homes, due to a lack of shared meaning of what family should be (Scott 2001: 13).

For LAs, the primary role of responsibility for the welfare and decent upbringing of children lies with their parents (Cooper 2008: 135), therefore explaining why more emphasis is placed on the 2.4 children family structure written into policy. However, caravan-dwelling groups do not consider their family units to

be limited to parents and children as seen above. The family unit is extended to aunts, uncles, grand-parents and cousins. However, if space is not provided for this, LAs can physically construct the meaning of family, while managing experiences.

9.5 Public Services and Integrity

Councillors were criticised by families in interviews for committing integrity violations, i.e. not fulfilling their organisational roles as expected, as well as making dishonest admissions to the public about their implementations of policy (cf. Lasthuizen 2011). In public management research, integrity is defined as ‘the quality of acting in accordance with relevant moral values, norms, and rules,’ (Lasthuizen 2011: 387). The implicit values associated with public service providers by the families mainly revolved around honesty and accountability as well as the motives behind decision-making. Some informants felt that those with power do not make good decisions, with Julia going as far as stating that politicians and members of LAs are “playing God” while making planning decisions for new caravan sites:

“They’re playing God! You have to put in a planning application and they decide on it and 95 per cent of the time the decision is ‘No’ because it’s like gold dust to get a planning application through [...] It’s like saying: “If you ask, you’re not [going to] get it.” – Interview 2009.

The quotation above relates directly to the life-changing decisions made regularly in planning offices, affecting the stability and well-being of families. In a later interview with Julia, she elaborated on her perception of the role LA officials play in caravan site provision:

“[Local authority officials] Sit behind their office, pretend to their friends: “Oh we’ve made provision!” They can pretend that they’ve got provision and nobody’s there to challenge [them] because the meetings are done behind closed doors and they’re all sitting down there agreeing with one another.” – Interview 2010.

This is sustained by PW1 who admitted to having very little contact with caravan-dwelling families, despite writing policies regarding their needs: “To be perfectly honest with you [...] unfortunately it’s turned out to be more [...] desk bound than anything else.” The reference in both quotes to planning offices and desks is another direct reference to the dislocation councillors and bureaucrats have with caravan-dwellers’ experiences when making decisions about their lives. In this respect, residents of private and council caravan sites were completely aware of the ethical nature of LA decision-making, and they communicated that they did not feel power was transferred through policy implementation in the right way.

More religious families who believed that “we should live by the laws God gave us” made further examples of this – implying that politicians do not, since they have the power to make laws, change laws or avoid them altogether. Furthermore, this interpretation of abuse of power is sustained by most informants, not only from but also working with caravan-dwelling families stating that they expect LAs and individuals with considerable political power to be accountable for their actions and fair with public spending: “If they’ve got all that money to spend on the area - the bus line which they reckon it’s not [going to] open for five years now [sic] surely they could give a little bit of cash, just to do this lane up? And we’d be happy as Larry!” – Interview 2010.

Dennis feels that the local council (who he refers to as “they”) should be able to spend public money on repairing the lane since large amounts of money have been spent elsewhere. In more recent years the public has been more demanding of proof of good or honest behaviour from LAs and more questioning of their role (Newman and Clarke 2009: 136-137).

Councillors were accused at many times in interviews of not doing enough for caravan-dwelling communities. When asked why they felt this was, all individuals replied that it has to do with maintaining power (see chapter seven). Quite aware of the amount of mainstream hostility directed towards them, families felt that local politicians valued their grass-roots supporters above the welfare of caravan-dwelling families. It was also presented by some that there was a more sinister side to why councillors and other LA administrators appeared to do so little for caravan-dwelling communities: “The only thing the council is using [...] is the power to evict, to torture and torment and not provide.” This statement may come across as biased, however it illustrates graphically the way every family who participated in the research seemed to feel about their local council. Having little contact and consultation with caravan-dwelling communities puts policymakers and bureaucrats in a position where they cannot be held accountable to the community itself when they make harmful decisions, as individuals do not know who to blame as they often are unaware of the extent of the policy process that has gone into influencing their day-to-day lives (O’Brien and Joyce 2011: 7). Practitioners defended the decisions they make, by listing the duties of their role within their communities. From TL01:

“I’m the only resource within the council that really has contact with the Traveller and Gypsy community [...] that can be anything from [...] finding new sites in the area [...] through the knowledge I have of the sites and the needs of the Traveller community [pause] and also [...] if there’s people who’s turned up on the side of the

road it's my job to go along and find out how long they're [going to] be there, make sure that all their welfare need's being dealt with." - Interview 2010. To LC2:

"[O]nce you're elected, you're elected to represent everyone [pause] so yes, of course it's important to ensure that the wishes of the majority are being taken on board, but you don't do that by also saying we sacrifice any particular group [...] This is why we have the criteria on planning [pause] you [got to] be fair!" - Interview 2010.

In the first quotation, TLO1 explains her perspective of her job description, which she undertakes alone within the organisation she works for. Whilst her colleagues were full of praise for the TLO's work within LA caravan communities, residents on private and unauthorised developments were less satisfied with her professional achievements. Returning to the case of the pot-holed road leading to several private plots, Julia spoke about the residents' relationship with TLO1: "I did get a meeting with her and it was more railroading her into having a meeting [...] and she hasn't got back to me yet. So I can't sing anybody's praises [...] When you look at all the organisations [...] they're all talk, all paperwork and no production." – Interview 2010. In the interview, Julia gives her perception of TLO1's job description to dismiss any recognition that the majority of councillors and officers knew how to do their job effectively as it takes "railroading" officials in order to get a meeting with them.

LC2's quote implies that planning strategies and decisions are unquestionably fair or transparent because councillors and MPs are aware of their political duties and the value of equal representation. LC1 also proclaimed his "duty" to ensure the welfare of all people living in his district, regardless of their background. In document four, values of the organisation are outlined as, 'Customer service; A commitment to improvement; Mutual respect; Trust,' (SCDC 2010: 13). The text goes on to state that its aims are:

"To put public involvement at the centre of everything the council does; To strive for a broad representation of residents; To be honest, open and transparent in communications with the public to ensure there is easy access to relevant and clear information," (SCDC 2010: 15).

