

Πρόγραμμα «Ένταξη Τσιγγανοπαίδων στο Σχολείο»

Gypsy Identities in Europe: policy and research¹
Πρακτικά επιστημονικού συνεδρίου (Ιωάννινα 2003)²

Ιωάννινα 2004

¹ Τα κείμενα που ακολουθούν αποτελούν επιμορφωτικό υλικό στα πλαίσια του Προγράμματος του ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ. «Ένταξη Τσιγγανοπαίδων στο Σχολείο», το οποίο υλοποιείται από το Πανεπιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων. Η παρουσία τους στο διαδίκτυο εξυπηρετεί επιμορφωτικές ανάγκες και ανάγκες ευαισθητοποίησης των εκπαιδευτικών της προσχολικής, πρωτοβάθμιας και δευτεροβάθμιας υποχρεωτικής εκπαίδευσης, αλλά απευθύνεται και στο ευρύ κοινό. Κάθε αθέμιτη χρήση των κειμένων υπόκειται στις διατάξεις του νόμου περί πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας.

² Στα πρακτικά συμπεριελήφθησαν οι ανακοινώσεις όσων συνέδρων μπόρεσαν να παρευρεθούν στο συνέδριο ή να αποστείλουν το κείμενο της ομιλίας τους στην οργανωτική επιτροπή. Για τις επιστημονικές θέσεις και απόψεις που διατυπώνονται υπεύθυνοι είναι οι ομιλητές. Οι θέσεις και οι απόψεις τους δεν δεσμεύουν τον επιστημονικό υπεύθυνο του Προγράμματος «Ένταξη Τσιγγανοπαίδων στο Σχολείο» ή το Υπουργείο Εθνικής Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων.

Saturday, 18.10.2003

9.30-10.00 Introduction

10.00-12.00 Session 1

Chairperson:

Leonie Herwartz Emden,
Department of Education, University of
Augsburg, Germany.

Speakers:

Panayotis Papakonstantinou,
Department of Philosophy, Education &
Psychology, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Wim Willems,

Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies,
University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Athanasios Gotovos,

Department of Philosophy, Education &
Psychology, University of Ioannina, Greece

Melpomeni Doka,

Research fellow of the University of Ioannina

Rebecca Taylor,

12.00-12.30 Break

12.30-14.30 Session 2

Chairperson:

Wim Willems, Institute for Migration and Ethnic
Studies, University of Amsterdam.

Speakers:

Leo Lucassen,
Department of History and Regional Studies,
University of Amsterdam.

Annemarie Coltaar,

Institute for Social History, the Netherlands

Ioanna Athanaspoulou,
Historian, Research fellow of the University of
Ioannina.

Yiannis Georgiou,

Sociologist, Research fellow of the University of
Ioannina

Maria Dimitriou,

Social worker,
Research fellow of the University of Ioannina.

14.30-16.30

Lunch break,
Restaurant "Figos", University Campus

16.30-18.30

Session 3

Chairperson:

Athanasios Gotovos,
Department of Philosophy, Education &
Psychology, University of Ioannina.

Speakers:

Brian Bellon,
George William College, UK

Maria Papadopoulou,

Vocational Training Centre, University of Ioannina

Eva Politou,

Teacher in Intercultural High School of Sapes,
Greece.

Leonie Herwartz Emden,

Department of Education, University of Augsburg.

18.30-19.00

Coffee break

19.00-20.00

Discussion

21.30

Dinner

ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΟΙ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟΥ

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Greek Ministry
of National Education and Religious Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Project: "School Integration of Gypsy Children"

A Round table Workshop

Gypsy Identities in Europe: policy and research



17 - 18 October 2003

University of Ioannina

Faculty of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy,
Education and Psychology
New Building, Lecture Theatre 1st Floor



Schooling and Gypsies

Abstract

In the present times, Gypsies in Greece have established a peculiar and partially problematic relationship with the educational system. The multiform and distinctive discrimination they are subjected to in the school, is developed through ethnic stereotypes against them.

Unsolicited and arbitrary “clichets” are recalled for the justification of certain social and educational operations. Through the prism of sociology of education the above mentioned associations between school failure and discrimination refer to ideological concepts that supported school failure in the past which was explained by the “reproduction theories”.

Writing Gypsies back into European History: Myths, Facts and New Concepts

Wim Willems, Institution for Migration and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam (willems@pscw.uva.nl)

“You have to be willing to admit that you don’t have all the answers. If you think you do, you will never have anything important to say.”
(Paul Auster, *I thought my father was God*, New York 2002, pag. XVIII)

Gypsies on Amorgos

As we all know, there are different ways to look at reality. This is also true for what I yearly experience on the Greek island of Amorgos, mostly in the months of May and June. What I see, is a large group of people, arriving by boat and some cars. Driving around, one family selling chairs and pots, two young man selling melons, potatoes and tomatoes; an old man, a chair-bottomer, sitting at the quay, concentrated working on the reparation of chairs. One way of looking at the group of visitors is as follows. The women have a special way of wearing their dresses, a red knot in their black hair, proud or fierce expression, an intense way of negotiation, every boy, girl and grow-up is playing a part in this selling-game. They keep to themselves, sleep in two tents on the quay, somewhere aside. In a way they are fascinating strangers, you could say and you can study them by focussing on the differences with the local Greeks.

Another way of looking at these people leads to the following picture. They sell goods that are cheaper than the regular prices on the island; they come back time and again, during three days, till they have sold as much as they can. They drive around with the family, some younger men apart; a woman and her daughter apart, and the old chair-bottomer by himself. So they spread the work and they speak Greek with the locals, are recognized as regular visitors and people do not respond in an aggressive way towards them. They may be different, and referred to as Jifti’s (or Gypsies), but as relative strangers they have an economic and thereby a social function. Because of that they form part of the Greek community and history as such.

The second perspective interests me most: not the differences with other Greeks, but the patterns of interacting. The group of people I yearly see are Greeks, specialised in different vocations. They live an itinerant life, are self-employed, travel around in a group of families, and cannot afford to behave themselves to badly, otherwise there will be repercussions the next time they come to the island. For me, looking with the eye of a tourist, this spectacle forms an integrated part of Greek life on the islands. What makes it more special, is that this travelling lifestyle has disappeared from the landscape in the Netherlands, where I come from.

Of course I realise that it is part of human nature to focus on differences, more than on similarities. Because of that in all kinds of societies groups of people are neglected or discriminated against. One of the results is that their stories and ways of life are left out of historical accounts. It took a long time before the contributions of labourers, women and migrants were recognized as such and became an object of study by academics. An exception, up till this day, are the vicissitudes (the adventures) of so-called

Gypsy-groups. They seem to have a kind of history on their own, apart from the rest of society. They are studied as a social problem, as criminals, as beggars and poor people, as persecuted minorities, as victims of the Nazis. Or, and that is let's say the approach that is tickled by fascination, their songs are studied, their dances, their ritual codes, their way of dressing, the music, the languages, their origin, so the typical Gypsy-group characteristics. What makes them so different, what are the inner sources of these exotic outsiders?

In general the focus has been less on modes of interaction with the surrounding societies. They never seem to be studied as an integral part of for example Hungarian, Greek, English or German society – the same is true for the Netherlands. For that reason we still know very little about many aspects of their historical evolution in European societies. You can fill a library with books and articles on Gypsies, but we had to wait for the eighties and the nineties of the 20th century before good empirical research on their professions, or on what happened to them during the Nazi-period, or comparative studies on people with itinerant professions – to name a few interesting topics – was done. And still a lot of sources have stayed unexplored. Why is that? Why are European societies so indifferent to acknowledging that people that travel around with their families and are self-employed, deserve a place on the historical stage?

There is a lot that can be said about the causes for this neglect, but I like to focus here on the decisive role academics have played in the defining process of the groups we are talking about. Especially the idea that arose at the end of the 18th century that all the Gypsies in the world do belong to one people (one nation without a country), with common characteristics, a language of their own, of which the roots are to be found in India, where they would have fled from centuries ago. Since then they were looked upon as Orientals – and, so was thought, these are, look at the Jews or the Muslims, hard to assimilate – and certainly in no way akin to the indigenous inhabitants of the countries where they lived. In the consciousness of the academics who wrote about them they were set apart, and policy-makers, police-forces and the like took over these ideas and used them in their daily work.

The founding father of Gypsology

To find out how this process of historical thinking on Gypsies has been developed, I studied the entries of encyclopedias, detecting the general knowledge, looking at the most influential works. Starting with Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann book, published in Göttingen 1783. Before him all sorts of images existed about travelling groups, as spies for the Muslims, heathens, poor beggars, former Jews, Egyptian sorcerers and the like. Also images derived from popular stories, plays and novels: people from a middle-world, with magic powers, members of a secret society, with women as witches, untrustworthy, but powerful men, and besides that the image of freedom loving adventurers. The world was a smaller place then than nowadays, especially in the perception of people. Only an elite knew what happened outside of his or her own city, village or region. Strangers and newcomers were looked upon with suspicion, and most of the times a lot of gossip circulated about them being completely different.

Interest of the young historian Grellmann was in tune with the mentality and preoccupations of his time – which is the case with most of us. There circulated rumours about Hungarian Gypsies who would have been man-eaters (cannibals), so they were a good theme to write about. Also philological studies flowered in these days, and the roots of European languages seemed to be buried in India, which led to investigations into the origin of languages and of people. Societies, this was certainly the case in Germany, started to become interested in the foundations of their national communities and were looking for traces of an age long history. This consciousness of policy-makers and historians about who belonged to their ‘imagined national community’ and who not, led to clearer definitions of who were domestic, so to say, and who not. The idea arose that the spirit, the soul of a nation (*der Nationalgeist*) could be found in his most pure manifestation in language, in folk-stories, in poetry and the like – the expression of our inner selves by way of words and sounds. Also the study of skulls and facial characteristics of individuals became very popular – the search for origins led to the search for men’s place in God’s great chain of being. Not surprisingly, for we are talking about academics raised in the West, the appreciation of the human face and skull was rooted in esthetic conceptions about the old Greek artforms. Classification in the end always leads to hierarchy. Another important steering mechanism for Grellmann were the politics of the empress and later the emperor of Austria-Hungary, Joseph the Second, whose focus was to enforce strict discipline on the poor, the workshy, and transform the unwanted aliens into civilized citizens, all speaking the same official language: German; minority-groups had to be assimilated. This led to a larger consciousness of social problems and directives meant to discipline all kind of deviant categories in society.

Influenced by all this, Grellmann did his research and wrote his book, a kind of historical-ethnographic-linguistic portrait. For him, in the end, there was no doubt that all the different Gypsy-groups he assembled material about, in the end belonged to ONE Oriental people, scattered throughout the world, most of the times living as a kind of *Fremdkörper*, as a burden for society. Very much sticking to themselves, marrying in the own clans, having morals, codes and customs, which hold them apart from the host societies. To his idea their essence, their spirit as a people, was unchangeable and therefore they should refuse to intermingle with the civilians around them. Nevertheless, he came up with instructions for the improvement of their circumstances, as the Emperor had asked for, because they had to be assimilated into the settled society, if necessary with force. Some of the ideas he formulated were practised for a very long time by different governments, for example taking young children away from their parents and raising them in guest families. Only by such measures would culture in the end conquer nature, was the ruling idea. Sedentarisation, christianization, and learning to speak the language of the country, were Grellmanns directives.

His book was an immediate success, highly praised. Several reprints were made, and translations into English, French and also Dutch. Until deep into the 20th century academics (and others) considered it as a well, full of knowledge and sound information. In my own study, however, I delved deep into the the sources the young historian used during his research. Although he gives us a very detailed ethnographic sketch of Gypsy-groups, the man had

never actually be in contact with Gypsies or observed their way of life. Everything he wrote about their nature, codes of behaviour, vocations and cultural characteristics, he derived from a Hungarian minister, who had written a series of articles about Gypsies in a contemporary magazine. Till recently his name was unknown, but in the meantime we know who he is. What we do not know, is in how far the Hungarian got his information by first hand or by hearsay. The same is true for the linguistic analysis Grellmann has made. The man was not a linguist, and got all his sources from his somewhat excentric landlord, a bibliographer, aiming to write THE history of the world, but not being able to put his ideas on paper. He had a huge collection of books and manuscripts and had gathered lists of words from everywhere. Grellmann, being his tenant, got permission to read what he could use. Because he did not know who had assembled the words and from whose mouth, his analysis was purely a formal one. The similarity between part of the collected Gypsy-words and a dialect spoken in North-East India, for him did the trick – to which I add that others at the same time came to more or less the same conclusion. The strange thing is that, as I have understood it well, all western languages derive from the mother language Sanskrit, so in the end we all belong to the same proto-family, including the Gypsies. In other words, the eyes of national mythmakers in those days were all directed towards the East. Having said this, his comparisons of words led Grellmann to the conclusion that since the Gypsy-language had roots in the far East, the native speakers of that language had to be from there too. Through the centuries they would have stayed who they are: a caste of Indian traders, craftsmen and artists.

What I realise is that linguists, just like archeologists, are trained to look for the historical roots of languages. But my point is: what happens when we look at all the people in the world speaking a variant or dialect of English? Somewhere in the past their forefathers will have migrated from the British isles. Does that make all English speaking individuals in the world at this moment to one people? Maybe if they themselves would feel it that way, and cherish a common myth of their land of origin, as orthodox Jews did (and still do). This is definitely not the case with all kind of Gypsy-groups, nor with English speaking groups. This aspect we need to elaborate more properly.

The Walking Lord of Gypsy Lore

Much more could be said about the fascinating ties between academic thinking and political ideas during the Enlightenment, but I leave Göttingen now. It's time to focus on the way Grellmann's work influenced other authors, in other countries, for example England in the 19th century. As I said, a translation of Grellmann's text was made and did not stay unnoticed overseas. It stimulated some clergyman to look for clans of itinerants in their own backyards. They sent questionnaires around, collected information from everywhere, but in their general and historical picture they stayed very close to what their German predecessor had written. He had made a universal imprint and set the tone for the overall way of looking at the object. His authority did not wane for at least another century and a half.

The interesting thing in this early British publications on Gypsies is that they also contain local observations on family-groups with ambulant professions. These passages differ from the more general chapters, in that they are much more positive about the social functioning of itinerant groups.

In fact, like Judith Okely would do 150 years later, a kind of workpattern was laid bare. With groups of families who travelled around for their work in a geographically restricted area. The goods and the services of these people were needed on a local level, so people mutually profited from each other. In the first large account of John Hoyland we discover touching portraits of families and individuals, about whom very personal stories are told. You can say that the general picture of Gypsies is negative, but the micro-stories about them much are more true to life. The greatest concern of the clergyman was, of course, that the people did not follow their christian duties, and kept their children away from the parishes. The religious concern dominated.