Despite the values and aims articulated by employees of LAs or in organisational texts, not all of the families seemed to feel that LA officials could be trusted or were honest, as Julia expressed here: "Shouldn't they **admit** they haven't got spaces and should they go to court and tell their barristers that there was spaces available for you to go to and then realise it don't exist?" (emphasis added). Jim also recalled the beginning of his campaigning days:

*"It was a very nasty eviction that set me off [...] There were a group of New [Age] travellers that were occupying an abandoned county council farm [...] The police were there, a bloke did a bit of passive resistance [pause] hanging onto a gate - so police beat him up, put him in hospital. You know - I know the bloke! Also, I'd managed to get a TV crew there so I knew it was going on and a key thing to quieten these things down - get a bit of media coverage because the police don't get arsy [sic] in front of the cameras [pause] and the police inspector [...] concerned asked the media to leave [...] Now I rang him up to find out what was going on [...] I was very worried [...] 18 month old granddaughter in the middle of all of this [...] He told me: "Oh the travellers asked the media to leave." So he lied to me and [...] that was the trigger really. I mean, he was a policeman, quite happily lying about something [long pause] I think that was it - they didn't **matter!**" - Interview 2010 (emphasis added).*

Jim interpreted the policeman lying to him about the media crew leaving the eviction, which arguably resulted in his acquaintance being beaten up, as a sign that caravan-dwelling groups are not respected and therefore do not "matter" to LA officials. Mr. Murphy reflected this claim when he explained: "The council [...] said: "We'll tolerate you." **Tolerate** is like talking to a dog. So that's the situation we're in" (emphasis added).

Individuals were critical of the fact that their lives were effectively controlled by LA decision-making since such decisions rarely - in their opinions - made life better for them, as Dennis demonstrate below: "One of [the councillors] has said: "No, no, no," to everyone building and then his son's gone and built a big four bedroom house [...] because he's head councillor [...] How can he just say: "Yeah put that up there. Go for it, son.?""

This is another example of a family who did not find their local council to be 'honest, open and transparent in communications with the public,' especially in a case that would improve the family's standard of living. Dennis and Emma describe the preferential treatment from the head councillor to his son regarding planning permission as contributing further to the belief that caravan-dwelling families are discriminated against within the planning system. If there were commitments to improvement in policy, why are they not a lived reality for young families or older couples? Ultimately, the accountability and integrity these research participants argue is lacking in LAs relates to the motivation behind applying or not applying these values in actions and thereby is a matter of social equality and fairness.

9.6 Community Cohesion and Equality

Whether or not caravan-dwelling families are well integrated or accepted amongst their local communities, the examples provided above have demonstrated that there

is not enough provision of pitches and sites to accommodate the needs of caravan-dwelling families, regardless of ethnic background. In addition, if accommodation was provided effectively (i.e. in more practical and desirable locations), then access to services would not be the negative factor often coupled with inadequate caravan site provision in policy or community strategy documents and reports. One document notes that it aims to: 'Increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission,' (SCDC 2010: 11), and: 'Create and support sustainable, respectful, inclusive communities where Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health, and welfare provision,' (ibid: 19).

The issue of access and provision of mainstream services and facilities to all members of a community feeds directly into the value of decent living standards, which in turn relates back to the previous discussion of citizenship. If one is not considered to be a citizen then perhaps it does not matter where they live, what the conditions of their home happen to be and also, what standard of living they are subsequently exposed to. Finally, in those circumstances, what are the chances that all of their welfare needs are being met? In order to answer the last question, one needs to ask first: who is and who is not a citizen? Conceptualisations of citizenship - as has been shown - are subjective and interpretive within their given contexts and thus one should ask: who decides who is a citizen and who is not a citizen? We should also question who decides what constitutes a decent or 'appropriate' standard of living as well as what an 'inclusive community' is considered to be? We should seek to decipher what happens to those who are not considered to be full citizens included in local communities and afforded with a stable home and reasonable access to local services.

These questions can be answered by reviewing the social and ethical norms we are expected to follow to be part of a community (cf. Harris and Young 2009) and those of individuals or minority groups who are - according to policy documents - entitled to the right to express their cultural differences, while not suffering discrimination on these grounds and denied their citizen rights. Simply put, at the heart of this matter is the question of equality. According to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), equality can be defined as:

'No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation [...] Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state' (UDHR 1948: Articles 12 and 13).

Arguably, if all members of local communities were treated equally, then there would be no issue of a lack of provision for some and subsequently, there would be no need for the additional policy and management over the movements and accommodation of certain groups. One of the most striking messages to come from interviews with caravan-dwelling families was firstly a recognition of discrimination directed at them due to their ethnic backgrounds and secondly, that they seemed to wish to be judged in the same way and have the same opportunities as others. For example, Mr. Murphy argued (see above) that he and his family were discriminated against by their local council, primarily for being Irish, but also due to being “Travellers” (“We’re travellers and we’re nothing”). Ruby accounted for the discrimination she faced at school as due to being “the only [...] travellers in the school”, while Shelly noted that her colleagues treated her differently after they found out about her ethnic background, which is why at first she had not shared it. Dennis and Emma alluded throughout their interview that they were not being treated the same way as house-dwellers as far as the planning decision on their plot was concerned: “We said we want our own land so we can start afresh [...] everyone should be entitled [to that].” As shown here and in previous chapters, some caravan-dwelling individuals did not feel that policy implementation allowed for the establishment of stable homes on caravan sites, since they argued decisions were made based on long existing prejudices and the constant wish of the “settled” communities to be rid of “travelling” families. This view was especially prevalent when discussing decisions regarding planning permission, which has been shown as denied to caravan-dwellers far more than other groups (Richardson 2006b: 18; Liberty 2008: 1; TTO 2010c: 2).

The counter argument to this is that caravan-dwelling families invest in unsuitable land that would not be given permission for building whoever its owners were. To this it could be countered that other members of society are not as under provided for as the caravan-dwelling population and despite their knowledge of how many pitches are needed, LAs have consistently refused to supply them, thus creating this planning issue for themselves. At times individuals from house-dwelling communities have complained that planning officials grant development permission unequally, giving preferential treatment to caravan-dwelling groups, in spite of reports that the planning system does give preferential treatment to some groups, while actively excluding caravan-dwelling groups. To remedy this, governments have requested through policy documents in the past that where there is insufficient LA caravan provision, LAs tolerate illegal developments and unauthorised camps.

The policy documents assert the importance traditional Romani and Pavee ways of living, pointing out a responsibility to ‘recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional travelling way of life of gypsies and travellers’ (ODPM 2006: 5); and to ‘Raising awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture,’ (SCDC 2010: 5). Document three makes the claim that:

‘The most significant problems we have encountered have been in dealing with local authorities; specifically social services and education. We have dealt with these by holding joint services’ meetings [...] primarily to give an insight on how Traveller cultures differ from other cultures,’ (DCLG 2007: 48).

EP1 seemed to agree with this policy claim, stating that: “When it comes to the planning [...] I’m absolutely sure that not enough [pause] consideration is given to the fact that this is a lifestyle [long pause] a cultural choice.” Jim elaborated further on his experience of “hatred and fear” towards caravan-dwellers: “We had some [pause] Gypsies turn up and camp [...] [his neighbour’s] words were “Why don’t they get rid of those fucking pikies?” [...] So I mean that’s an illustration [...] of this kind of bred in the bone dislike, hatred, fear. It’s not rational.”