This was, to a certain level, also true for George Borrow, the Walking Lord of Gypsy Lore, bible seller and well known author of travelguides, half-autobiographical novels and amateur-historical accounts of Gypsies in England, Spain and Russia. His work was widely read and his observations were considered to be true to life, because 'he had been there and lived with them', as was generally believed. Some of his books, like *Lavengro*, entered the British canon and are still part of the vast body of travelbooks. The man spoke and read more than ten languages, became famous when he sold bibles in Spain for the British Foreign and Bible Society, and in his picaresque novels about his adventures in the Catholic Peninsula several Gypsy-characters play an important role. They are middle-man between the under- and the upperworld. In his writings they are smugglers, thieves, boxers, but also staggering romantic and pure-hearted souls. In his imagery Borrow was influenced by authors as Cervantes (the hero on a horse and his helper on a mule, mysterious meetings, imprisonment and escapes) and Pushkin, the exponent of melancholic ballads in which the hero and his heroine are driven apart by the forces of society. But his job as a seller of translated bibles also transformed him, that is in his stories, into a kind of Christ-character, who tries to bring his Message to the heathens of the world. And were Gypsies not the ultimate symbols of disbelief, so a rewarding prey for a man with a mission? Besides all this, Borrow was also fascinated by language, and he collected scraps of Gypsy-words where ever he travelled. He gave money and tabacco to informants, bought material assembled by others and learned the language (and variants of it).

What happened then is one of the many ironies in Gypsy-studies. In his later years, when he met Gypsies on the British isles or elsewhere, he noticed that they were not able to speak Romani in a proper way. He had become the judge of their language, while he was not a Gypsy at all. In his opinion the ancient Gypsy life-style was vanishing quickly. The image of the True Gypsy in his head, composed by the reading of novels, actual meetings in Spain and Russia, his own imagination and elements derived from books like that of Grellmann, this image did not match with reality. And in the end he blamed the travelling groups he met or where he read about, that they betrayed their centuries old, original culture. They were not pure, not real Gypsies anymore, but halfcastes, rim-ram, the scum of society. They were dishonest, antisocial tramps, with mixed blood and a danger for society. In the end Borrow was only interested in the archeological remnants of a culture on the brink, a paradise like search for purity. And he considered himself fit to judge who was real and who was seriously afflicted.

In his footsteps many students, gathered in the Gypsy Lore Society, which was founded in the eighties in Edinburgh, started to look for traces of the so-called original Gypsy lifestyle, not only in England, but also in other parts of Europe: Germany, Hungary and France. Words and tracks of origins were their favourite objects of study, but they also collected songs, verbs, stories, magical and ritual practices, codes of purity and the like. Although they stressed again and again that Gypsies and other Travellers were very reluctant to reveal their secrets, especially their language, every Gypsiologist in the end appeared to succeed in breaking down the walls of their distrust and to become friends with this secretive nation he studied. On the one hand they said that Gypsies were cheating people, or distorting stories about their lifestyle a little bit in their contacts with Gadje (non-Gypsies), on the other hand every word from Gypsy-lips was written down as if it reflected fragments of the truth. Most of the time, as research on some of the leading contributors to the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society has shown, the assembled information was gathered from a very small amount of informants, or it was an adaption of earlier published texts. Much more research has to be done on the vast body of texts written by Gypsiologists the last century, but the opinions about their trustworthiness differ largely.

The thing is, most of them were only interested in what at a certain moment became indicated as racially pure Gypsies. It were not the hawkers, ambulant traders, itinerant craftsmen, or seasonal labourers as such that raised their fascination, they started a hunt for the real thing. The families with tents, horsemen, tinkers and the like, preferably with exotic clothing, long smoking-pipes and all the well-known attributes of Gypsy-life. More than one Gypsiologist fell in love with a Gypsy-girl (going native, as anthropologists would say), ran away with her, travelled with Gypsies for a while, or felt that his soul was destined to roam. It was the age of romanticism, and the age of folklore – the ways of simple people – and Borrow and his descendants were very much attracted by this. It offered, that is for a while, a way to escape from the pressing ties of contemporary society.

Some readers may think that this is a too severe criticism on people that can't defend themselves anymore, but the thing is that the effects of their publications was not a deeper insight in the history of Travelling groups, neither an improvement of the circumstances under which they had to live. On the contrary. All these rather noncommittal studies had negative effects on national and local policies towards itinerant groups. They seemed to prove that fullblooded Gypsies were people from the past, on the edge of vanishing. And the mixed bloods, living in the margins of society, were not of real interest for the Gypsiologists, and they were considered as a category of unreal Gypsies, so not worthwhile to defend. This division in thinking about Grellmann's pan-national people of Gypsies, started with the publications of Borrow and the authors after him who felt inspired by his writings.

A final step backwards

A next and very fatal step in thinking on Gypsies leads us back to Germany, first of all to the criminological perspective. Because of more and more accepted categories such as real and mixed blooded Gypsies, good and bad itinerants, people with and without an alibi to travel around and earn a living, governments and especially the controllers, that is the police, became rather

rigid in their behaviour. A paper machine was set in motion, with all kinds of certificates you needed when you wanted to work outside of your residence, but the police also came up with a registration-system of wandering civilians. The idea behind this was that they were a potential threat to society, so from beggars, tramps, itinerants who were once controlled on the roads, and everyone who had committed a little theft or whatever, was made a file, in which personal information, a photograph and fingerprints was stored. In a well ordered society the government and his servants had to know where their nationals were and what they had done in the past. Non-sedentary nationals caused suspicion, because it was more difficult to control them. The existing fear was that they escaped the guarding eye of the ones in charge. Poverty, social marginality, criminality and dwelling around seemed to belong to one and the same category.

Another influential academic discipline since the end of the 19th century were the eugenetics, a social variant of Darwinism. The central focus of researchers in this field was to look at the social defects in categories of people, and as a follow-up think about a policy to improve good breeding qualities. It is interesting to look at the kind of sources that were used as the basis for this approach, namely: medical files, dossiers about the psychological make-up of people, school reports and evaluations of employers. The ideas about the social deviations of individuals and the groups that they would belong to, were always based on witnesses of authorities, so on the written statements of others than the people themselves. The ruling classifications of bourgeois society were never disputed. The effects of such unquestioned basic assumptions become clear when we look at the work of the youth psychiatrist Robert Ritter, who was doing research on Gypsies and likewise groups in the thirties and the forties. He was certainly not a Nazi and even wrote critical articles about Hitler and his regime. At the same time he was a strong believer in eugenetics and the new policy did provide him with the means to combine academic knowledge with practical management.

It all started very innocently. The doctor got teenagers in his medical practice who were very nervous, at the same time energetic, had a big mouth and were hardly educated. He became fascinated by their ambivalence and extended his observance to their natural environment. He started to watch them in their playground, like an anthropologist, and asked bystanders about the background of the boys. By doing so, he found out that most of these children came from itinerant families, and this put him on the trail of paper evidence. Just like his fellow eugenetics did, he went out to collect files with information about these families. He became fascinated by the idea of what these youngsters were trying to hide for the outside world. Their frame of mind he labelled as '*getarnte Schwachsinn*', hidden feeble-mindedness. What he did, fitted in the primordial body of ideas about racial groups, as communities that have always stuck to themselves. Their history is interpreted as a group-immanent process. The notion of 'social construction' did not belong to the vocabulary of those days, so Robert Ritter really believed in the essence of a '*Jenische Menschenschlag*', a kind of wandering tribe. A type of people of which he discovered the contours by studying all kinds of government documents: social welfare and state support dossiers, criminological files and so on. This information he combined with genealogical research on the

families of these kids. He made very extended family trees, which included uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces. He tried to map the complete environment of every individual under scrutiny. This search led him back as far as the 18th century, a period in which he encountered all sorts of ambulant folks, but also people who were labelled as Gypsies or whose lifestyle would have been Gypsylike. He acknowledged that they did belong to different groups, whose characteristics were not so easy to differentiate, but he treated them in the end as one category, that of '*Der Jenische Menschenschlag*'.

In the eugenic as well as in the racial discourse of these days – not only in Germany, but also in the United States or, for example, Switzerland or Skandinavia – the key-words were: purity, full-bloodedness, hygienic lifestyle, hard labour. The other side of this picture (an abstract ideal), was of course the lack of these values, which would course danger for the civic society. All kind of groups who were supposed to deviate from the mainstream were analyzed as potential aliens to the ideal society. Think of men who drank too much, who were unemployed for too long, prostitutes, homosexuals, Jehovah's witnesses, or men and women who lived together without being married. In fact all individuals who acted in a way that was considered to be a potential threat for the foundations of society, were labelled as '*Gemeinschaftsfremd*' or '*Gemeinschaftsunfähig*'. Among all these categories the Gypsies or Gypsy-like groups were an interesting theme for academics. Besides that they were the object of government policies, as they had always been. Although the basic idea now became that real Gypsies should be allowed to live their own life in isolated areas. Only the mixed-bloods should be sterilized, so that their wandering gene would not be reproduced any longer.

The combination of Nazi-policies and academic interest lead to a death-trap for the larger category of wandering people, but especially for the ones who were labelled as Gypsy, or whose ancestors were labelled as such. On the base of his genealogical research Robert Ritter made racial diagnoses (*Gutachtliche Äusserungen*), who were used by the authorities to select citizens for labour camps and later for concentration camps. So, it was not someone's itinerant lifestyle or anti-social behaviour that was decisive. Also not the outcomes of anthropological or linguistic research. No, of overriding importance was the stamp of the ancestors on the contemporary position of their descendants. When a citizen who lived a regular life as a clerk somewhere in Munich had the bad luck of a couple of forefathers who were seen as Gypsies, he ran the risk that, because of his position in Ritters' extended family-trees, he (or she) was categorized as a Gypsy mixed-blood – a label that could lead to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The ironical, if not plainly cynical result of this German research was, that one and a half century after the book of Grellmann had been published, dr. Ritter thought he did prove that 90% of the so-called Gypsies actually were mixed-bloods (half-castes). The whole concept of one people (one nation), who did not allow outsiders to join them, and therefore had stayed one homogeneous ethnic category for ages, was proved to be false. That is, for the German-speaking countries. But the eugenists did not interpret these evidence of mixing as signs for integration or social interaction. On the contrary, they interpreted it as a kind of pollution, as if the wandering gene had entered the body of the German nation, undermining it's sedentary

foundation. What the academics proposed was: isolation and sterilization. What the Nazi authorities in the end thought to be the best solution was: concentration camps and death.

One people, one nation again

After the Second World War all the perspectives I have discussed here remained in existence, even the combination of genealogical and criminological research, especially in Germany. The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society experienced a new Golden Age, with the center in North America this time. The leading authors in the field still are linguists and ethnologists, although I have to add that there have been published some excellent anthropological studies too. A real innovation, however, is the approach in which researchers focus on aspects of minority-formation and ethnic profiles. Much has been done on anti-Gypsyism through the ages and the history of persecution during the Nazi-regime. Especially in Germany many publications have paid attention to the vicissitudes of Gypsy-groups, as a neglected category of victims. This uprise of research was directly linked to the process of *Wiedergutmachung*, for which individual Gypsies – Sinti und Roma – and their self-interest groups needed more information about the historical roots of state policies. They had to prove that they were prosecuted as members of a racial category, while the judges initially refused to acknowledge their claims, because they would have been eliminated because of their anti-social behaviour. To win this theoretical struggle research was very much needed.

Another new impulse in the seventies came from sociologists in the field of migration- and ethnic studies. In a way their perspective was aimed at the emancipation of minorities and the explanation of the exclusion mechanisms of western societies. This led to questions as: What is the relation between the welfare state or ruling socio-policies and contemporary minorities? In fact this academic interest was also a response to the consequences of the racial ideology of not only the Nazis, but also the policies of the former empires. This explains why the leading academics in those days were from Great-Britain. As with my own research on the Dutch East-Indians from the former colony Indonesia, that was in the beginning of the eighties, the trend was to look for discriminatory patterns in society and to explain the deep-rooted prejudices towards for example Eurasian groups, but also towards Gypsy-Travellers. I think the choice for the topics of this sociological and social-historical research was a direct consequence of a political anti-racism movement. And it was also about the restoration of the human rights of Gypsy-groups – on a national and an international level - of whom many found themselves in an awkward socio-economic position in many European countries.

What happened in the eighties and the nineties, is that the let's say *Wiedergutmachungs* and the anti-racist research got more and more intertwined. Much later than in Jewish circles a small Gypsy-elite, existing of representatives of interest groups and some academics, were trying to combine forces in an international body. They also find some leading Gysiologists, who themselves are non-Gypsy, on their side. In their mutual fight for a better cause, however, they are confronted with some paradoxes which are not without danger. In the end it comes down to this. It took a lot of effort for the self-interest groups to prove that the Nazis did persecute

Gypsies and similar groups as members of a racial category. Besides the Jews they represented the ultimate ethnic others. In this time consuming case a process of self-ascription as 'being different' was initiated. What many Gypsies had in common was what happened to them and their ancestors in Nazi-times or, later onwards, under communist regimes. They were stigmatized because of their lifestyle and to get this acknowledged, they had to stress collective characteristics. One could say that it was a variant of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Once the national level was left and representatives tried to get acknowledgement in international platforms, especially with the European Union, they were forced to construct a relation between their backward position as a minority in many countries and their ethnic ties. On an intellectual level they start to revitalize the concept of 'one Roma people', a nation without a country, an ethnic tribe in the diaspora, who still kept their transnational ties alive. The social reality, however, is completely different, as we know from studies on Hungary, England and Spain. But to get recognition in European bodies, the old myth, created by Grellmann, Borrow and all the other Gypsiologists, is reanimated.

Historical knowledge is manipulated all the time, and not only by politicians. And from a sociological point of view it can be quite interesting to analyse what some of the Roma-leaders are actually doing. But the ten years I have done research in this field - not by studying the lives of Gypsies, but trying to understand the way western societies have dealt with groups labelled as such – have made me watchful and concerned. By stressing, again and again, that Gypsy- or Roma-groups have a history by themselves, which distinguishes them from the rest of society, representatives burn the bridges between 'their people' and the nations where they live. Which leads me back to my observations on the Greek island of Amorgos. In my opinion the history of these itinerant families is first of all part of the national narrative of Greece, and not part of an isolated, ethnically founded story of a scattered people. It is true, the tolerance towards minorities, certainly in the political domain, has been given an ideological foundation. The socio-economic position of the groups in question, however, has not equally improved. The prejudices towards travelling or formerly travelling groups are deeply rooted in European consciousness. As long as the value of their (partly) itinerant lifestyle is not acknowledged, in the end the call for assimilation will rise again. The idea of one people in a diaspora, for which my historical research has produced no evidence at all, will turn out to be contra-productive – and dangerous. Don't play with old myths, would be my humble advise.

Summarization by statements

Coming at the end of this article I will try to summarize my findings in ten statements. In the first place we have seen that in the image of Gypsies one always comes across two components: fascination and fear. For fascination I refer to the works of George Borrow, the Gypsy Lore Society, and the press. The fear has always come from the institutions for poor relief, civilization movements, the eugenetics, the assimilationists. Secondly, in the course of the centuries Gypsies have always been the symbol for the non-Christian outsider. From foreign heathens to spies for the Muslims, converted Jews, people who stick to themselves and do not belong to the core of European

societies. This overall image seriously blocks their social integration in rural as well as urban communities.

Thirdly, the way western societies think (and have thought) about Gypsies is rather based on novels, plays, so derived from literary imagination (think of Cervantes, Pushkin, the Carmen and the like) than on encounters in reality. In the world of fiction Gypsies are the symbol for another way of life; they are the middlemen between society and the underworld. Recognizable in different characters: sorcerers, witches, smugglers, thieves, romantic tramps and natural wanderers. In the labelled interaction they predominantly are accepted as enchanting artists: as performers, musicians, fortune-tellers, flamenco-dancers and the like. Fourth, the reason that academics, policy-makers and the media still think and write so unbalanced about Gypsies has to do with the social distance between them and their subject. All kind of stereotypes keep their worlds apart. A Gypsy who does not fit the existing image immediately is cherished as THE exception.

Fifth, there is this idea about Gypsies that they belong to a secret people (or nation) and refuse outsiders to enter their social circle. Nevertheless do all authors on the subject mention, not without proud, that they have succeeded in getting down the wall of distrust and were recognized as friends. So Gypsy communities are, like so many subcultural groups, less closed than prejudice says them to be. Sixth, the True Gypsy does not exist. Neither does the true Greek or Dutchman. The search for this specimen has led to the discovery of half-castes and mixed bloods, as we have seen in the works of George Borrow and Robert Ritter.

Seventh, in the christian ethics 'the other', the non-believer, is susceptible to change – otherwise conversion would not be possible. In the image on Gypsies one does not recognize much of this views. Here we find a clear parallel with the perspective on Jews as civilians who are supposed to be insusceptible for change. Eighth, the idea that Gypsies, as members of a kind of transnational nation without a country, do have a history of their own (a *Sondergeschichte*) and ultimately are outsiders in every community where they live, is a sign for the ignorance of what we know about the social interaction between these groups and the rest of society. The thing is: Gypsies are different as well as the same, as is the case with most groups. But people, in general, have the tendency to focus on differences, more than on similarities. We are obsessed with what separates us from others, and neglect the resemblances.

Ninth, the recent paradigm in academic circles to describe Gypsies first of all as victims of discrimination and persecution, obstructs their integration into surrounding societies. It is a false and dangerous way of self-labelling and it activates old prejudices. Without knowledge of their socio-economic functioning in European nations through time the negative thinking on Gypsies will not change. Tenth, the 'one people' concept is a response to the fate of Gypsy-groups during the Second World War and the result of western emancipation movements arising in the seventies. It has to do with *Wiedergutmachung*, anti-racist movement, critical analysis of excluding mechanisms in society, and the introduction of the diaspora-concept. Their international plea does not reflect the reality and the perception of Gypsies in different nations. In the end it will have the effect of a boomerang: they are not

one of us, so why bother any longer about their social circumstances and they do not belong here.

Educational recommendations

In my research I have not come upon evidence for a widely felt Gypsy-unity in western-Europe during the last three centuries. Contemporary stress on such ties forms part of a top down approach, now from a Gypse elite, forced by international standards. As in the centuries before, the Romani Union and others revitalize the idea of a different cultural-political entity. This leads to extra attention for ethnic boundaries and cultural standardization, for example in language. Academics help creating such a linguistic pattern as part of a politically motivated cultural movement. Such an educational traject will set youngsters apart from their age-group and possibly block their education. Besides that, from the scarce literature on this topic we know that the international agenda does not correspond with local wishes and initiatives.

The alternative, again, is to focus on the connections between people – that is, Gypsies and non-Gypsies – less than on what separates them. What we can do, for example, is to take a city or a neighbourhood as research unit, and look at the modes of interaction. Not only at this moment, but also in a long-term perspective. We have to analyse families and their professions, as we did in our Dutch 1995-exhibitions '*Mensen van de reis*' (People on the move). By doing so the socio-economic function of itinerant groups will become clear, and therefore their social value in national communities. Another approach could be to collect the narratives, the family-stories of Gypsy-groups, and combine these with general developments in society. We have to think then about modes of incorporation as intermarriage-patterns, vocational shifts and the like. Furthermore, we have to analyse the history of Gypsy-settlements in certain regions, and connect these with other regional currents. In that process we have to keep an open eye for the influx of newcomers.

For in the end education has to be about the acknowledgement of differences. At the same time the traces of togetherness have to be laid bare. For too long the Gypsy has been an opposite self, a supposed 'foreign traveller'. Like the Jew and the Muslim are the symbols for non-christianity, the Blacks for non-Whites, the Middle East for the non-West; and so on and so forth. Only historical knowledge can break the chains of this mythical concepts of the ultimate others.

References

In this article I have tried to combine the contents of two talks I gave, one in a series of lectures on 'Gypsies and Europe', organized by the Humanities Department of the Stony Brook University, Long Island, New York (October 8, 2003); the other in the workshop 'Gypsy Identities in Europe: policy and research', organized by the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology of the University of Ionnina (October 18, 2003). The academic foundation is: Wim Willems, *In Search of the True Gypsy. From Enlightenment to Final Solution* (Frank Cass, London 1997); Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems and Annemarie Cottaar, *Gypsies and other itinerant groups. A socio-historical approach* (MacMillan, London 1998); and Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen, 'Gypsies in the diaspora? The pitfalls of a biblical concept'. In:

Histoire Sociale/Social History, Vol. XXXIII, No. 66, November 2000, pp. 251-269. In these publications one can find references to empirical sources and the works of others.

Athan Gotovos, Melpomeni Doka.

Minority discourse, social state and the imposition of identity: side-effects of the ideology of multiculturalism.

Abstract

Minorities and their rights vis-à-vis the national state is a central topic in contemporary European institutional and human rights activists' discourse. The activity of supra-national (european) institutions, politicians and human rights activists can be perceived as an attempt to establish a protectionist frame within which certain social groups are "enlightened" about their identities as a basis for the legitimization of demands on the state, especially on the social state.

Social state's policies towards (officially recognized or not) minorities may, under circumstances, be identified by the ideology of minority protection through identity destigmatization and identity enhancing.

Although some groups (and individuals belonging to them) may be eager to take on the new identity as a convenient vehicle for setting up demands or claims, others may vehemently object the whole process and may denounce it as an external imposition of identity on them. The paper will discuss a case of resistance addressed by individuals and collectivities in North Greece (East Macedonia) against, agents of the (social) state when they attempted to redefine people's identities. This type of resistance may be conceived as an act of defending the group's self-conception against the danger of alienation in the process of minority enlightenment.

Becky Taylor

Travellers, Citizenship and the early Welfare State

The focus of my work has been analysing the development of Traveller-state relations in the twentieth century and particularly in understanding the experiences of Travellers in the era of the Welfare State. In my work I argue that Travellers have a distinct history, and that their experiences as a people are intrinsically tied to the history of the mainstream, and profoundly influenced by the stereotypes forced upon them by settled society.

The two prevailing, and enduring, stereotypes of Travellers have been as current in the corridors of government as they have been in popular imagination. Travellers are either seen as social failures who are unable to cope with the pressures of modern life, or as a brightly coloured people with flashing eyes who live on remote heaths untouched by civilisation. In the first formulation, they are nothing more than an unfortunate part of the detritus of society, best dealt with under the category of vagrant or social deviant, and in the second, they are seen as timeless and unchanging, and therefore as having no history.

At the same time as acknowledging the importance of these stereotypes, I am anxious to move away from the depiction of Traveller-state relations that tends to go something like ‘... hanging of Gypsies in the eighteenth century... brutal evictions in the 1960s... social exclusion today’. While the existence of these stereotypes has been crucial in misinforming Traveller-state relations and in the development of prejudicial attitudes, it is too crude a portrait to stand up to rigorous historical analysis. My aim has been to demonstrate how prejudicial action (as opposed to attitude) within Britain has not been unrelenting, nor has it been enacted in a static context, nor had it always the same justification. I have tried to move away from obstructive categories of the unified state as ‘oppressor’ and the equally uniform depiction of Traveller as ‘victim’. I believe that this more nuanced and informed position, rather than letting the British state ‘off the hook’, in fact allows a serious and grounded analysis of the shortcomings of official treatment of British Travellers.

A key part in developing my perspective has been to disaggregate the monolithic category of the state, and to consider the varying reactions of central and local government to the challenges posed by the presence of Travellers. My work also reveals the extent to which Travellers were active agents in their own history, who while they existed within a climate of prejudice, saw themselves not as victims, but as a separate, and often superior, people.

To show how Traveller history has been intrinsically entwined with that of majority society, while at the same time providing them with their own distinct experiences, in this paper I aim to provide a brief insight into how the creation of the British Welfare State¹ in the late 1940s affected Travellers. Did the extension of ‘cradle to

¹ There has been much debate over the precise definition of the ‘Welfare State’ and whether Britain ever enjoyed one. While acknowledging it is not an unproblematic

grave' provision, and the inclusive idea of a minimum standard of living for all have a beneficial impact on Travellers, and profoundly change their relationship with government agencies? In this paper I show that the traditional stereotypes of Travellers continued to have influence, but that they were also supplemented by a new range of concerns that specifically related to the era of post-war reconstruction. Before I go any further I should say that in this paper I concentrate on how the negative view of Travellers as social deviants continued to hold sway with policy makers. While romantic ideas about Travellers were also present throughout this period, they tended to imply government inaction, stressing as they did Travellers separateness from society and the racially unalterable nature of their nomadism.

I begin by quickly outlining social policy approaches to Travellers before 1939, and go on to indicate how general social policy changed with the development of the Welfare State. I then discuss the implications that this new theory of social welfare and citizenship had for Travellers, before going to illustrate, with examples, how things worked in practice.

In the inter-war period the question of welfare provision for Travellers received the attention of two Commissions in Scotland, one in 1918 and the other in 1936.² Those giving evidence to both Committees drew on a mixture of environmentalist and racialised theories to explain how a travelling lifestyle was largely the result of poverty and social failure.³ The main complaint in both reports was that Travellers had remained separate from the rest of the community, had not advanced with them, and instead preyed on the benefits created by the rest of the population. The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Child) representative interviewed in 1918 stated that while Travellers treated their children better than did many of the poor from the slums, nevertheless it was a 'great moral wrong' to bring up children on the road:

[Traveller children] are allowed to grow up in ignorance and idleness. Tinkers and vagrants contribute little or nothing to the common wealth of the country. Theirs is a parasitic life which subsists on the industry and thrift of others. They are social outcasts. It is a most serious form of cruelty to children to permit them to grow up under such conditions.⁴

term – for an introduction to this discussion see R. Lowe 'The Second World War, Consensus and the Foundation of the Welfare State' C20th British History 1 (2) (1990) 152-182 – for the purposes of this work it is taken to mean the provision of the five 'core' services (social security, health care, housing education and the personal social services) and the fact that these were widely seen as a universal right, subject to the exceptions discussed below.

² These were the Report of the Departmental Committee on Tinkers in Scotland, 1918 and the more general Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy in Scotland, 1936 (Cmd. 5194).

³ For examples of this in the 1918 Report, see pp. 8-9 where it discusses the 'causes tending to perpetuate vagrancy'. It sees there being five main factors: racial, economic, legislative, topographical, and social.

⁴ Report on Tinkers, 1918 12-13

Here no actual physical cruelty is alleged, instead, something far worse, social cruelty, depriving a child of the chance to have a normal, that is settled, upbringing, and to contribute to the common good. The authors of the 1918 Report wanted to build on the back of the Children's Act and the Great War, which had 'placed duties of citizenship' on Travellers,⁵ and encourage Travellers to settle and find regular employment. They proposed dispersing the settlement of Traveller families in order to dilute their culture and break their social networks. This was to be reinforced by placing the women under the supervision of a local woman to learn the proper skills of a housewife. Their husbands were to be similarly supervised by a man in the community, and given training for regular employment, and the children were to go to school. Nationally, there was to be an Inspector of Tinkers who was:

[To] act in a very real sense *in loco parentis* to his wards. He should shepherd them continually until such time as they are able to take their place among responsible and self-respecting citizens.⁶

These plans make it clear that the bureaucrats and reformers who steered the 1918 Report saw Travellers as being irresponsible and child-like and needing supervision and guidance to ensure they followed the correct social path.

Both the 1918 and the 1936 Reports made the assumption that vagrants and Travellers were social failures, people who have not been able to keep pace with the demands of civilisation. The solution for Travellers was to 'gradually... absorb [them] into ordinary society by housing them and securing for their children a full education'.⁷ These attitudes were largely theoretical in the inter-war period as government did not look upon Travellers as a priority, and instead left matters to the piecemeal efforts of private individuals and missions.⁸ They were also not particularly out of step with more general attitudes towards welfare of the period that still worked within a framework of the deserving and undeserving poor and tried to tie receipt of benefits to some form of moral, as well as material, improvement.

The Second World War and the construction of the Welfare State changed mainstream social policy in two key ways. The universal provision of services and benefits theoretically removed both the stigma and the overt social control elements to welfare provision.⁹ Perhaps more significantly, the new and extended services instead became linked, rather than opposed, to the idea of citizenship. While for the general public this was much-welcomed shift as it confirmed services and benefits as a *right*,

⁵ *ibid.*, 22-23

⁶ *ibid.*, 27

⁷ Report on Vagrancy in Scotland, 1936 94

⁸ These too tended to be conducted along similar lines. See for example the efforts of the Home Mission Society in Scotland in the 1930s, in a scheme where they established a network of camps open to 'local' and licensed Travellers, who were expected to send their children to school and engage in income generating craftwork schemes in return for the privilege [D. Maitland An Account of Gypsy Camps in Surrey Supervised by Hurtwood Control Committee, with a Bearing on Tinker Camps in Scotland (North Berwick, East Lothian 1.6.1932)].

⁹ See for example T. H. Marshall Social Policy in the C20th (London, 1985) (5th edition, ed. A. M. Rees) chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of this shift.

the implications for Travellers were quite different. Much of the basis for the new thinking was derived from the idea that the Welfare State was founded on the notion of reciprocity, for as T. H. Marshall stated:

Citizenship 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... Citizenship requires a bond... a direct sense of community membership... If citizenship is invoked in defence of rights, the corresponding duties of citizenship cannot be ignored... Rights have been multiplied, and they are precise... [Duties include] the duty to pay taxes and insurance contributions... Education and military service are also compulsory. The other duties are vague, and are included in the general obligation to live the life of a good citizen... of paramount importance is the duty to work [which is linked to the process of reconstruction]... [All these] are attached to the status of citizenship.¹⁰

This idea of citizenship implied a contract in which, in return for the guarantee of equal status and access to now considerable benefits and services, the citizen was expected to participate fully in the economic and civic life of the community.

While not all of the population subscribed to this definition of citizenship, there emerged a popular sense that along with the war, the Welfare State had been won through the active participation of the people. The reverse side of this was that those who were not perceived as having pulled their weight were vilified and marginalized.¹¹ The role taken by Travellers during the war, in the public mind, was at best viewed as ambiguous, and at worst as positively hindering the efforts of the majority. The implications that this had for the post-war era was profound: added to traditional stereotypes of Travellers as anti-social, was the new feeling that they had been undermining the interests of Britain in its time of need.