Previous quotations have shown that while LC1 is concerned with making sure his constituents can enjoy freedom of cultural expression and still gain access to all possible public services, LC2 seemed more concerned with ensuring that all members of society abide by the law. This is arguably due to another policy-based preoccupation with community cohesion. For example, as document two points out: ‘Providing more sites is crucial, but it is also essential that those sites support community cohesion and provide decent homes,’ (DCLG 2007: 47). The text written to aid management of anti-social behaviour stated: ‘Anti-social behaviour can include a variety of behaviours covering a whole range of unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life,’ (DCLG 2010: 8), and document six insists that:

‘Local planning authorities are required under the Housing Act 2004 to assess the accommodation needs of travellers. The Government considers that the circular has harmed community cohesion and created resentment towards the overwhelming majority of law-abiding travellers,’ (DCLG 2011b: 54).

These three policy passages each indirectly assert a notion that law abiders are deserving of community cohesion or inclusion and can be interpreted as constructing an important narrative about community life. Caravan-dwellers need to refrain from transcending into ‘unacceptable behaviour’, their reward being ‘decent homes’ that ‘support community cohesion’ and do not create ‘resentment’.

Ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society appeared to be the most important and communicated value of all participants of this research. However, the approaches to fulfil this value through the implementation of policy were quite different. In interviews with politicians and policymakers from the house-dwelling community and also reflected in news articles (cf. Malvern Gazette 2009; Thewlis 2009; Webster 2010), the point was made that mainstream services and the aid of the LA are there for those who did not break the law or upset the common goodwill. Regarding “operating within the law”, LC2 elaborated:

“In terms of where the law allows a development to happen. It shouldn’t be [pause] unjustly frustrated, but at the same time one of the things that sometimes adds tension is if for example on an Easter weekend when the council office has just shut, people go onto the land illegally and the impression is that they’re flouting the law.”—Interview 2010.

Policy documents aiming to guide LAs in providing new caravan pitches, managing existing pitches or instigating better community relations, frequently use language that indicates aid should be offered to caravan-dwelling families, but only if this aid will in no way inconvenience the house-dwelling community. One document stated: ‘The [community] agreement, which is aimed at tackling the issues that affect people’s quality of life, is based on the wishes of the majority and clearly states how those involved would like life to be within their community’ (DCLG 2010: 13). Document six states:

“The Coalition Government is committed to radically reforming the planning system. It wants to return power to local communities to help them shape the development of their areas [...] It will instead make local planning authorities responsible for determining the right level of site provision in their area and in consultation with local communities’ (DCLG 2011b: 11).

Document four claims a duty to: ‘Foster good community relationships [...] respect and tolerance between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of our rural communities’ (SCDC 2010: 9).

In this context ‘community’ refers mainly to settled or house-dwelling groups, as discussed at length with many other examples in chapter seven, and indicates the way that regardless of how they behave, caravan-dwelling families may always struggle to be viewed as integrated members of local communities. The following example illustrates community cohesion – and the conditions of social inclusion as well as the “response of residents” - are more complex than this. TLO1 explained more about her work and gave an insight into the everyday experiences of caravan-dwelling communities:

*"I can go onto a site and I can have a lot of empathy and understanding [...] about some of the battles [families are] facing [...] Because I'm there for an hour then I go away and they continue to face the battle of going in the local shop and people looking at them sideways you know? [...] It's the fact that you get up and you walk back to your own life [pause] But you can never **really** understand!"* – Interview 2010 (emphasis added).

This account resonates with the ethnographic example of the two girls in the shoe shop (see 4.2.1) as well as the accounts of discrimination given by families throughout interviews. Also, TLO1 demonstrates that despite the great amount of time she spends with some families and the "empathy and understanding" she has for the "battles" they face, obtaining a conscientious comprehension of the social exclusion faced by some members of the caravan-dwelling community is not something she possesses. She proclaims that she could "never really understand" and implies as sense of helplessness on how to ensure that families are accepted within local communities and are thus able to access all the services they should be able to. Arguably, if local councils seek the approval of the house-dwelling communities in planning decisions – as the policy texts and implementation history suggests – then the lack of acceptance some families face is surely a great obstacle to improving access and accommodation for caravan-dwelling families.

In short, caravan-dwelling groups are not considered to be full, unmarked members of their communities. Upholding cultural diversity alongside dominant socio-political wishes seems to put policymakers and implementers in a difficult position as they endeavour to please their communities and promote cohesion amongst all ethnic groups in society. Although it may seem from policy texts that governments have a clear logic to achieve equality and inclusion for so-called minority groups, these methods are not working, as families who are already part of these communities have indicated how and why they do not feel recognised as such.

9.7 Summary

This final analytical chapter has been concerned with the implicit values and norms that are communicated in discourses; i.e. policy texts and interviews with LA officials and caravan-dwelling families, which took place during the fieldwork period. The chapter focused on multiple meanings of social vulnerability, the environment, education, and home and family, integrity, equality and community cohesion amongst different cultural groups.

By exploring how values and norms construct ethical narratives concerning the above issues, one gains an insight into the extent that minority group life experiences and perceptions of values are being taken into account as a valid part of

the policy process. Policy processes seem to ultimately reflect the values of dominant community stakeholders and therefore, how community life should be is constructed by dominant ethical narratives. One can deduce many things related to the complexities of LA decision-making and managerial efficiency. However, the simple and clearest reason caravan-dwellers' values are not also woven into conservation and anti-social behavioural policy is that politically caravan-dwellers are not being listened to or included in decision-making processes to the extent that other members of the community have been. If we begin to look for the more complicated role that values play in building dominant narratives and in turn public policy discourses, one can start to assemble an ethical framework in which narratives and policy discourses rely on moralistic messages (i.e. norms and values) as well as consistency. Where consistency of the narrative is threatened (for example, by the view-point or experience of a minority group), the action arguably is to ignore it. Therefore, dominant value structures are also created, which give way to dominant norms, set in place by ethical arguments. Ethical argument is the basis for narrative, along with the moralistic warning for those who do not concede.

Minority ethical frameworks are often obscured and the life experiences of families are also used to support and sustain the dominant narratives. For example, negative experiences of caravan-dwelling lifestyles (such as the intolerance of unauthorised camps and developments) are treated as the moralistic lesson we all should learn from. Policy-based ideas about the right or good way to live as part of a community life become written into law through anti-social behaviour and planning legislation, which overlap with dominant socio-cultural norms and expectations. Therefore, even when caravan-dwelling families are not necessarily doing anything illegal, their presence can cause disdain and discomfort and subsequently access to public services – such as education – is denied or made burdensome. LAs look to the approval of majority groups within communities for their policy strategies, especially in the area of planning. Thus, the needs, preferences and well-being of majority populations remain an ultimate priority for policies, as they becomes the most represented, relatable and supported frameworks, regardless of the detriment caused to minority groups.