Travellers engaging in this debate disputed the idea that they had not participated in the war effort. Similarly, those writing in support of Travellers often also used the war as a reference point, both in terms of Travellers' participation in it, and the ethos for which Britain as a nation supposedly fought:

Dear Fellow Briton – You don't like inhumanity, persecution or harsh treatment. You fought a War against the Principle of Unjust Power. So I am sure I can appeal to you for sympathy and help for some of your fellow countrymen who are slowly but surely being broken... Despite prejudicial beliefs, Gypsies are hardworking people... They also gave their sons willingly in defence of this country. Now the Public Health and

¹⁰ T. H. Marshall Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays (London, 1950) 28-9, 40 & 78-80.

¹¹ S. Nicholas 'From John Bull to John Citizen: Images of National Identity and Citizenship in the Wartime BBC' in R. Weight and A. Beach (eds.) The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-60 (London, 1998) 45

Town and Country Planning Acts are being used as weapons to destroy them completely...¹²

However, for those engaged in the task of reconstruction, participation in the war effort was only one small part of the new wider definition of 'citizen'. As Marshall stated, duties to which the citizen should subscribe included generalised exhortations to good conduct and promoting the wider welfare of the community. One way in which Traveller lifestyles could conflict with this can be seen in the area of planning and environmental control.

Planners promoted the idea that the nation had the right to a clean and regulated urban environment and access to unspoilt countryside, achieved through 'mixing a romantic care for the land with a modern expertise'.¹³ Central to these aims were the creation of the green belts, the national parks and stricter planning regulations, as embodied in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act:

While particular types of conduct in the country were held to promote good citizenship via mental, moral, physical and spiritual health, other signified a lack of citizenship. Citizenship became defined in relation to 'anti-citizenship' represented by those members of the public, whose behaviour did not live up to environmental standards.¹⁴

The environmental residuum did not merely include the 'urban minded' tourists, who dropped litter, left gates open and played loud music, but also those who threatened the landscape with their 'hideous settlements' in the form of plotland shacks, bungalows, and inappropriately placed caravans.¹⁵ Beyond a dislike of badly sited caravans, planners and bureaucrats believed that the very existence of moveable dwellings perpetuated sub-standard housing and therefore undermined their efforts to create an orderly environment, and decent accommodation for the working classes.¹⁶

Given the failure of Travellers to match up to the new and exacting standards required of citizens of a reconstructed Britain, their relationship with the Welfare State in all its forms was clearly problematic. While the ideals espoused by Marshall and others concerning the notions of reciprocity and duty were largely just that – ideals – and ones which many settled members of society also did not meet,¹⁷ they did form important guiding principles for those conceiving and implementing the new services.

¹² PRO HLG 71/1650 letter and enclosure from W. Smith to Hugh Dalton 17.4.1951. This was written by Will 'Dromengro' Smith, whose mother had been a Traveller, and who campaigned on behalf of Travellers in the 1950s.

¹³ D. Matless 'Taking Pleasure in England: Landscape and Citizenship in the 1940s' in R. Weight & A. Beach (eds.) The Right to Belong 183

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 182 & 185

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 192

¹⁶ For government statements on this see for example Hampshire Record Office 59M76/DDC207, Ministry of Health to Hartley-Wintney Rural District Council, 14.6.1950 and PRO HLG 52/1527, memo on Caravan Club, 26.5.1943.

¹⁷ Lowe asserts that in general people's support of the Welfare State was 'both selective and selfish', typified by a 'lack of altruism' that accepted the taxes for services they benefited from as individuals, while questioning the funding of benefits

Yet the emerging relationship between citizenship and welfare rights contained an inherent contradiction: it was both difficult and counter-productive to withhold services and benefits from these less-than-perfect citizens, as they were the best weapons at the disposal of the state for civilising anti-social elements. The compromise position produced for Travellers a practice that was very little changed from the inter-war conception of welfare provision: services were bestowed with discretion, based on a concept of social improvement and with a view to the eventual assimilation of the Traveller community. For Travellers, the result of this ethos of welfare was not a new era of universal benefits wedded to a notion of citizenship and rights. Instead, Travellers were seen to have less right to services than the settled population, and that where those services were provided they were with a view to promoting 'civilisation' and eventual assimilation.

Added to this was the simple fact that modern life and its attendant bureaucracy was not designed to manage a nomadic population. The result was that despite public claims by government over the neutral impact of new policies on Travellers' lifestyles,¹⁸ bureaucrats recognised there were biases inherent within the system:

The provision made for the welfare of the Gypsy is simply that which is made for citizens generally, but to the extent that the Gypsy's approach to life deters him from always taking advantage of these, he may obtain less than his full share of the benefits available. It will be evident that, although the British Government makes no distinction between Gypsies and other citizens, and makes no attempt to force them to give up their traditional ways of life, nevertheless an itinerant existence becomes more and more difficult to maintain in our highly organised society and as a result, a certain amount of assimilation of Gypsies into the ordinary community is constantly taking place.¹⁹

These claims of equality were at best disingenuous, as behind the structural problems that prevented Travellers from receiving their dues lay simple, old-fashioned prejudice. In the words of one local government official: 'I have the normal English countryman's dislike of Gypsies, whom I regard as liars, thieves and rogues'.²⁰ This

servicing the unemployed, minorities and single parent families. This was 'matched by a popular reluctance to accept the duties... implied by welfare policy', with the unions, for example, spurning calls for wage restraint and resisting technological change [R. Lowe *The Welfare State* 98].

¹⁸ See for example PRO HLG 71/903, Bevan to the Bishop of Gloucester, 27.10.1950

¹⁹ PRO FO371/116901, statement *Gypsies in the UK*, prepared for the Swedish government, 1955

²⁰ PRO ED147/13, minute by HMI Mr Ritchie, 29.3.1949. He was a school inspector in Hampshire. Even the doctor who served the compounds of the Forest and was in general very supportive regarding the needs of the inhabitants took a less than professional, and almost flippant line about his patients: on passing on a letter from one of them to a colleague, he described 'Mr Dixon' thus: 'he mates with a Britannia 'Sherret', alias Shered, alias Hughes, alias Coker, who had relatives in Thorney Hill... P. P. S. I haven't disinfected this document!' [Hampshire Record Office H/WLF1/3, Dr Howard to Dr Long, 7.3.1962].

commonly resulted in institutionalised prejudice that undermined the formal equality espoused by the state. This combined with an increase in the amount of services provided – so while there were more benefits, Travellers were seen as less entitled to them than the rest of the population.

To see how these new perspectives on welfare interacted with older prejudicial attitudes, I will now consider how national assistance and housing policies were deployed in relation to Travellers. For Travellers, whose commitment to and relationship with settled society was ambiguous, the Welfare State, with its assumptions of social citizenship, contained as many threats as it did promises.²¹

Inherent in the creation of universal benefits based primarily on work-based insurance contributions, was the marginalisation of both the wageless and those who operated within the informal economy. While people were encouraged to view benefits based on National Insurance contributions as their right, means tested benefits funded through general taxation had a certain, and increasing, stigma attached to them. Through the passing of the 1948 National Assistance Act, Travellers were structurally disadvantaged along with the majority of women, the ‘civilian’ disabled and anyone else who was unable to engage in full-time, long-term employment. They ‘were effectively being denied full and equal citizenship... social citizenship (the automatic right to social security) had to be earned through insurance contributions’.²²

However, the right of Travellers to receive the increased benefits created by the Welfare State was not simply questioned on the basis of their lack of National Insurance contributions. Had it been so, then they simply would have joined the ranks of those who found themselves on National Assistance. Instead, the older stereotype of Travellers as social failures and deviants combined with these new ideas of social citizenship to label Travellers as less worthy of relief and more in need of the civilising benefits of such aid.

In 1946 the Appointed Assistance Officer of the Highlands and Islands stated that Travellers were less trustworthy than non-Traveller members of the community, saying: ‘If a member of a Tinker community asks for relief, it is desirable not to give

²¹ This is not to deny that social control was absent from the Welfare State’s relationship with the wider population. Squires, for example has argued how socialisation, not socialism was its main goal [P. Squires, Anti-Social Policy - Welfare, Ideology and the Disciplinary State (Hemel Hempstead, 1990) 36].

²² R. Lowe The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945 (London, 1999 ed.) 138-9. He notes that there was a ‘permanent emphasis on the danger of scrounging’, and that once on ‘supplementary benefit the unemployed were treated with suspicion. Disqualification could start after four weeks if... claimants could not prove they were ‘genuinely seeking work’ [p. 159]. The conclusion of this stigmatisation and the fear that receipt of means tested benefits resulted in profligacy and dependency came in the 1980s with the dismantling of the commitment to universal, automatic benefits and a move towards discretionary benefits. For a feminist perspective on citizenship and the Welfare State see C. Pateman ‘The Patriarchal Welfare State’ in A. Gutmann (ed.) Democracy and the Welfare State (Princeton, 1988) 231-60.

it without full enquiry. If it became known that it was easy to obtain relief, the number of applications might become more numerous'.²³

Officials assumed, with little or no supporting evidence, that Travellers were inherently deceitful and less entitled to relief. This attitude can be found running through the practices of the National Assistance Board in the 1950s. It had the habit of making deductions to National Assistance either on the basis that work was available in the area, or on the grounds that Travellers were entitled to less relief because they had a lower standard of living, or were earning money and not declaring it. In one case they decided that:

Although McPhee is disabled (and dirty) there is apparently a job he could do if he got cleaned up – hut orderly at Dounreay. By requiring to make himself presentable in order to be submitted to this sort of vacancy we might, just possibly, collect one piece of evidence towards a Section 51 prosecution; I presume, of course, that he would not comply... An alternative line would be to use Section 10 (or merely to cut off assistance) but there are a young wife and child and after all the man is disabled. As things stand we are paying only 32/- a week... On the other hand, we are dealing with one of a notorious Tinker family...²⁴

It would appear that this practice of making so-called 'automatic Regulation III deductions' was widespread throughout Scotland in the mid- and late-1950s. As the Area Officer for Arbroath reasoned:

There can be no doubt that there are undisclosed resources in most cases. A number of them have ancient cars in which they move around while our allowances are largely disposed of in the nearest bar that sells 'wine'... no injustice would be done if allowances were withheld from all but the oldest and exceptionally, those with large families of young children.²⁵

These statements make it clear that local agencies attempted to use the new welfare system to push Travellers into a more regularised and settled lifestyle. It also shows that they were willing to do this in a punitive way – by removing relief and benefits – rather than in a positive or proactive manner. It was not until the mid-1960s that this practice was challenged from the centre, and the policy of automatic deductions for having an 'unsatisfactory mode of living' changed.²⁶ Whitehall eventually decreed that:

²³ PRO AST 7/1480, Mr Ottley Survey on the Highlands and Islands, Nov –Dec 1946: The Tinker

²⁴ *ibid.*, Beltram to Collins, Unemployment Assistance Board Central Office, Edinburgh, 30.11.1955

²⁵ *ibid.*, Arbroath Area Officer Tinkers n. d.

²⁶ This was on the grounds that 'there is little or nothing having to be spent on fuel, lighting, and household replacements'. The debate was resurrected when it came to the attention of the London office that a Traveller pensioner, Mr G Foxton had had deductions of 44s 6d made to his allowance, leaving him with 14s 6d per week. As was usual, this had been done on the grounds of 'assumed earnings' [PRO AST7/1480, D. C. Ward, London Office to Pringle, Edinburgh, 3.9.1964]. This is not

[It] is no concern of ours how a couple spend their allowance unless they come back to us and ask for extra money for the fuel bills and household equipment... if an applicant with a roof over his head chooses to spend part of his income on drink, the dogs or collecting stamps instead of heating his house or buying new pots and pans, we do not thereupon dock his allowance.²⁷

Here we have an example of central government, albeit belatedly, insisting on the impartial and equal treatment of Travellers and non-Travellers. The willingness and ability of central government to restrain the excesses of prejudicial treatment by local authorities towards Travellers was one key feature of Traveller-state relations in the first half of the twentieth century.²⁸

As well as Travellers interacting with the new Welfare State through National Assistance, they were increasingly drawn in through a number of council settlement and housing schemes. In many cases they were not seen as capable of living in a standard council house, and so were allotted purpose built 'simplified housing'. The scheme sited at Bobbin Mill, Perthshire by Pitlochry Council was a case in point. Started in 1946, ten years later it was reviewed to assess the success of the project. The houses in question were described as being 'of a [not] completely modern standard', and the inhabitants were 'subject to fairly close supervision'.²⁹ In fact, the admission that the houses were not 'modern' was an understatement— an internal memo commented, that these 'houses are really an old hut... constructed of weather boarding only with internal walls formed of a very soft boarding', noting that they had not been painted or otherwise treated, and a decade on, were in imminent danger of collapsing.³⁰ The provision of 'fairly close supervision' harked back to the recommendations of the 1918 Report on Travellers.

By the mid 1950s it was acknowledged that the initiative had only been partly successful as, 'tenancy of these houses has meant a more settled way of life for the small number of families concerned, but... there have been constant difficulties with additional members of the clan overcrowding the houses for longer or shorter periods, with an increase in the number of encampments in the vicinity'. It was further noted that 'it has been very difficult to persuade expectant mothers to leave their unsuitable bivouacs and go into hospital for confinement'.³¹ Officials had clearly hoped that

to imply that Travellers were never caught earning money when they were also claiming relief. In 1952 eight Irish Travellers in Sheffield were prosecuted for claiming public relief at the same time as they 'collected rags, metal, and sold artificial flowers, living in caravans and tents under filthy conditions' ['£20 Gypsies Got Relief' *Sheffield Star* 20 February 1952]. The point, of course, is that in most instances the allegations were not proved, and deductions made on the basis of an assumption.

²⁷ *ibid.*, D. C. Ward, London to Pringle, Edinburgh Office, 3.9.1964

²⁸ For a full discussion of this see R Taylor 'A minority and the state: Travellers in Britain, 1900-1960' Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2002

²⁹ Perthshire Record Office, BM, County Clerk to Mr Rushworth Fogg, 13.6.1956

³⁰ *ibid.*, County Factor to the County Clerk, 24.8.1956

³¹ *ibid.*, County Medical Officer to County Clerk, 11.6.1956

housing provision, however shabby, would act as a step towards assimilation. However, Travellers seem to have simply used the scheme as a base for maintaining their distinct lifestyle. So, although some Travellers may have been settled in houses, they retained very close links with relations who visited them and camped in the area.

These string of experiences from Scotland demonstrate quite clearly how officials simultaneously believed that Travellers were an important target for the services provided by the Welfare State and less willing to extend to them the full benefits it afforded. They also show that Travellers were able and determined to retain their own culture and lifestyle choices despite contact with welfare services.

The official line of central government by the mid-1950s was that it was making efforts to engage with Travellers through various organs of the Welfare State, without singling them out for special treatment:

[We] must recognise that the ancient Romany tradition of wandering the countryside in picturesque horse-drawn caravans is largely dying... the non-nomadic Gypsies of this generation seem to be in the position of being half-educated, half-civilised – perhaps it is merely a difficult transition stage and that in the course of time they will become fully-fledged citizens... They can't do this without a house or some permanent spot for their caravan... [It would be] impracticable and unjust in the present circumstances to provide residential sites specifically for caravan dwellers who happen to have Gypsy blood in their veins. They must be subject to the same laws as everyone else.³²

The preconceptions and stereotypes of government in the post-war era were crystallised in this memo. An equation was made between a rural and romantic race and the nomadic tradition. This was placed in opposition to sedentary Gypsies, who were depicted not as a people apart, but rather as failures within the modern system: owing to their insufficient education, and by extension their 'civilisation', they were seen as less than full citizens. When the government stated that they 'should be subject to the same laws as everyone else', they were implying that Travellers did not deserve the same access to state resources as the settled population.