10. Conclusions

The title of this thesis already introduces the main themes that have been investigated in the research: caravan sites, narratives, contested landscapes and contested values within the context of public policy. Some conclusions of this research endeavour will be drawn below, along with how it answers the questions and provides opportunities for further research. First however, we shall pay attention to the research limitations and how the thesis contributes to the academic arenas of public policy science and public administration.

10.1 Research Limitations and Contribution to Theory and Literature

This interdisciplinary thesis is an intersection of public administration, policy analysis, ethnography and organisational ethics, offering an insight into the role that narratives play in public policy and minority group identity construction. The most notable methodological and literary contributions to existing academic discussions this thesis can supply, lies firstly in furthering discussions on ethical decision-making within public administration research as well as expanding the concept of institutional ethical narratives (cf. Lawton 1998 and Brody 1999). Secondly, contributions can be found in the discussion of dominant narratives and the implications they have for minority identities and accessibilities to public services (cf. Pader 2006 and Silver 2010). Finally, this thesis has contributed to methodological debates that have focused on the increased utilisation of interpretive and ethnographic approaches within the organisational sciences (cf. Huby et al. 2011 and Haverland and Yanow 2012).

The completion of this thesis coincided with the 2010 General Election in the United Kingdom, which saw a change in government, the first coalition since World War II and a massive shift in policy that would go onto affect the topic being studied here. In order to be respectful to the contemporary nature of the research and because of the timing of the fieldwork for the thesis, the election was taken into account and investigates policies both prior to and after the fact, without necessarily comparing governments or political rhetoric (see chapters four and six), which arguably makes the research contextually richer, although it did make discourse analysis more complicated. The direction of the research was adjusted to acknowledge the changes occurring in government offices and on caravan sites, which meant an alteration in the focus of the fieldwork, which at that point was already half completed. What this illustrates is a general limitation and potential complication in national and local government studies, which this thesis primarily contributes to.

An additional limitation to the research was the inability to spend more time with caravan-dwelling families and interview more families either in the county where research took place or across the rest of England. This could have helped obtain more findings leading to conclusions more applicable to nation-wide policies and therefore contribute to institutional changes. However, the strength of this thesis lies in its intersectional methodology and how this has managed to contribute to organisation and local government studies' treatment of minority groups and the subjects of policy. Regardless of the number of research participants, this research puts the research subject and their experiences of policies at the centre of the thesis, which in its own way could lead to changes in the current approaches to policymaking.

The investigation of ethical decision-making and value conflict in studies of local governments and other forms of public office is not novel (cf. Wyld and Jones 1997) and therefore this thesis serves to continue the existing discussions on ethical behaviour in public administration offices. That said, in the past the on-going rhetoric of ethical decision-making has fallen short of offering a perspective of the public itself, and much less of minority groups, even where the topic considers the progress and pit-falls of participatory governance (cf. Fung 2006), and in doing so, the question of "Whose ethics?" excludes the possibility of a minority group perspective. This thesis openly questions the source of the ethics written into policy texts and what the ethical implications of not questioning this source can be as well as the wider ramifications for subordinate groups' well-being. It does this by using interpretive critical discourse analysis (CDA) and ethnography as the research methodologies to philosophically inform interview, textual analysis and observation techniques employed within the field. CDA seeks out and dissects active power relations written into and out of text or verbalised (cf. Van Dijk 2001 and Lynch 2006), having ethical implications for the actors and subjects involved in public policy processes. The research has continued ethnographic inquiry in the field of local government studies with the inclusion of the perspectives of local authority officials (at various levels of management) as well as providing a new dimension to knowledge by exploring how caravan-dwelling families make sense of their life experiences, which are a direct result of the decision-making processes in public administrative offices. Aesthetic analysis of the physical artefacts of policy processes (i.e. caravan sites) proved to be an integral aspect of building a more thorough contextualisation of the material and ethical consequences of LA policy actions.

Furthermore, through discourse analysis one can assess the extent to which policy epistemologies – i.e. political knowledge production - relate to lived experience and organisational behaviour, especially with regards to how policies are actually implemented as well as identity construction. If we, as researchers want to look beyond the social constructions of [minority and subordinate] groups, then we ourselves need to go beyond those constructions by revealing the complexities and incoherencies of the narratives of the policy processes that seek to aid and manage these groups in particular. As has been shown above, there are definitely dominant strands or contributions to any social narrative, obscuring minority perspectives, however if we are to acknowledge that all ethical outlooks are valid, then they all need to be part of the narrative we construct for our research purposes. This may also result in an incoherent narrative, however policy-making and decision-making are not coherent processes and thus we should not analyse them as such. This thesis takes the study of ethical narratives beyond the spectrum of health services (cf. Mattingly and Garro 1994), by considering the role narrative plays in constructing a right and wrong way to live through written and verbal discourses, in addition to conceptualisations of citizenship and [re]appropriating power.

The fundamental role that interpretive methodologies play in this research could have interesting reverberations for other interpretive researchers studying policy processes and public services (cf. Yanow 2000 and Mattingly 2008). Interpretive policy analysis enabled a critical discourse analysis of organisational texts, which could be conducted alongside interpretive interview processes and ethnographic visits to informants' homes. The combined methods or tools of interpretive policy/textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and aesthetic observation worked well to illustrate what is experienced by all of those involved within this particular policy context.

10.2 Reflections on the academic debates and research questions

Below we will be reminded a final time of the research questions and examine some possible answers that will highlight explicitly what contributions this thesis has made to existing academic debates.

- 1. To what extent does local authority policy-making reflect a limited discourse that excludes other discourses particularly those of minority groups who do not conform or adhere to conventional notions of citizenship?*
- 2. How can we employ ethnographic research approaches to understand the divergent discourses that impact a contested arena of policy-making, such as local authority caravan-site decision-making?*

3. To what extent are public policy decisions, and their subsequent social consequences, interpreted through and into various discourses by policy-makers, and perhaps more importantly by those subject to the policy issue?

While it is not far fetched to claim that LA policymaking is an exclusionary process, we should not rely on linear, causal responses to policy problems when investigating dominant narratives, as this will on one hand further undermine minority narratives and on the other risk ignoring the intricate and diverse meaning-making that also occurs in decision-making. For instance, it would be too simple to claim that LAs do not consider the needs of caravan-dwelling families, which is shown by a lack of adequate provision and in turn leads to adverse living conditions for families, thereby making LA decision-making unethical. It has been shown through interviews and analysis of texts that LA bureaucrats at various levels are aware of and concerned about the needs of caravan-dwelling families as well as the inadequacies of the planning system in providing alternative forms of accommodation. In other words, there is more to LA decision-making than a straightforward process of discrimination.

In order to comprehend what the ethical implications of decision-making may or may not be, one must first understand how values are attached to various definitions and experiences of democracy and citizenship, which are both communicated through ethical discourses (see chapters seven and eight). Citizens are constructed through policy processes as belonging to national and local communities and as benefitting from political action. However, whether or not individual members of society truly belong and should therefore benefit from that belonging, hinges on other notions of a value-laden group identity, immediately excluding some while including others. Those included in this conceptualisation of citizenship have the ability to contribute towards accompanying meta narratives, either further excluding those who do not belong or not. The analysis of the construction of identities within a dominant narrative or policy process, explores how inclusion and exclusion are managed. In order to do this, one needs to interpret what it means to be victimised through the policy process.

Policy processes also give and remove power within communities in a number of implicit and explicit ways. For instance, explicit power is given to LA officials to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour occurring on caravan sites, as well as to interpret what anti-social behaviour is and how it should be managed. Implicitly,

power is removed from caravan-dwelling families through the usage of terms such as 'settled' and 'traveller' communities. The terms are misleading in that to be a traveller suggests constant transience and to be settled insinuates a permanent home, which is not necessarily so in either case. These terms imply not only an accommodation status for families but also their lack of or confirmed belonging within a community, regardless of what the living circumstances of individual families may actually be. The ethical implications for those labelled 'settled' meet the prescribed standards of conventional notions of citizenship and thus, their status as part of the local community is taken for granted within policy texts and real life. Multiple identities are afforded an unmarked house-dwelling population as well as free movement, in contrast to an ongoing process of surveillance of sites and defining caravan-dwelling group identities through policy texts, to be consistent with upholding the interests of house-dwellers, which is framed as 'well-being' in policy texts, at the expense of the liberty of others.

Ethnographic research approaches can and should be utilised to understand lived experiences of policies in order to explore the tangible outcomes of constructing juxtaposed dominant majority and minority group identities, especially in research concerning policy arenas. Ethnography not only allows a close-up look at the material consequences of policy decisions; it also provides the researcher an opportunity to explore the meaning-making of caravan-dwelling families and how they construct their own identities and narratives, which are equally as important as the aforementioned dominant narratives (cf. McDowell and Wonders 2009 and Smith 2012). By interpreting both dominant and alternative narratives, researchers are able to analyse how the two interact with each other in order to see a truer ethical narrative. In short, critical discourse analysis and/or critical interpretation as a methodology focuses on the articulation of power dynamics through the inconsistencies of discourse, i.e. what is left unsaid through the unheard narratives. Interpretive approaches – which are concerned with exploring meanings, beliefs and motives – have been necessary in this thesis because while all of the research informants held comparable values, the meaning attached to these values varied as did their application through norms in daily life (as seen in chapter nine). These actions and experiences, with their accompanying motive based anecdotes, build an ethical narrative imbued with the attached meanings and beliefs that each policy stakeholder reads into it.

Taking lived experiences into account as they are communicated through alternative narratives alongside *meta* narratives, we begin to piece together the dominant ethical moralistic tropes, which underpin public policy and lead to

political actions, and yet are sandwiched between alternative value-systems. This is the most thorough methodological intersection of the research: where the interplay between interpretive CDA of policy documents and ethnographical observations of caravan-sites, informs us about public administration and LA ethical decision-making. The dominant narrative here revolved around appropriate housing; if a form of accommodation is not considered to be appropriate, then leading decision-makers should not encourage it, or so the logic goes. Despite the lived experience of inadequate site provision, it may be the case that planning officials believe they are doing what is best for society on the whole based on their beliefs on good accommodation. By looking closely at the conditions families live in and hearing their personal experiences, one might deduce that LAs do not want to encourage other social groups towards a caravan-dwelling existence, therefore making it difficult for families to permanently stay in one area through the development or expansion of a plot or by hiding away existing plots.

Complicating matters is when examining policy documents and political rhetoric, which come across as evidence-based and consistent (cf. Stevens 2011), it is clear that at various organisational levels, different policy stakeholders have different interpretations of what the problem is and what should be done to solve it. This is in part based on varying levels of experience in working directly with caravan-dwelling families, however experience does not correlate with power and influence over policy action. For example, district council leaders do not work closely with Romani and Pavee communities, though they do set agendas that will impact their lifestyles, in the same way that policy writers (who also do not work directly with caravan-dwelling families) are charged with drafting texts on site allocation and management. It is in roles such as traveller liaison officer or educational liaison officer that one finds organisational individuals with well-informed ideas about the needs and expectations of caravan-dwelling families. However, despite having the benefit of insight, TLOs fulfil an advisory role within local councils, and although they may be able to inform decision-makers of lived experiences of policies, this is arguably ignored when accounts conflict with dominant lifestyles or notions of citizenship, as well as undermining ethical arguments for the management of alternative lifestyles. There are multiple organisational interpretations and subsequent discourses surrounding this policy arena, however those with the most knowledge do not have the power to construct the dominant narrative, which serves the purpose of getting across political messages that leave out “wicked issues”.

This research has shown how accounts and experiences from caravan-dwelling families were the most consistent throughout fieldwork and at times are reflected in policy texts but policy action leaves much to be desired. While this finding may not necessarily be applicable in comparison with other policy evaluations concerning minority groups' accessibility to public services - especially considering the very small sample of families that took part - it remains important to note that on this research project in particular, all families agreed on a number of issues. From community cohesion, to education, to land accessibility, to political integrity, the families had similar stories to share regarding their experiences. Therefore, we can again begin to understand the inconsistencies of dominant narratives and how they come to be constructed, as well as how they lead to the construction of minority identities.

The alternative narratives can illustrate much more about this area of policy, because unlike the dominant narrative, they remain consistent, intact and tangible to lived experiences. Arguably, this is an interaction of truth to power in that while lived experience of a policy action is obscured in certain policy discourses, life narratives openly challenge policy processes in a united voice. Additionally, because of the articulation of a compromise of well-being, entangled in a dialogue of what should be, the alternative narratives highlight the ethical consequences that are found lacking in more patchy *meta* narratives.

10.3 Ethical Narratives

It is clear that a number of policy initiatives have been drafted in "good" faith by local and central government(s) in England, with a decent background knowledge and at times a real respect for Pavee and Romani caravan-dwelling families - and where relevant other caravan-dwelling groups. Policymakers and bureaucrats interviewed in the research seemed to have a genuine concern for the well-being of caravan-dwellers, wanting the best for their lives as they would any other member(s) of the community. However, it cannot be denied that there appears to be some obstruction to implementation within the policy process. We can look to the ethical narrative of those involved in this policy arena in organisational settings.