Travellers had to compete with the settled population for scarce resources, while at the same time facing additional structural and bureaucratic barriers:

Of course there is nothing to stop a Gypsy family applying for a Council house. But (a) bona fide Gypsies aren't likely to do so, [and] (b) they would find it difficult to acquire any kind of residential qualifications which many local authorities require.³³

³² PRO HLG 71/2267, internal MHLG memo, Ward to Wiltshire, 29.5.1957

³³ PRO HLG 142/25, MHLG to MoH, 21.12.1960. Sibley has suggested that Travellers were hit by the decline in the availability of privately rented housing, particularly at the lower end of the market, which combined with their failure to qualify for local authority accommodation [D. Sibley *Outsiders in Urban Society* (Oxford, 1981) 83, footnote]. This is supported by A Sutherland's *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans* (London, 1975), which demonstrates how Travellers' use of poor

In Hampshire this led to local officials stating that '[housing Travellers must be put in the context of] housing demand. All local authorities are under constant and severe pressure from substantial and growing waiting lists',³⁴ resulting in the sidelining of accommodation needs of Travellers.

This raises a question over the true nature of the promise of assimilation – the implicit bargain behind the promise was that if Travellers gave up their lifestyle and settled down, they would in turn be treated like other citizens. But this claim has a hollow ring to it. That Travellers were seen as second class citizens, combined with traditional prejudices against their community, meant that 'benefits' were commonly metered out grudgingly or as punitive sanctions. And, where Travellers failed to measure up to expectations they, and not the shortcomings of the state, were blamed for their failures. Thus, two Traveller women who were prosecuted for obtaining food by fraud, having not eaten for three days, were admonished by the court, 'you are living in a state where nobody should starve, there was no need to resort to what you did'.³⁵ Behaviour that might have been seen as understandable in a pre-war context was now less likely to have been tolerated.

In summary, then, the Welfare State did not redefine Travellers relationship with government agencies, it only made it more problematic. While there was a difference between the attitudes of central government and the localities, on a day to day basis it was local decision making that had the most impact on Travellers' lives. The creation and extension of the Welfare State added a new layer of significance to citizen status. The legal rights that came with citizenship were enhanced with entitlements to the new and extensive health, educational and housing benefits. While for the settled population this may have had redistributive and democratic overtones, for Travellers it only served to confirm their place as anti-social outcasts whose lifestyle undermined efforts at reconstruction and the image of a modern Britain. It seemed that there was no room in post-war Britain to be a good citizen and a Traveller

The goal of the Welfare State to create an inclusive society and a minimum standard of living finds echoes in today's search by the current British government to end social exclusion. If there is a lesson to be drawn from the history I have outlined then it is perhaps to recognise that without tackling deep held opinions within majority society about the Traveller community then social policy will simply enact old prejudices, only refracted through a different lens. When that occurs then inclusion becomes assimilation and the right to self-exclusion is denied.

quality, private housing allowed the continuance of their lifestyle unfettered by local authority interference.

³⁴ Hampshire Record Office, H/WLF1/3, Observations Made on Behalf of RDCs Hampshire Parish Council Association, 1961

³⁵ 'No Money To Buy Food – Gypsies' Liverpool Daily Post 20 February 1952. They were ordered to pay £2 costs and told in the future to apply to the National Assistance Board

The weakness of well ordered societies. Gypsies in Western Europe, the Ottoman empire and India 1400-1914¹

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Introduction

The history of people labelled as Gypsies, tsiganes, cigan, kipti, bohémiens or Zigeuner (hence: Gypsies) has not attracted much serious attention. Moreover, those who have devoted their research time and energy, have predominantly focussed on the antagonistic nature of the relationship between Gypsies and non Gypsies (or *Gadze*). This has produced a historiography, in which Gypsies are portrayed as victims of racism² or as criminals who more or less caused the repression themselves by their anti-social behaviour.³ As a result we know a lot about the Gypsy hunts in 17th and 18th century Western Europe, the genocide in the 20th century,⁴ or the enslavement of Gypsies in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia until the 1860s, but surprisingly little about the day to day interaction with the rest of society.⁵

This dominating approach is not only top down, it also fails to differentiate according to time and place so that the impression is conveyed that the 'fate' of the Gypsies was universal and only marginally influenced by the specific historical context. This generalisation is often justified by assuming that human society is by nature sedentary and that as a result it will always be in conflict with itinerant and nomadic groups.⁶ Gypsies as the ultimate 'other', to use postmodern vocabulary, are often portrayed as a closed ethnic group that has successfully resisted assimilation and cultural change. The core elements are to be found in their itinerant way of life and the ensuing cultural norms and traditional occupations, which would set them clearly apart from the rest of society.

There are, however, two major problems with this approach. First of all, the term Gypsies has been used to label such different and diverse groups that it is difficult to uphold the idea that we are talking about a people with a distinct culture;⁷ and from research on itinerant occupations we know that Gypsies were much more socially and economically integrated in Western European society than is often assumed. In this paper we will therefore first give a (bottom up)

¹ This paper is an abridged version of the article which appeared in *Review* 26 (2003) no. 3, pp. 283-313.

² E.g. Mac Laughlin 1999.

³ E.g. Schama 1991: 595.

⁴ Zimmermann 1996; Willems 1997; Tebbutt 1998; Lewy 2000.

⁵ Lucassen 1993.

⁶ Fricke 1996.

⁷ Lucassen et al. 1998. This is even admitted by scholars who adhere an ethnological approach to Gypsies (Fraser 1992).

impression of accommodation at the day to day level by going into the functionality of Gypsy occupations, putting these in the larger framework of migratory behaviour and ambulant professions. The emphasis in this section will be on the 19th and 20th century, because most research has been done on this period. By using long term developments in state formation and social relations in Western Europe as a background we then address the question how to explain the undeniable repressive atmosphere Gypsies were confronted with from the 15th century onwards. Finally, we compare the conditions under which the negative attitude of Western-European authorities could emerge with the treatment of Gypsies in other state configurations, such as the Ottoman empire and pre-colonial India.

Accommodation through economic functionality

Itinerant professionals like showpeople, musicians, jugglers, bear leaders, coppersmiths and peddlers have existed for ages and performed a wide range of functions, which had in common the disseminating of goods and services that mostly could not be offered, or not at such a low price, by the sedentary professional class.⁸ Roughly we can distinguish between two categories: those men and women who travelled alone (or in small groups); and people wandering with their families. The latter have been categorised in most countries from the Middle Ages onwards by various authorities as 'Gypsies', 'Zigeuner', 'Romanichals', 'travellers', 'Landfahrer' etc. Whereas the functionality of ambulant professions performed by people in the first category has been acknowledged by most historians,⁹ this is not the case for 'Gypsies'. They may have been active in the same kind of business, the idea that Gypsies only used itinerant trades to hide their parasitic and criminal behaviour is widespread and has obstructed structural comparisons of the social and economic history of both categories. That they have more in common than is generally assumed can be illustrated by focussing on the economic function of groups that have been lumped together as Gypsies or similar labels.

First of all, it is important to state that Gypsy occupations did not differ essentially from economic activities by sedentary people. One of the most confusing concepts used in this respect is nomadism. This idea refers to societies of hunters and gatherers, or herdsmen, and is often used as proof of the Gypsies' traditional and specific culture. Gypsies, however, differ as much from pastoral nomads - wandering in a certain area with their herds - as other members of Western European societies. If we summarise the three main characteristics associated with the 'Gypsy economy', the family as work unit (in which all members contribute to the family

⁸ Gmelch 1986; Rao 1986, Cottaar et al. 1995.

⁹ Lucassen 1987; Schubert 1995, Fontaine 1996 and Oberpenning 1996 and the literature mentioned in Lucassen 1996.

income), an itinerant life style and self-employment, it is clear that these are far from specific for Gypsies. The interesting thing is, however, that these are often explained in primordial ethnic and cultural terms: group cohesion, nomadism, and dissoluteness. To substantiate our claims we will give a *tour d'horizon* along the different Gypsy specialisations and their function within society.

Trading, hawking and peddling

Trading was perhaps the most important economic niche for Gypsies, and within this category hawking, going from house to house selling products, seems to have been the principal activity. Gypsies did not have a monopoly on hawking; on the contrary, many people tried to earn a living in this way. In Europe most of them came from specifically delineated areas and localities, which served as operation base.¹⁰ Furthermore, in the nineteenth century members of the working class undertook itinerant activities, among other things, in order to supplement their low wages. For these 'penny capitalists' retailing continued to be popular for a long time.¹¹ The low costs made street-selling or hawking attractive to the ambitious and destitute alike and provided a possible escape route for the ambitious working man. In only a few instances are 'Gypsies' mentioned in this respect. The 'Gypsy-awareness' of authorities increased after the middle of the century when more people started travelling in families and took their own housing with them. This transition was stimulated by the wider use of caravans after 1870. A caravan made travelling with one's family not only easier and more comfortable, but also more visible. In most countries many of these travellers were quickly stigmatised and often 'gypsified' by the authorities.

The demand for products sold by hawkers and street-sellers was not restricted to the pre-industrial period. Not only did itinerant groups adjust to economic changes by finding new niches, modernisation was far from a linear process. Especially the increase of stores initially remained behind population growth, the purchasing power of the masses and urbanisation. Therefore many people depended on hawkers and.¹² Even where various stores were within reach people often preferred buying goods from hawkers, many of whom were women. Most hawkers had a regular circle of customers and were therefore trusted. Moreover, they offered cheaper goods and did not show the contempt that many workers were confronted with in middle class stores. Consequently some shopkeepers were not all that popular with the working man.¹³ Not only the demand, but also the supply stimulated itinerant trade. Wholesale businesses in particular used hawkers for the distribution of their wares. The development of modern

¹⁰ Lucassen 1987: 88-90.

¹¹ Benson 1983.

¹² Mayall 1988: 49.

¹³ Klein 1898: 371.

transport systems, e.g. railways, enabled peddlers to have goods sent to places in their work area from where they started hawking. For some time hawking and industrialisation therefore went hand in hand and performed a retailing function among the rapidly growing urban population. Itinerant traders were not an anomaly, but a buffer and a stimulus to the mass consumption of consumer goods in the industrial era.

Accusations that hawkers were workshy, only sold products of inferior quality and thereby deceived the simple country folk were mainly uttered by shopkeepers who were afraid of competition. These allegations were often false or exaggerated. Most hawkers also operated in larger towns, where people could compare the quality with that offered by shops. Moreover, in the smaller villages they returned regularly so that they could not afford to cheat.¹⁴ Otherwise it would not have been possible for many peddlers to return again and again to the same areas and customers. Only with the emergence of large department stores around 1900 did the function of urban hawkers gradually diminish. In the countryside modernisation sometimes took much longer, so that hawkers, among whom Gypsies, were able to earn a living for a long time.

Gypsies not only traded from door to door, but also on streets or at fairs. One of the best-known activities is the horse trade, which together with kettle-mending and the making of music is regarded as a typical Gypsy occupation. The role of Gypsies is illustrated by the history of Gypsy horse-dealers in the Netherlands. The first families immigrated around 1900, coming from Scandinavia. Although it was only a small group (at most some 500 people), they quickly managed to get a firm grip on the at that time expanding trade in cobs, small but tough horses which were indispensable for commerce and transportation until World War II. At horse fairs these Gypsies were very much at home and during the First World War they almost managed to monopolise the important trade in cobs. Mostly Gypsies bought horses from farmers and then sold them at horse fairs.¹⁵ The operational area of the (male) horse dealers covered the Netherlands, Belgium and the northern part of France, for which they had to cross the national borders frequently. The authorities interpreted these movements invariably as an invasion of their country by hordes of Gypsies. In fact, it only concerned relatively small groups (30 people) whose business required constant travelling. Apart from the recurring difficulties at the borders, they also had to face other kinds of opposition. This had to do with the well-known stereotype of the ever-cheating Gypsy, especially where horses are concerned. They were accused of transforming old and worn horses into elegant ones by a process of clipping, singeing and beautifying. There are, however, powerful arguments against the impression that Gypsy activity at horse markets was characterised by deceit. To begin with, it does not explain why customers kept dealing with

¹⁴ Demetz 1987: 54.

people with such a bad reputation. Trading between Gypsies and others suggests a relationship of trust and respect rather than intolerance and abuse. There can be no doubt that 'trickery' formed part of horse trading (and trading in general), but it was not peculiar to Gypsies, nor can it have been a general phenomenon. Nevertheless this stereotype was used to incriminate Gypsies. Despite the restrictive and even repressive policies pursued in many countries, making it more and more difficult for Gypsies to practice their occupations, most of them managed to earn a living until World War II. In the Netherlands as in Germany they were known for their riches, owning expensive caravans and substantial amounts of money.¹⁶

Itinerant crafts

A second important economic niche for itinerant groups were crafts, especially for repair work. For most people occupations as kettle-mending, chair-bottoming and knife-grinding come to mind when Gypsies are concerned. Most of these craftsmen travelled in a relatively small area because there was enough demand for their services. In such areas, however, they travelled constantly. Many crafts were constantly adapted to changing circumstances and demand. This can be well illustrated by the history of Gypsy copper- and tinsmiths, known in the literature as the *Kalderash*.¹⁷ Coming from Hungary, at least according to their passports, the first groups appeared in Western Europe around 1860 and were immediately labelled as Gypsies. These coppersmiths were well organised in companies of some 40 people (men, women and children). Before coming to a certain country, these groups sent a few men ahead to explore the possibilities and make arrangements for camping places and residence permits. When the authorities made objections, they frequently used the services of their respective embassies and consulates, which in some cases pleaded their case with the authorities. According to the clients of the *Kalderash* - and local authorities as well - their skills were impressive, and despite regular price-fixing problems, they were often asked back year after year by the same customers. Sometimes even authorities with the most negative Gypsy-image, and whose task it was to get them out of the country, e.g. the gendarmerie, were impressed by their skill and wealth.

More detailed descriptions of the professional activity of this group were offered by members of the English Gypsy Lore Society (founded in 1888). Eric Otto Winstedt's accurate and detailed accounts of these Hungarian Coppersmiths, as they called themselves, were based on a visit they made to Great Britain and France during the years 1911-1913. One of the remarkable conclusions from this *petite histoire* is the economic flexibility of these craftsmen. Due to a lack of

¹⁵ Lucassen 1990: 144.

¹⁶ Hehemann 1987: 203-205; 364-365.