First of all, values are expressed through norms - that is, standardised and acceptable modes of behaviour. The leaders of our communities are expected to uphold these values through the promotion of norms, which result in policy texts. However, as values conflict between individuals and groups, so do norms making it difficult to implement all policies into any social situation. Even the same inherent values may lead to a difference in perspective over how they should be acted out. For example, most reasonable individuals would agree that a clean, safe home is a

basic human need. On the other hand, we might not all agree on what exactly constitutes a clean or safe environment, or what kind of space can become a home fit for human occupation. Thus what we each consider a normal home to be may contrast with the next. With around one quarter of caravan-dwelling families finding themselves homeless due to ineffective implementation of LA caravan site policies, the eradication of child poverty high on the agenda for the government, and LAs seeking to establish better relationships with all members of their communities whilst establishing community cohesion between groups: something needs to change.

Caravan-dwelling families are out of options if LAs do not increase the number of adequate plots. We have seen how a vicious cycle has manifested in the wake of a lack of provision and is set to continue without the cooperation and hard work of bureaucrats and councillors. Arguably, the steady increase of unauthorised camps and developments has been tolerated by councils due to an unwillingness to upset so-called “full” citizens – i.e. potential voters - by building permanent sites or passing more planning applications for private sites, which would undoubtedly solve numerous unauthorised cases. Turning a blind eye to unauthorised caravan sites has led to extreme bouts of antagonism and resentment within house-dwelling communities, not only directed towards caravan-dwelling groups, but also towards councillors. Through no fault of their own, animosity towards caravan-dwelling families is the general sentiment in England, however it seems to be less prominent in areas where there is adequate site provision, especially compared to areas where there is not, indicating that LA action holds the key not only to stable homes for families but also for increasing successful integration and acceptance for caravan-dwelling residents amongst house-dwelling residents within local communities.

There appears to be a vast amount of literature detailing the needs and requirements of such accommodation, yet there is clearly political opposition against LA caravan sites, from house-dwelling communities who fear crime rates will increase, schools will become inundated and the countryside destroyed. How do councillors uphold these values with those of the so-called “Traveller Gypsy” community? To live in open, adaptable spaces that can accommodate the growth and extensions of families and to not be trapped inside bricks and mortar? This ethical dilemma is decided by a dominant narrative that essentially has little to do with who will win an election.

Additionally, while caravan-dwellers are constructed as un-belonging due to their transience and subsequently their experience is marginalised within *meta* ethical narratives, they are still very much part of local communities. Therefore, the

current lack of acknowledgement of interests of all stakeholders within society creates contested landscapes, both literally and figuratively. Power dictates how to resolve political disputes and therefore *meta* narratives prevail contributing to the continued silencing of already disenfranchised members of society.

Thus dominant ethical narratives dictate the norms to be followed in life, regardless of whether or not each individual agrees with what these norms are or will imply. In order to contribute to leading and influential narratives, one needs to first have access to full citizenship and following that be considered by others to be a full citizen. A citizen by definition is fulfilling all of their social responsibilities and duties (i.e. full-time work or education; conventional employment; home ownership; avoiding crime; participating in public and political life), and is thus entitled to their rights, which include access to mainstream services; LA assistance and most importantly, an audible public voice, which in turn gives an individual an element of social power. This is not to say that the values of various citizens do not clash with each other, just that they are represented and have a chance to inform policy processes, rather than maintaining stagnant policy issues.

10.4 Constructions of Citizenship

Those who do not conform to the aforementioned standards of citizenship – regardless of legal status – are not considered to be full citizens. Therefore, they are rendered socially invisible and mute - subsequently powerless. This also goes for their value-systems, which are considered invalid or circumspect by those who are part of dominant groups. In fact, anything that may harm the dominant narrative – including strategies aimed at helping caravan-dwelling families claim the services they need to survive – is not considerable. As members of those able to contribute to a dominant narrative themselves, street-level bureaucrats are torn between their world - which is natural to them - and their world of work, which may be important to them, but is not the world they have to live in. They cannot help at certain stages in planning and policy processes but have a natural inclination towards their own values and norms and arguably, such an inclination causes ruptures down the line.

This could help us to explain the ‘gaps’ within and throughout policy processes that renders - in this case at least – alternative accommodation policymaking unsuccessful. It is also worth mentioning however, that policy processes are not only about written texts; they are about interactions between individuals and groups. Thriving policies depend on mutually initiated interactions, which also contribute towards bridging a gap. In the case of policies relating specifically to minority groups, whilst dominant group narratives imbued with the negative perceptions of

marginalised peoples, it is not enough to only blame the interpretations of individuals within institutions for mistakes made. In other words, recognition of every individual's responsibility as well as their personal capacity to policy is important. It is also fundamentally important for policymakers to pay attention to individual members of minority groups who are proactive in their approach to political action and also (where disenfranchisement is not an obstacle) caravan-dwelling groups do not wait for policy initiatives to create opportunities. Whilst policies can help soothe social frictions, arguably they are not the only solution and furthermore, without more independent action, the interaction or dialogue between groups cannot take place at all and when policies are put into action they are more likely to fail.

While marginalised groups may claim alternative narratives and lifestyles, going against the norm, it is possible that only some individuals are awarded the right – or space - to experiment with their accommodation status, which is arguably why it is acceptable to stay in a caravan for a couple of weeks by the seaside but not permanently on the outskirts of a town. Furthermore, some narratives are so pervasive in their discouragement of alternative ways of life that the idea of a dialogue between dominant and minority groups in society seems futile, even where it is necessary.

10.5 Deconstructing the Future

We have seen that despite central government intervention (e.g. the RSS), many LAs have retained a sense of autonomy in their rejection of caravan-dwelling families rather than their acceptance of these families by encouraging them to settle permanently within districts and counties through the building of sites or allow space for a transient lifestyle. Although not all LAs have responded to centralised pressure in this manner, the impression that caravan-dwelling families are not quite part of the societal imaginary or landscape lingers on. Individual bureaucrats and policymakers within LAs have made attempts through policy formation to address this perception however it rarely makes an impact in the long run, with vocabulary such as 'settled population' or 'local community' for addressing non-caravan-dwelling peoples, pertaining to the perspective that to be a caravan-dweller is to be unsettled or not native. Thus the positioning of caravan-dwelling families becomes increasingly marginalised on paper and in reality, perhaps despite intentions of the very opposite by policymakers. For local councillors and TLOs alike, who do not wish to increase their caravan-dwelling populations, there may be an emphasis on how distinctive (and presumably burdensome) the groups are through policy texts. Additionally, policies that supposedly focus on distinctive characteristics of caravan-

dwelling groups – such as anti-social behaviour guides – discourage potentially willing councils from accepting or even welcoming the groups and subsequently are unable to view caravan sites within county and district boundaries in a non-threatening and inclusive light.

The argument has often been presented that lack of caravan site provision is down to control exerted over councillors by the voting population. A counter-argument is there are examples of councils with sufficient provision for (at least existing) caravan-dwelling families has been allocated. This has been achieved through communication between LAs and the public about new sites as well as the involvement of caravan-dweller representatives within the dialogue. Furthermore, whilst there are arguments that Conservative governments have a recent history of stricter and less progressive policies concerning caravan-dweller communities, 13 years of Labour hardly did much to improve the quality of existing sites or increase site numbers.

A second counter-argument is that councils should be able to make their own decisions and formulate policies based upon the needs and aspirations of their communities as a whole and not on the ideological vision of central government, as reflected in the *Localism Act* (2011). Since returning to power the Conservative Party have delegated the decision-making powers to LAs regarding caravan site provision as well as the eviction powers for illegally built sites. However, becoming more localised is not the same as authority reaching street-level. There are times when out-reach workers and TLOs do not have the authority to re-interpret policy to such a degree that it can take a more promising affect towards the families and individuals they work with. They indicated in interviews that a shift in paradigms relating to notions of home, property, land and citizenship is required in order for any policies to be progressive or positive for caravan-dwelling families.

For example, a new view of society that offers the possibility of any form of warm, dry and clean accommodation as institutionally acceptable rather than merely tolerated could have an impact on the public's view of caravan-dwelling families and their way(s) of life. Currently there is a lack of respect by some members of the public - and at times their political representation - for the choice of accommodation and home of caravan-dwelling families, to the extent that demands are made to dispose of them. This has had strong ramifications for the status of citizenship allocated to the aforementioned families. Here we can see the different interpretations of citizenship – legal citizenship and cultural citizenship – play their way into policy processes. Almost all of the participants of the research were British and while the Pavee families may be of Irish descent, they each had British

citizenship. However, like their English Romani counterparts, Pavee families have been portrayed as not subscribing to the cultural citizenship that proper citizens are automatically expected to adopt.

This attitude towards cultural or mainstream citizenship is reflected in the tacit distinction made between full and half citizens: the full citizen oftentimes depicted in the media and by the current Conservative-led coalition government as respectful of the monarchy, military and nation-state borders; moderate and private in religious practices, whilst publicly contributing towards a (British) public good socially and economically. The half citizen is juxtaposed with the full, revealing the seemingly foreign individuals who refuse to fit in to the dominant narrative: the woman wearing a Burqa or growing dreadlocks or raising her children in a caravan, thereby only partially fulfilling citizen-based expectations.

Constructions of groups in society can lead to the perception and fear of problems that have not even arisen as is the case with caravan-dwelling groups. They are constructed as problematic and even dangerous, going against fundamental mainstream values that ordinarily bind society together. This leads to a controlling and restricting policy area that targets specific groups for the apparent protection of everyone. However, when a policy controls or limits one group, it can also serve to control everyone as it seeks to uphold well-being. In other words, by explicitly condemning the way of life of one group or another, all diverse and non-conformist ways of life are also implicitly condemned, which is why certain discourses cannot be ignored, even when they do not seem to affect all members of society. By disregarding alternative narratives as well as taking for granted meta narratives, which underpin normative discourses, we are not only complicit in the technologies of domination exerted over minority groups; we are complicit in the potential control over ourselves.

Future research can delve further into how alternative and meta narratives operate in public policy and administrative services, from a post-modern perspective of realising constructions of groups remain localised as well as ever-changing over time (cf. Wond and Macaulay 2011). A decrease in the open hostility towards ethnographic and interpretive approaches in public management could lead to furthering the revelations we are able to make about governments as well as the suggestions we will be able to make regarding policy. An important educational moment while completing this thesis has been how to integrate seemingly different disciplines in a way that respects philosophical underpinnings and will also be used in the right way to enquire about socio-political phenomena.

Where ontological and epistemological presuppositions allow for these approaches to be used (cf. Haverland and Yanow 2012), ethnography can enable more attention to be paid to the perspective of minority groups and their experiences of organisational actions, rather than merely representing the organisational perspective on its own or sensationalising cultural difference. This way we can also illustrate in our research the experience of policy from the perspective of policy subjects, especially where they feel policies have negative consequences for communities. The point here is not to search for “empirical data” but to include the subjects of policy to shape the research processes by allowing divergent meanings to emerge from multiple policy stakeholders. Similarly, interpretive textual analysis of policy documents and interview outcomes can serve to take researchers beyond content analysis by opening up the possibility to investigate communicated and yet tacit motives and beliefs that are behind actions in addition to exploring meaning-making through vague language as well as social narrative constructions through what is not said or written (Mattingly 2008: 138). This is essential in the study of public services and administrations, as all actions taking place have ethical implications for others, who rely vicariously on the outcomes of policies.

Finally, as researchers we should take it upon ourselves to deconstruct the characterisations of certain groups which are illustrated in policy narratives to, emphasise both sides of policy stories.

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Appendix A: Images



Figure 1a: LA caravan site (a), photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2011).



Figure 1b: LA caravan site (b), photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2009).



Figure 2: Private seaside caravan site, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2010).



Figure 3: Route to LA caravan site along the by-pass, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2009).



Figure 4: A traditional bow top caravan. Photograph from Gypsy Caravan Holiday Breaks Website (2013) Available: <http://gypsyncaravanbreaks.co.uk/> [Last updated: 2013; last accessed: 16/01/2013]



Figure 5: 'Woman making yog'. Photograph from Smith, R. and Marsh, L. (2009) *Old Ways, New Days: a Family History of Gypsy Life in South London and Kent*. London: Francis Boutle Publishers (Page 33).



Figure 6: Privately owned and managed caravan site, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2009).



Figure 7: Potholed and muddy road to a private caravan site, photographed by research informant (2009).



Figure 8a: Informant's home (private caravan site) before modifications, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2010).



Figure 8b: Informant's home (private caravan site) after modifications, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2010).



Figure 9a: Potholes in road to temporary unauthorised development, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2010).



Figure 9b: Raw sewage on temporary unauthorised development, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2010).



Figure 10: Unauthorised encampment in a car-park, photographed by B. Parnell-Berry (2011).

Appendix B: Documents

The vision for this strategy, our first focusing on Gypsy and Traveller communities, is:

Mission Statement [To ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities enjoy equality of service and are part of cohesive communities within which people from different backgrounds participate together and share equal rights and responsibilities.]