¹⁷ Lucassen 1990: 64-67; Fraser 1992: 226-235.

demand from private consumers, they concentrated more and more on the industrial sector. The quality of their work was of such a standard that clients put up with the traditional bickering about the price. In contrast to indigenous coppersmiths, these Hungarians mastered a technique that was highly valued by industrial clients.¹⁸ Also in Western Europe some travellers and Gypsies specialised in this craft, as the example of the Scottish and Irish tinkers show.¹⁹ Irish tinkers repaired old vessels at farms and in villages as well as selling new ones. Broken kettles were mended with the aid of solder. Here, again, there existed a relationship of mutual dependence between Gypsies and their clients. Irish farmers before World War II expected them to repair the earthenware coolers that kept their milk from decay. Several of the same families of tinkers would also undertake specialist repairs of broken China, earthenware or glass.²⁰

Wandering entertainers

A third important economic sector for Gypsies and other itinerant people was entertainment. Wandering musicians, animal-performers, acrobats, owners of freak shows, showmen and the like have always played a role in European history.²¹ Although for most of that time they were treated with a good deal of suspicion, their activities have always been valued too highly for them to vanish. Not only did they bring distraction, they also introduced all kinds of novelties. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, the telescope, cameras and cinema were introduced and made popular by itinerant entrepreneurs.²² By Easter some of them had already travelled large distances. Others brought in strange animals, such as bears, camels, and lions. Many of them were not labelled as Gypsies since they did not travel in family groups. Very mobile groups were Italian (child) musicians and organ-grinders, French bear-leaders from the Pyrenean and German itinerant music orchestras.²³ To get a clearer picture of their activities we will focus on bear-leaders, musicians and fortune tellers.

At the same time as the coppersmiths from Hungary moved West, small family groups of bear-leaders from Bosnia (at that time part of the Ottoman empire) appeared. The labelling of them as Gypsies was not as general and quick as with the *Kalderash*, but in most countries they were stigmatised as well. Like the *Kalderash* they travelled great distances and did not restrict themselves to Europe. In the 1880s many emigrated to the United States. Many of them who left

¹⁸ Winstedt 1913: 287-288.

¹⁹ Simson 1865: 354-355.

²⁰ Gmelch & Langan 1975: 28.

²¹ Burke 1978: 94-96; Schubert 1995: 226 ff.

²² Benson 1983: 68.

²³ Zucchi 1992; Lucassen 1990: 367-375; Gabaccia 2000: 62-64.

the continent had considerable sums of money and were able to buy houses in England and the United States.²⁴

A well known Gypsy occupation is that of musician and performer, such as acrobats, comedians, showmen, magicians and puppeteers. In contrast to coppersmithing these occupations were not monopolized by men, for women are also regularly found in historical sources as independent professionals.²⁵ After the turn of the century we can discern an occupational specialisation. Whereas in the nineteenth century many Gypsy performers combined music with other showmanlike activities, trading and crafts, in the twentieth century they began more and more to concentrate on the making of music. This shift may have been caused by increasing professionalism within the world of showmen. From the end of the nineteenth century we see in all countries the emergence of more capital-intensive attractions, such as carousels, merry-go-rounds and cake-walks. At the same time the policy toward the small street performers became more repressive and since they lived in caravans these people were marginalised as Gypsies. This combination of economic and socio-political developments caused the more successful operators, who also lived in caravans, to organise themselves into professional organisations and thus try to escape from the Gypsy stigmatisation.²⁶ In some cases Gypsy-musicians settled in cities, because the demand for their work was sometimes so great that they could give up travelling altogether.

In a survey of occupations within the entertainment field, fortune-telling is probably the most 'Gypsy-like' of all, having been associated with Gypsies since the end of the Middle Ages.²⁷ In eighteenth-century French encyclopedias, it was even part of the definition of 'bohémien'. This is not to say, however, that this branch was monopolised by Gypsies. Others (sedentary and itinerant people alike) also engaged in this sort of activity, often combined with magic and sorcery.²⁸ Although many Gypsy-women have earned money in this way up to the present day, little is known about this activity except that there was a regular demand from all classes in society and it was often combined with hawking or entertainment. Many of these women not only operated in holiday resorts, but also in the countryside, where they offered all kinds of 'emotional services'. Some gave advice in the case of theft and bewitching, but most of them talked with their clients about the highs and lows in life, such as marriages, travels (emigration), the possibility of evading conscription, accidents or death. Although many fortune-tellers lived at

²⁴ Lucassen 1990.

²⁵ Benson 1983: 65.

²⁶ Acton 1974: 116-123; Cottaar 1996: 172-173.

²⁷ Fraser 1992: 46-48.

²⁸ Burke 1978: 106-107.

a fixed place waiting for people to visit them, a good number travelled and combined it with peddling.

As with all professions, itinerant or not, abuse was possible and occurred now and then. Some fortune-tellers used their skills to lift their clients, for example, in cases of illness or bad luck (sick cattle) by suggesting that a spell was put on the unlucky farmer. In offering to lift the spell they would advise their clients to gather up all their valuables and bury them. After a set period of time the client was to dig these up again, after which the situation would be normal again. It needs little imagination to realise that in such cases the fortune-teller was ahead of the superstitious client.

Seasonal labour

Except for some Gypsies (as the coppersmiths and bear leaders) most of them combined all kinds of crafts and services in order to react to seasonal changes in demand and supply. History offers numerous examples of this economic flexibility. In nineteenth-century England, as we have seen, many Gypsies settled down during the winter months and made all kinds of products (clothes-pegs, skewers, flowers, etc.).²⁹ At the beginning of spring they started to travel and sell their manufactured wares, as well as offer all kinds of services; during the summer many of them were hired as seasonal labourers, whereas during the autumn fairs were visited and trade was resumed.

Seasonal labour in agriculture was one of the few occupations that did involve wage-labour. In England agricultural employment was found chiefly in the South and the East. Seasonal workers, including Gypsy families, used to go from farm to farm following the ripening of the crops: hay-making, turnip-hoeing, pea-picking, wheat-fagging and strawberry-picking. The cycle was completed with the picking of hop.³⁰ How large the number of Gypsies within the seasonal work force in England was, is not clear. According to a government report of 1907, between a quarter and a third of those picking peas in England were Gypsies. For hop-picking this number seems to have been much lower and here they were only a small minority; the bulk of the workers were Irish. Hiring Gypsies, especially women for fruit, could be advantageous for farmers because they brought their own accommodation with them. Remarkably enough the same report states that Gypsies had a standard of living and level of health far above that of the ordinary seasonal labourer.³¹ In Germany and France Gypsies are also reported as 'hoppers'. In some Bavarian communities at the beginning of the twentieth century in the months August and

²⁹ Levy 1953: 133.

³⁰ Cuttriss 1915: 68.

³¹ Mayall 1988: 63-64.

September an 'international army' of hop-pickers visited the area. Among them were many people with carts and caravans, generally labelled as Gypsies. They arrived some weeks earlier, not only to assure themselves of a spot to put their caravans, but also to make the baskets that were needed for the harvest.³² In other cases (potato harvest) farmers depended on (Gypsy) basket-weavers as well. They even used to save twigs so that the Gypsies would have enough material for the baskets needed and therefore not lose time.

This overview of the economic domain may be somewhat impressionistic, it shows that Gypsies cannot simply be portrayed as workshy criminals, nor as a people with a unchangeable nomadic character. Moreover, it makes clear that the interaction between Gypsies and others was much more varied than is often assumed. If this is so, however, it the question forces itself upon us *why* they have been treated in such a repressive way for so long.

Stigmatisation and persecution in the early modern period

The standard history of Gypsies in Western Europe reads as follows:³³ Gypsies left their homeland India around the year 1000 and slowly migrated westward through Persia and Armenia to reach Byzantium and Greece in the eleventh century. They stayed for some time in the Balkans and then moved to Western Europe around 1400. Here they wandered from town to town proclaiming to be pilgrims from Egypt (hence 'Egyptians' from which the word 'Gypsies' is derived). At first they were welcomed and given alms, but soon the attitude changed and the Egyptians were more and more regarded as beggars, parasites and outright criminals. Their anti-social nomadic behaviour led increasingly to clashes with the authorities and from 1500 onwards a negative spiral of criminalisation and repression was set in motion, amounting during the first half of the eighteenth century in gypsy hunts and attempts to exterminate this group.

Although the stereotype of parasites and criminals has since the 1970s gradually been replaced by the image of nomadic, anarchistic victims of sedentary modernisation, the focus remained very much on repression and the discordant relationship with the sedentary society. A way out of this predominantly ethno-cultural explanatory framework³⁴ was offered by the work of social historians as Zemon Davis, Hufton, Beier, Geremek, Danker and Schubert, to mention a few, who implicitly or explicitly integrated the gypsy tale in the changing attitude towards poverty, vagrancy and banditism.

³² Lucassen 1996: 179.

³³ Fraser 1992: 1.

³⁴ For a recent example see Fricke 1996.

Changing attitudes towards the poor in Early Modern Europe

According to Bronislaw Geremek, who wrote a number of fundamental and influential studies on the changing attitude in Europe towards the poor in general and vagrants in particular, the stigmatisation of travelling groups has its origin in the fourteenth century. Vagrancy was increasingly looked upon in a negative way and soon regarded as a crime in itself.³⁵ The negative stereotyping culminated at the beginning of the sixteenth century in popular books as *Das Narrenschiff* (1494) the *Liber Vagatorum* (about 1510), and publications on the secret language of rogues.³⁶ In these works people without a fixed abode were depicted as professional thieves, robbers and cheats. The spreading of this image, which strongly influenced public opinion and was supported by state and church alike, coincided with the emergence of a serious labour shortage. As a consequence of the plagues that almost halved Europe's working force wages rose fast and leading up to a short 'golden age' for workers. For many of them it could be profitable to leave their master and try to get another job with a higher wage. Employers, together with authorities, tried to prevent this by enlisting as many workers as possible. One of the measures to bind labour to capital and fix wages was the Statute of Labourers issued in England in 1351 and a similar act two years later in France.³⁷ The result of these structural ideological and economic changes was the emergence of a repressive policy towards people looked upon as vagrants and an attempt to control labour migration. When during the 'long sixteenth century' the labour shortage disappeared due to population growth the stigmatisation of labour migration waned. The expanding economies needed seasonal labour and peddling middlemen, and repressing them would not have been very wise from an economic point of view. Moreover many of them, like the wandering craftsmen, ('Gesellen' in German), servants and seasonal labourers were part of more or less institutionalised systems with formal controls and often indentured contracts.³⁸ This did not end the stigmatisation of Gypsies, because their visible travelling way of live underlined their status as 'masterless' men, which made them a threat to a well ordered society.

Equally important in explaining the ongoing stigmatisation of Gypsies, however, were the fundamental changes in the organisation of the poor relief.³⁹ The initiative was taken by urban authorities who took over the coordination of the poor relief from the various private and religious bodies. This not only led to a more rational and bureaucratic distribution of alms, but also to the exclusion of alien beggars, whose stay in cities was formally forbidden from the

³⁵ Geremek 1980: 71; Woolf 1986: 17-18. According to Schubert (1995: 359-361) the stigmatisation became only effective after 1500 when itinerant groups and Gypsies lost their social and economic functionality and the state increased its claims to guarantee a 'well ordered society'.

³⁶ Geremek 1991: 53.

³⁷ Steinfeld 1991: 36.

³⁸ Steinfeld 1991.

sixteenth century onwards. This does by no means imply that their entrance could be stopped. It was difficult to distinguish them from indigenous beggars, whereas many tolerated their stay and thus frustrated the official policy. Nevertheless, as time moved on, the attempts of the cities (and later also villages) to restrict the poor relief to their own people, made life more difficult for those who could not prove that they belonged in a certain place and stimulated a kind of local aliens policy *avant la lettre*. One of the aims of the reorganisation of the poor relief was to establish a better regulation and control over the labour reserves. As the demand for labour fluctuated strongly, it was important for the employers to offer relief during bad times.⁴⁰ In Germany the main pillar of the exclusion policy of alien (alleged) poor was the *Heimat*-principle. Every city or village was given the right to send back aliens to the place where they were supposed to have some sort of citizenship, mostly the place of their birth. In many cases travelling people could not assert their rights and thus a class of wandering and illegal (to use the modern term) people was created.

It does not come as a surprise that quite soon after the reorganisation of the poor relief the acts and regulations aimed at repressing these vagrants proliferated, whereas the category was much broader defined and equalled with criminals. The implementation of the anti-vagrant legislation from the seventeenth century onwards proved to be quite difficult in practice. Not only because most states were quite weak and had to rely on local authorities and the cooperation of their citizens, but also because the distinction between the 'good' and the 'bad' was less simple than the acts assumed. Moreover, the repressive policy was seriously weakened by the fact that many 'bad' migrants performed a variety of services, such as the catching of mice and rats, mending of kettles, playing music and peddling, which were valued by many people (including local authorities).

Notwithstanding these mediating influences, in the course of the seventeenth century, the number of edicts against vagrants became more numerous and the sanctions more and more extreme. Gypsies, often explicitly included in these decrees were increasingly regarded as the most dangerous subgroup and became the symbol for the unwanted itinerant. Their way of living, travelling with their families, seemed to indicate a permanent wandering, and being seen as aliens they could not just be sent back to their places of birth, so that the legislation simply forbade their stay in the country and aimed at expulsing them. Although these 'Egyptians' were pictured in ethnic terms (having a dark complexion, wearing a distinct costume), the edicts made clear that it was foremost their way of life that formed the core of the accusation, very similar to the accusations levelled against vagrants. In the course of the seventeenth century part of the

³⁹ Jütte 1994: 100-102.

Gypsies and other itinerants, including Jews, became engaged in organised crime, and as a result the whole category became the target of, sometimes brutal, repression.⁴¹

State formation in an age of industrialism and urbanisation, 1815-1914

From the end of the eighteenth century onwards internal migration in Western Europe increased.⁴² Due to the ongoing commercialisation of the agricultural sector and the jerkily character of industrialisation jobs became less secure, leading to a growing mobility. In agriculture year-contracts were replaced by irregular demand, and in industry much work was still seasonal (construction), whereas factory work often was temporary as well. This unstable feature of labour markets caused many labourers to move constantly from one place to another. In view of the traditional ideas on migration and mobility it is not surprising that this situation led to growing concerns of the authorities. Migration may have been the rule, as it had been in pre-industrial Europe, the fear for a great mass of rootless and wandering paupers was widespread.

Apart from political disturbances, the fear for the mobile poor, especially those who were labelled as vagrants, seems to have been one of the major reasons for professionalising the police in Western Europe as well as in the Ottoman empire.⁴³ This was especially the case in Great Britain. In the discussion on the professionalisation of the police in 1840-1850 the repression of vagrancy was stressed and crime was mainly associated with migrants.⁴⁴ According to Steedman the County and Borrow Police Act (1856) was directly caused by the wish to repress vagrancy.⁴⁵ The most important legal framework was the Vagrancy Act of 1824, characterised as 'the most pernicious piece of legislation against Gypsies and travellers in the nineteenth century'.⁴⁶ The definition of vagrant had become so wide and the discretionary power of the police so big that all obnoxious behaviour could be labelled as such. In practice, however, it was aimed in the first place against migrants. In France the professionalisation of the police was not only linked to vagrancy, but first of all to the insecure political situation and the fear for revolutions and disturbances of the public order.⁴⁷ After 1850, however, criminality became a dominant theme and as in Great Britain the causes were primarily sought among the poor: unskilled, unemployed paupers and vagabonds, whose personal defects were thought to be responsible for their criminal

⁴⁰ Van Leeuwen 1994.

⁴¹ Egmond 1993: 96.

⁴² Moch 1992: 76 and 102 ff; Hochstadt 1999.

⁴³ Ergut 2002.

⁴⁴ Emsley 1991: 49.

⁴⁵ Steedman 1984: 57.

⁴⁶ Mayall 1988: 147; Jones 1982: 207.

⁴⁷ Forstenzer 1981: 109.

behaviour. The vagabond was depicted as the prototype of the criminal, because of his alleged refusal to work and to accumulate possessions.

In Germany the situation, at least before the unification, was more complicated and differed from state to state. In general, however, the police acted in a proactive way. This is especially well illustrated by the emergence of detailed extensive collective search warrants (*Actenmässige Nachrichten*) at the end of the eighteenth century. These contained dozens, hundreds sometimes even thousands of descriptions of people who were wanted or suspected of criminal acts (including vagrancy).⁴⁸ Comprehensive information was given on numerous people who were labelled according to various stigmatised categories (Jew, Gypsy, vagrant). After the Napoleonic wars these warrants, often private initiatives of higher administrative civil servants, were slowly replaced by official police journals that appeared on a regular base. In these journals most attention was paid to the *gemeinschädliche Umhertreiber* (harmful tramps). Although most of them did not commit (serious) crimes, the police tried to establish a constant supervision and control, by spreading detailed information about them among the local police forces. As Lüdtké already observed, the tenor of executive police conduct was directly influenced by the increase in population and migratory movements.⁴⁹

Waning of the Gypsy-stigmatisation after c. 1750

The stigmatisation of Gypsies did not keep pace with that of vagrants. After the end of the gypsy hunts around 1750 the interest in this category waned for about a century. In some countries, like the Netherlands the authorities seemed to assume that they had vanished, whereas in other countries they received significantly less attention than before. As far as authorities were involved with Gypsies, it concerned attempts to civilise certain family groups, mostly by trying to make them sedentary, as examples in Württemberg, Austria-Hungary and Prussia show.⁵⁰ It is not quite clear how this decrease in the stigmatisation has to be explained. It may have been partly caused by the general disappearance of banditism, with which Gypsies were often associated, but for a more satisfying explanation we have to look for structural causes. The first is, paradoxically, the emergence of the nation state and the transition from indirect to direct rule. Although one might expect that this would rather stimulate stigmatisation of irregular groups like Gypsies, it took quite some time before the national state became powerful enough to take over a number of vital functions that thus far had been exercised at the local level, especially by cities, such as

⁴⁸ Lucassen 1996; Fahrmeier 2000: 67.

⁴⁹ Lüdtké 1989: 82.

⁵⁰ Willems 1997; 141-145; Fricke 1991; Danckwort 1995.

policing and poor relief.⁵¹ In the case of aliens control, from the second half of the 19th century onwards the central state (especially in Germany and Britain) gradually tried to monitor the migration of alien labour migrants by demanding some sort of national identification which guaranteed that the state of origin would take back the bearer in case of poverty.⁵²

This process of centralisation proved to be fertile soil for a renewed stigmatisation of gypsies. If we want to understand how and why, the German case is instructive. A good source are the already mentioned police journals. Although vagrants in general remained the most important target, from the 1830s onwards the labelling of certain families as ‘Gypsies’ (*Zigeuner*) gained ground.⁵³ This was triggered by several factors: failure of the attempts to sedentarise Gypsies in Germany, a more ethno-cultural image of Gypsies, stimulated by the dissemination of a new scholarly paradigm that linked Gypsies to India,⁵⁴ and the problems the police ran into when trying to document individual identity.⁵⁵

Gradually the problematisation led to a breakthrough during the 1860s in the sense that Gypsy became a ‘master’ category again. Although it is tempting to link this to the simultaneous migration of coppersmiths from Hungary bear leaders from Bosnia we mentioned in the first part of this paper, the changing role of the central state and the ethnic character of German citizenship seems to offer a more fruitful perspective. With the German unification under Bismarck in 1870 the nation building process got a strong impulse and one of the consequences was that those who were considered as alien to the German national body, such as the Poles, but also Gypsies from Eastern Europe, were seen as a threat. Secondly, we point at changes in the poor relief system in the 1860s, shifting the responsibility for (wandering) poor from the municipality of origin (the so-called *Heimat* principle) to the municipality of settlement (often the growing cities). This change brought about a much more negative attitude towards those newcomers at the local level who were considered (rightly or wrongly) as potential poor. Itinerant groups who travelled in families, and often in caravans, were highly visible and became one of the first objects of a repressive policy at the municipal level. This development has been documented in detail for the Netherlands by Annemarie Cottaar, who also demonstrated that this also marked the beginning of the emergence of indigenous Dutch caravan dwellers as a separate ethnic

⁵¹ An interesting case is Britain. As Feldman (1999) has shown, the British state was not interested in aliens, who were looked after by their own communities, but very much in the (massive) immigration of Irish workers, who were treated as internal migrants and who were frequently expelled to Ireland, because of the locally based poor relief system.

⁵² Lucassen 2001; Feldman 1999.

⁵³ Lucassen 1996.

⁵⁴ Willems 1997.

⁵⁵ Especially the use of fake names and alibis was deemed highly suspect (see also Singha 2000: 155).

group.⁵⁶ Thirdly, after the unification the central state under Bismarck became much more active in the social and economic domain, which gave an important impulse to the further implementation of creating a well ordered state and establishing the identity of its citizens. One of the consequences was that itinerant groups within the Reich, often without a fixed abode, were increasingly treated with suspicion and repressed.

This tendency was reinforced by the specialisation within police forces that took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century throughout Western Europe.⁵⁷ In the wake of the general bureaucratisation that accompanied state formation in Western Europe, special branches were established for the surveillance of 'social problems' as prostitution, aliens, vagrants and in some countries Gypsies. Strongly influenced by the general negative ideas on travelling groups, the sections that occupied themselves with these categories could to some extent gain autonomy and the power to define the problems in their own perception and interest, if only to justify their existence. Around 1900 the two main thriving objectives of the policy towards travelling groups were sedentarism and regular work, and - in the case of foreigners - expulsion. The result of this development is that the demarcation line between nationals and foreigners on the one hand and normal and anti-social citizens at the other was more and more stressed.

Overviewing the attitude towards Gypsies in Western Europe we conclude that its system of rule was characterised by an inability to deal with highly mobile groups that could not be fixed administratively. From a political and ideological point of view they were regarded as a threat to a well ordered society, whereas in a socio-economic domain they did not fit in the poor relief systems. In order to deepen our understanding of these two shortcomings, we will make two comparisons with systems of rule under which Gypsies were treated with more tolerance, the Ottoman empire and pre colonial India.

Contrasting comparisons and the impact of administrative regimes: the Ottoman Empire and pre colonial India

In a recent article Zoltan Barany argues that the treatment of Gypsies under Habsburg and Ottoman rule was quite different from that in Western-Europe. Although both states were multi-ethnic empires, especially the Ottoman empire through its millet system offered a better social environment for a relatively harmonious and enduring ethnic coexistence.⁵⁸ To explain the diver-

⁵⁶ Cottaar 1996.

⁵⁷ Lucassen 1997: 39-40.

⁵⁸ Barany 2001. See also Fraser 1992: 173-178. It should be noted, though, that historical research on Gypsies under Ottoman rule is rare, at least as far as we can judge from publications in Western-European languages. A

gent developments in Western Europe and the Ottoman empire three more or less independent variables seem to matter: the nature of state formation, the organisation of social life and the position of gypsies in society. The distinct path of state formation of the Ottoman empire has been noted by many scholars. Many have stressed the weakness of the central state in monopolising violence and monitoring its population, which is commonly seen as the cause of the illness of the 'sick man of Europe'. Recently Karen Barkey has criticised this interpretation and argued that at least for the seventeenth century, this alleged weakness in fact was its strength because the central state neutralised its potential enemies (peasants and local elites) by a process of negotiation and incorporation.⁵⁹ A consequence of this Ottoman 'route to state centralism' was that phenomena which were seen by Western European states as threatening, such as vagrancy and banditism could very well be incorporated and even used to consolidate the power of the central state. Vagrancy resulting in banditism among landless peasants, especially in Anatolia, became a wide spread phenomenon in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁰ Although these groups caused a lot of misery in the countryside, the Ottoman state, very differently from France or German states, used these groups on a regular basis as additional soldiers and to fight local power holders, who at times when they were without a job hired these men as well. Thus these armed vagrants turned into permanent mercenaries rotated through society and depended one way or another on the central state.

The distinct feature of Ottoman society was the already mentioned millet system, which ordered social life differently from Western Europe. In stead of local civic communities within a common judicial system Ottoman villages and cities were pillarized through millets with religion as ordering principle: Muslims, various sorts of Christians and Jews Gypsies were the only category which was constituted on an ethnic basis. Within these millets guilds played a central role in in- and excluding people from, among other things, poor relief. these guilds were much more all embracing than their Western variant. In principle all occupations, also the 'immoral' professions such as entertainers, were organised in guilds who's functions spread over all aspects of social and institutional life. Moreover, they were moulded from above to ensure the central state the collection of taxes and the administration of its subjects.⁶¹

good summary can be found in Fraser (1992). Furthermore we consulted Marushiakova & Popov (1997) who used Turkish, Serbian and Bulgarian sources and literature.

⁵⁹ Barkey 1994: 230-235; Inalcik 1984.

⁶⁰ Inalcik 1984: 285.

⁶¹ Baer 1970; Edhem et al. 1999: 161-162.

Due to the continuous migration into towns in the Early Modern period pressure upon the guilds to be included was strong,⁶² but - as far as we know -⁶³ this did not lead to stigmatization of itinerant groups or poor migrants similar as in Western Europe. In the case of Gypsies this is furthermore explained, and here we touch upon the third factor, by the fact that many of them were sedentary and, moreover, organised in their own millet and living in their own city district.⁶⁴ On the social position of Gypsies not much is known, but their presence in the Balkans has been unveiled to some extent by recent research, especially in Bulgaria. The presence of Gypsies in Bulgaria probably predated the invasion of the Ottoman army in the second half of the 14th century. In addition many Gypsies entered the Balkans as part of the Ottoman army (servants and craftsmen) and then settled there, both in sedentary and nomadic forms, starting in Bulgarian lands.⁶⁵ In the archives of the central government and local administration they are called *chingene*, *chingane*, *chigan* or *kibti*. Although a growing number of them became Muslims (especially from the 17th century onwards), they had to pay head tax (*haradz*) regardless of their faith. Only the black smiths in service of the army, who lived in fortresses, were exempted. The latter had a special status and belonged to a special Gypsy *sandz*, a non territorial administrative unit.

Most Gypsies settled and only a minority consisted of wandering groups. Both were distributed over different special tax units (*dzhemaats*). Some of them gave up traditional itinerant occupations and turned to farming. Most however, held on to a great variety of itinerant trades, especially blacksmiths and musicians, but also tinkers, goldsmiths, shoers, sieve-makers, tailors and servants. Next to the fundamental division of the population in faithful and *raya* (mostly Christian), Gypsies were given a special ambiguous status. Contrary to the general rule they seem to have been categorised according to their ethnic roots and ideosyncratic religious practices. Compared with the situation in the Habsburg empire and Western Europe, their position seems to have been less problematic. This is confirmed by the large-scale migration into Ottoman lands from run away gypsy-slaves from the neighbouring vassal principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia throughout the Early modern period. The relative favourable position of the Gypsies under Ottoman rule may partly be explained by the fact that many of them were sedentary, but also those who continued a nomadic way of life seem to have been left in peace and not regarded as a threat to a well ordered society.

⁶² Inalcik & Quataert 1994: 697.

⁶³ The problem is that not much has been published on poor relief systems in the Ottoman empire.

⁶⁴ Shaw & Shaw 1977: 240; Karpas 1985: 20-21. Edhem et al. 1999: 79.

⁶⁵ This paragraph is mainly based on Marushiakova & Popov 1997: 18-27.

The fact these *ghezende* also were 'legible', to paraphrase James Scott,⁶⁶ through the system of flexible administrative units (*dzhebemaat*), may have played a role, in addition to the pillarization embodied by the different *millets*. Finally it is important to realise that itinerant Gypsies were by no means the only nomadic group. Much more numerous were nomadic pastoral tribes, such as the Yörüks and the Turcoman tribes. Although they posed administrative problems to the authorities, they constituted an integral part of the sedentary society and fulfilled certain functions without which the society would not have been able to survive. The Ottoman state realised this and gave each clan a *yurt*, summer and winter pasturelands with fixed limits and well circumscribed in the imperial registers.⁶⁷

These still very preliminary conclusions from the Ottoman case (which need further substantiation) strengthens our idea that the diverging treatment of Gypsies in South-East and Western Europe is not only explained by differences in the approach to ethnic and other minorities, as has been put forward by Barany, but has also to do with the fact that Gypsies could be 'caught' by the state in an administrative sense and as members of a well circumscribed unit did not pose a (free rider)⁶⁸ threat to the general principles of the poor relief system. In addition, it is possible that the fear in Western Europe for 'masterless men', was less pronounced in the Ottoman empire, because the state tried to solve the shortage of manpower by raiding the non occupied part of Balkans and other foreign territories for slaves, thereby keeping the population under their rule out of range.⁶⁹

Another interesting case is India before and during colonial rule. Pre-colonial India, especially under (Muslim) Mughal rule, has long been depicted as an anarchy personal despotisms, which stood at the basis of an anti-capitalist 'Asiatic mode of production'.⁷⁰ More recent work has criticised this view by pointing out the dynamic and class aspects of Indian society, such as the commercialisation in the 18th century.⁷¹ There is less dispute over the nature of the 'fiscal-military state'. Most historians agree that this state, through many intermediaries, like warlords, Hindu kings and regional potentates, was mainly interested in extracting taxes from the village communities through their headmen.⁷² The central state, nor the local potentates, seem to have been motivated to repress mobility or to create a 'well ordered society' in a Western European

⁶⁶ Scott 1998.

⁶⁷ Inalcik & Quataert 1994: 37.

⁶⁸ Van Leeuwen 1994.

⁶⁹ Toledano 1982.

⁷⁰ This image is quite tenacious as the recent study of Landes (1998) proves.

⁷¹ Bayly 1988. See also Goody 1996.

⁷² Anderson 1974: 489; Bayly 1988: 26-27.

sense. This may have been partly due to the pioneer character of Indian society. As the English historian Bayly stated:

"Indian society in the eighteenth century was typical of other frontier societies in that the internal extent of the state's influence and of the arable economy with its more hierarchical landed society was constant in flux. Migration was followed by counter-migration, especially across the great empty lands of the Deccan. Settled society and its values were not irrevocably divided from the frontier; they were in a state of mutual dependence."⁷³

As a large part of India before colonial rule was occupied by unsettled, semi-nomadic people, their position in society at large was quite different from that in Western Europe. Furthermore it is relevant to note that – in contrast to the classical static image – labour was scarce and migration necessary and an accepted phenomenon.