Our objectives are to:

- Provide a consistent, co-ordinated approach across the Council, and through its partnerships, to its work with Gypsies and Travellers. *working together*
- Improve access to services and the responsiveness of mainstream services and ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated into existing policies and mainstream services. *not making decs for but with.*
- Foster good community relationships, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and positively promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of our rural communities. *this isn't about choice.*
- Work with partners, including health, police, voluntary agencies, and other local authorities to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities. *Stewart? bringing together all LAs to be more inclusive in aims objectives*
- Ensure that the accommodation and other needs of Gypsies/Travellers are met whilst taking account of cultural issues or specific requirements.
- Seek to manage unauthorised camping in an efficient and effective way, having regard to the welfare requirements, rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers, the environment and the potential level of nuisance for local residents.
- Provide a clear policy and practice framework for the guidance of agencies, staff, elected members, Gypsies and Travellers, landowners and the wider public.

Whilst there are some good examples of service delivery by the Council and by our partners we recognise that there are areas where we need to strengthen our work with, and our approach to, the Gypsy and Traveller community. This strategy reviews where we are now, identifies areas for improvement and how we will address these. *where existing policy has NOT worked, yet.*

The key priority areas for action are:

- Raising awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture, the duty to promote equality and practical ways to achieve this
- Providing strategic direction and co-ordination
- Establishing two-way engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Promoting community cohesion *buzz word*
- Improving partnership working
- Improving access to, and experience of, services

in other words, bearing it in mind but not making it a priority

∴ giving G/T comm a voice

- important that these go together

- not only giving a service but a service worth experiencing.

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Figure 1: Scan of research annotations on analysed policy document, excerpt from SCDC (2010) *Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy 2010-2013*. Cambourne: South Cambridgeshire District Council (Page 9).

His son started to do it in the '80s, now we're living in the year 2000 where it costs a million pound to put a trailer site up () if they're gonna pass these temporaries, instead of trailer sites - if they're saving a million pound - and I know the funding's there and adequate, they could use that funding. There's 9 million pound out of lottery money allocated to improvements in this area but you wouldn't only be improving it for the Gypsy families without access to adequate services () you got the fire service - you couldn't get a fire engine down here, we need an ambulance down here on a regular basis and apart from that it goes against the laws of the land for disabilities.

H/W: hmmm! (in concurrence)

People with disabilities () you got healthy children with buggies you could say that they could um () pass that road but -

everybody that lives down the lane, even the people that live in houses don't like the lane, they want to see something done with it but no one knows how to go forward with it so -

and I think myself they're trying to put a lid on it which they can't now 'cause we got too many people involved and we got too much out there with the limelight on it that they can't put a lid on it this time, they can't shut you up because they've done nothing for G&T for 10 year and the funding's there and there's adequate amount of funding to do something productive for the village () because the local services are dustbins and at the 2nd December they stopped me the school bus coming down. So it's not good enough for the school bus - school transport then it's not good enough for people to live here.

W/H: hmmm! (in concurrence)

H: yeah exactly

that end of the land wasn't good enough for the animals, when the animals stumbled. If my child took a fit in that building and I couldn't get an ambulance down here in 6 to 8 minutes I could lose her life, so for me it's life threatening and for major surgery that starts some time this summer I haven't got the time or the years that the farmers have had () and the experience that my child's gonna witness to go through major surgery if I thought that I can't get her home from surgery. For me it's a necessity.

um and apart from the road, what other problems do you have with the council and services here?

how long has your dad been trying to get places passed in this area, on this plot -

in the new year - I'll be 35 soon, I moved here when I was 12. This is passed for (refers to land where caravan is situated) - they've no problem, this is passed for life. We been trying to get that back plot because we wanted to move on there and put this chalet on there and they're saying: "no" because this is passed, we can't have that passed and we've got our own family now so we want our own -

3

W: one of their reasons was that they're weren't enough room in the schools for like anymore children. And so I've worked in this village for years, I still work in the village -

H: (overlapping) you work for mental health -

I've like been in the village since I was 15, he's been in the village since - for like 20 years, and at the end of the day, all the children on new estates and stuff that are going up, got a place no problem. So I don't see why my daughter and people down here shouldn't have places -

H: and you're from the village aren't you, you're not like

W: well, yeah but () and that was one argument that we used on land getting passed and we didn't really get a response for that either did we?

H: and when they give permission all round us, but when we try and get permission and we're not going anywhere um when we try and get permission they don't wanna know and they've give - I know who they give - they've passed loads of land round here, they've even passed a piece of land over there, which is parallel to ours and they don't - there's no one living on it () and no one wants to live on it but it's passed -

see they're new people coming in. You can't provide for new people coming in when you 30 temporaries being put down in this village -

W: (overlapping) yeah that's what I think

when the man that lived here on his own land can't live beside his father on his own land, so the people that grew here can't live here. I stepped into the school because they said there was no facilities in the school and said to the woman nothing's right for G&T now, we need two classrooms and they've got the funding, the two new classrooms will be up, September 2010 - so the people that's always lived in the village are isolated. His father had to fight for these plots in court, never got them easy () lived her for 24 year and can't get planning permission - there's 30 temporaries been put round the area for strangers to come in the village. How upset would be about that?

W: look at all the building that's gone up in the village as well and they're like 'causing like munities and stuff for people up the road when there's nothing! They wouldn't have that road up there. Nobody would be expected to drive up and down that road in the village.

H: the amount of flats and houses we've seen go up in the area -

W: (overlapping) there's loads!! Loads of flats and houses!

H: all the old farms that have been sold off and they've built all through the middle and we've watched that happen and not -

W: all the children going into schools and we've can't - nothing!

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Figure 2: Excerpt of typed interview transcript during analytical phase using colour-coding techniques. Conducted in 2010 by B. Parnell-Berry.

The Road Ahead:
**Final Report of the Independent Task Group on Site Provision
and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers**

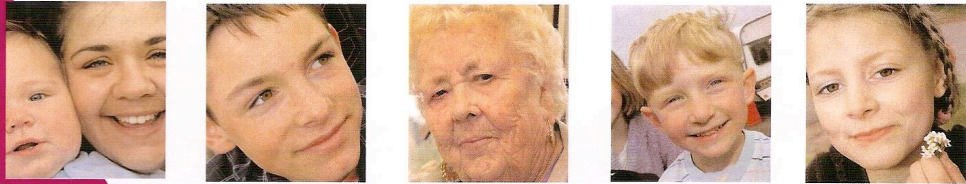


Figure 3: Front cover from policy document 2. DCLG (2007) *The Road Ahead: Final Report of the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

Draft Policy

Regional Spatial Strategy Single Issue Review:
Planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
in the East of England

February 2008



east of england
Space for ideas

east
of england
Regional Assembly
www.eera.gov.uk

Figure 4: Front cover from policy document 3. EERA (2008) *Regional Spatial Strategy Single Issue Review: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England*. NP: East of England Regional Assembly.