Finally, as far as we know, no comparable poor relief system existed at the local level, so migration and itinerancy were regarded less problematic than in contemporary Western Europe. As a consequence rulers seemed to allow itinerant groups, such as pilgrims, pastoral nomads, peddlers, musicians etc. to travel without any form of control, independent of any political authority.⁷⁴ This situation appalled British colonial rulers when they tried to settle the population, because of tax and police, in the 19th century. They saw themselves confronted with an 'illegible' population, both in an economic and in a social sense. The social manifested itself in the impotence of the colonial rulers to categorise the indigenous population in a hierarchical sense and to distinguish between honest and dishonest subjects. British colonial rulers therefore deemed it of utmost importance to establish a firm system of personal identification embedded in distinct (caste like) collectivities. Moreover, with their European conception of vagrancy they were astonished by the tolerance that the Indian society displayed towards 'vagrant' communities, such as the *Badhaks* or the *Maghiya Doms*. A second reason to make the population legible and to monitor geographical mobility was the need to mobilise labour for public works, plantations and mining enclaves. The most important legal framework to combat undesirable mobility and to establish personal identity was the Criminal Tribes Act for, issued in 1871, which was too a large extent stimulated by the European vagrancy acts. It cannot be a coincidence that that a similar development took place during the Ottoman Tanzimat era (1839-1876) and the following rule of Abdülhamid (1876-1909) when centralisation after the French model replaced the earlier

⁷³ Bayly 1988: 31.

decentralised model. As in India Western European concepts of vagrancy were introduced and enshrined in explicit anti vagrancy Laws.⁷⁵

Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to reach a better understanding of the way various itinerant groups who travelled with their families, labelled as Gypsies, have been treated in Western Europe from the fifteenth century onwards. Notwithstanding considerable differences between regions and time periods, we think that a number of general conclusions can be drawn. First of all we have argued that it is essential to study the day to day interaction at the local level and avoid a one-sided top down repression history. By concentrating on the social and economic functions of Gypsies in various regions and looking at the relation with both local authorities and ordinary people, it follows that in spite of the general repression of vagrancy and Gypsy groups, in many cases itinerant groups because of the services they offered were more integrated in society than is often assumed. Moreover, we argued that the legal rhetoric of extreme repression was only effective in certain periods and in certain regions, whereas the extent to which they were accepted and given the possibility to lead their itinerant live, depended on the group and the specific local context. During the hop picking season in England and Germany, well into the 20th century, for example, they were left in peace, whereas these same groups may have been chased as peddlers or musicians at other moments. This more nuanced and differentiated view of the place of Gypsies in Western European societies is of course very general and there is still a lot of work to be done to specify these conditions.

A second conclusion of this paper is that there are two important factors which stimulated the stigmatisation of Gypsies. The first is closely linked with the path of state formation. With the emergence of dynastic states in Early modern Europe, rulers left less room for subjects who remained out of its reach. Vagrants and itinerant groups, Gypsies in particular, were increasingly seen as a threat to society, which was in essence considered as sedentary. In this sense we agree with the German historian Schubert that the end of the Middle Ages around 1500 marked the beginning of a much more problematic relationship between the state and Gypsies. Equally important, and closely linked to the concept of a well ordered society, is the functioning of the poor relief. The restructuring of this system in the same period led to the stigmatisation of

⁷⁴ Singha 2000: 152-157.

⁷⁵ Ergut 2002.

those who did not have a fixed abode and who as a consequence were not integrated in these locally based arrangements.⁷⁶

The structural inability or weakness of the European well ordered societies to deal with Gypsies was finally accentuated by the (admittedly sketchy) comparisons with the Ottoman empire and pre-colonial India. Both cases highlight the two key variables for our understanding of the antagonistic relationship between them and the state. On the one hand the desire to bring subjects under direct control and to make population-groups legible and on the other hand the double faced nature of poor relief systems, which by laying down the rules for inclusion based on a sedentary model irreversibly excluded and stigmatised highly mobile groups.

⁷⁶ This theme also needs to be researched more thoroughly. It would especially be interesting to compare the position of Gypsies and other itinerants in different types of poor relief system, for example those in England, France and Germany.

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The Gypsies in Corfu

(14th–19th century)

For several centuries, official history ignored the Gypsies, a very interesting group of people from a historic point of view, a group of fellow-men who are so close to us and yet so unknown.

We have been in contact with the Gypsies for the last six years, in the context of the program “Education of Gypsy children”, conducted by the University of Ioannina, with the encouragement and the precious guidance of Professor Pedagogics Mr. Gotovos. Undertook this task by our interest in the so called “marginal social groups”. The identification of this group with certain ways of behavior and a lifestyle, which isolated and distanced them from the rest of the society, urged us to study the Gypsies historically, our immediate purpose being to ascertain the diachronic nature of the stereotypes. The fear of the “unknown Romà” encloses anything concerned with them into stereotypical images. The stereotypes, along with the distance between this group [and the dominant social group] result in myths, used arbitrarily and in relation to the circumstances. This abuse of the stereotypes and the myths built around them result in an unfair mystic consideration of the group, far irrelevant to their reality and their needs. As far as the Romà are concerned, this mysticism is created by the “others” [, the non-Romà], to “justify” the persistent exclusion of this group from the social activities.

Their conditions of living, their lifestyle and even their way of thinking cannot have derived from their diversity from the whole and [the individuals] are not self-determined by those features. Consequently, it is unfair to attribute to them features that cannot be proven as innate, as biologically determined, and their diversification from the whole of the society cannot be founded on those features.

The present study aims at examining the Romà group in the Corfu geographical district of Greece.

Gypsies are first witnessed in Crete in 1323 and a few years later (about 1370) they are encountered in Epirus, where they work as villains and slaves. From Epirus, they pass to Corfu, where we deal with the most interesting case of Gypsy setting. We have information about the existence on this island of a feud, the so called "Feudum Aciganorum". According to the sources, this feud included Tziganes as well. It was of a considerable importance, something which is testified by its duration. The first baron of the "Feudum Aciganorum" was one Adamo di Sant Ippolito. The abolition of this feud came along with the abolition of the feudal system in the Ionian Islands (19th century). The information we draw for this feud offer us a complete picture about both its numbers and vassals, and its landowning status. We are actually in the position to disprove the view of the non-existence that no land was assziated with this feud.

Given the absence of a sociological nature, we tried to understand the position of the Gypsies in the wider social group, through administrative documents. The weddings, the population data and the notarial acts contributed to this kind of approach.

Firstly, in examining the wedding acts, we should insist in three basic parameters:

1. the presentation in them, e.g. in their surname definition;
 2. the kind of the wedding, e.g. if it is mixed or non-mixed;
- and
3. their religious nature and their frequency.

Particularly, the existence of Gypsy weddings in the archival series “Grand Head Priests [Μεγάλοι Πρωτοπαπάδες]” in the General Records of Corfu and Venice, leads us to conclude that the Gypsies who lived in Corfu throughout the Venetian era of were Orthodox Christians, which means that they had adopted or originally belonged to the dominant religious creed; certainly, the existence of Gypsies with different religious identity cannot be excluded, we must however emphasize that no such act has been found. This conclusion confirms the view that the people belonging to this group were neither “wizards” nor “charlatans” and that they were not only concerned with metaphysical affairs (a view which had been dominant and shadowed the people of this group); on the contrary, this conclusion coincides

with those of recent studies, which support that the Gypsies usually adopt the religious creed that represents the religious feeling of the dominant social group. The case of the religious conversion of a Gypsy person, as rare as it can be, is characteristic; this person adopted christianism in 1818 and was baptized *Ioannis*, while he was given the surname of his godfather, *Theotokis*. This case is of particular interest, as the family of Theotokis was a wealthy and noble family, included in the list of the Venetian *libro d' oro*. The lack of knowledge concerning his previous religion prevents us from comparing the religious data.

“18th May 1818; a Gypsy man, about 20 years old, who had wished to adopt the Christian religion, began catechism; once the requisite period of the catechism had been completed, during which he had been taught about the Christian creeds and the declarations of our religion by myself, the signatory priest, and had adopted and done everything in the same way, after having had the oral permission of the Right Reverent, former Bishop of Roges, Mr. Makarios, temporary vicar of Corfu, and after having rejected his original religion, he was blessed to receive the holy Baptism by means of the holy Font. The godfather was His Honor Mr. Andreas Theotokis, son of His Honor, the president of the Parliament of Corfu, Mr. Emmanouel Theotokis; the name he received was Ioannis Theotokis.

Priest Spyridon Vlachos.

In continuing with the kind of marital acts, we are in the position to support that, the variety of cultural mixings through mixed weddings can be proved by a wedding that took place in 1725 between Ioannis Petros, a Jew, and a Gypsy woman. At this point, we think it is opportune to mention our effort to trace the percentages of the mixed weddings.

73% conduct mixed weddings, whereas 27% marry partners with common Romà origins. It is remarkable that mainly the male population (49) with Romà origins marry wives with non Gypsy origins (73).

During the 16th century we observe that an important percentage of the weddings took place between people with common origins; however, during the 17th and 18th centuries, there is an obvious shift to mixed marriages. This fact proves the full assimilation of the Gypsy social group by the wider social group, which includes, we should not forget, various groups of Albanian, Peloponnesian, Cretan and Italian origin.

How do the Gypsies present themselves in Corfu from the 15th and 16th centuries and afterwards?

A man with Romà origin presented himself using his first name and an adjective declaring his origin, e.g. *GEORGIOS Atsinganos* [Γεώργιος Ατζιγγανός]. LATER, the form of his name changes by the addition of the family name, e.g. Georgios Kyriakis Atsinganos [Γεώργιος Κυριάκης Ατζιγγανός]. Finally, in the 18th century, the adjective declaring the origin perishes and remain only the first and the family names REMAINED e.g. *Georgios Kyriakis* [Γεώργιος Κυριάκης].

Two families with Romà origins, which are not attested in any source, are of particular interest. The coincidental discovery of a document WITH the title γενιε γιφτι (*gypsy race*) reveals their origin, but at the same time testifies that there existed an adhesion procedure and that the definition of the origin of a person was not necessary.

As far as the frequency of the Romà marriages is concerned, we must enote the existence of cases of second or third marriages, which disproves the belief about the strict morals of the Romà group. This is not a characteristic exclusively of this group, as it is encountered in the rest of the population as well. *In particular, the greatest percentage of the men and women only marry once, but there are also second or third weddings, something that characterizes the whole of the population.*

We are beginning to be confronted with thoughts relevant to assimilation or integration, since all the information mentioned above make us reconsider the set and largely prejudiced view about this group, which present the same features as all the other population groups, something that is proved by the conclusion of mixed weddings, contrary to their “racial” isolation. Besides, there are not any mentions in the travelers’ texts of the 19th century, or in literature, about the Gypsies, unlike the texts concerning other regions of Greece.

This impression of integration does not derive only from the mixed marriages. If we study the population data, we will come to similar conclusions. Our study has so far revealed 3 censuses that regard the Gypsies among others. The occasional and random references to this group make us conclude that the official state did not face them in a singular (separate) way (administrative marginalisation). One could justify this situation by means of their restricted population on the island. For example, on the census reports, there is a separate parameter with the title Γίφτι [Gypsies], which is not in favor of this group and that can be encountered throughout the Venetian period of the Venetian Conquest of Corfu. One should therefore notice that the group is initially discernible, as time went on however the integration into the whole of the society raises those administrative borderlines. Nevertheless, it is not the only social group that presents this specialty. The Jews, the Latins and the distinction of the families into noblemen, wealthy, plebeians, owing to do unpaid labor, privileged, priests and according to their professional identity, are just some of the census parameters.

Particularly, we notice that in all 3 censuses, the Gypsies seem line all over the entire island, from the southern part and the department of Lefkimmi to the northern part and the department of Magoulades. In the census of 1759 there are 159 Gypsies to have been recorded on a total population of 44879 inhabitants. Correspondingly, there is a slight reduction in the number of the Gypsies in the decade

to come, in 1770, which can be noticed in the total population as well, who come up to 44333 people. A decade later, the population of the Gypsies has considerably increased, reaching 296 people.

The most complete and notable census were the one that took place in 1781, which revealed geographical continuity in the Gypsies' residence areas. The increase in their number is very important in relation to the number of Gypsies encountered on the island in 1770 and 1759. In this census there is mention over the Gypsy families that live on the island and at the same time belong to the feud. The fact that the census had been signed by Prosalentis, baron of the feud, proves the existence of Gypsies in the feud; this census begins as follows: *"egicy abitanti nella isola di Corfu, soggetta alla....* Except from the population data, we draw information for the economic condition of the Gypsies in that time, their assets, and we come to the conclusion that they were occupied with agriculture and cattle-raising (existence of animals), just like the rest of the island's residents. The oil production (containers- oil-presses) proves the adoption of the local productions. Eventually, we note in the existence of three priests, the first of whom bears the name Stamatios Tsigganos [Σταμάτιος Τσιγγάνος] and is in the area of Lefkimmi and in particular in the village Argirades. That priest gives to his daughter a non-Gypsy husband. The second priest comes from the village Choroepiskopoi and has the name Dionysios Mavrozoumis [Διονύσιος Μαυροζούμης].

A priest is not only a person in whom one can confide, but is at the same time a commonly accepted personality. He represents a group of people and he may have been literate, something which was rare in that time. Even recently, the role of the priest in the community was particularly important and charged with a lot of responsibilities. The existence of gypsy priests – which was without precedent – reinforces our view about integration.

Eventually, one of the most precious information sources about the economic and social status of the people in a certain period of the past are the notarial acts of that period.

Our effort attempted to locate the oldest notarial acts, so as to draw conclusions about the group in question, approaching as much as possible the earlier chronological limit of their appearance in Corfu.

In the relevant contracts we notice in the first place the existence of the family name, accompanied by an adjective declaring the origin, which perishes as the time went by, something which is very rare in the particular period, as the use of a family name is not very often encountered. The suggestion of the permanent settlement of the Gypsies during that period is reasonable, because if they moved often this would prevent them from participating in contracts as witnesses, since they would be people little known to the contractors. The

necessary conditions should have been the good knowledge of the person and, furthermore, the good knowledge of the features of the person's character.

In the second place, there have been found notarial acts in which “μισέρ” or “κυρ” (Mr.) accompanying the name, identified the social esteem and status of the particular person. The family name is absent and the declarative adjective is his origins.

In the third place, regarding the kind of domicile and their places of settlement, we should note that the Gypsies of that period did not live only in the villages of the island, but in the town as well, having at the same time real property in the centre of this area being of higher value than that of the suburbs. Master. Giorgos Aigyptos used to live at Pinia, in particular next to the St. Vassileios church. This is proved by a contract drawn up in 1515, regarding a transaction. The Gypsy man is the seller and he sells one half of the house, which is described in detail.

In the fourth place, another case regards the mention of Gypsy people as witnesses in notarial acts. The first of these dates from 1502 and reveals the participation of a Gypsy person as a witness in a transaction, which proves their integration in the whole of the society and, therefore, their acceptance by it. This view is

reinforced by the fact that the contracting sides do not have Romà origins. Their reliability, their sense of confidence and their trustworthiness are some of the features they should possess in order to have such competences.

Even if we do not have information about the practice of wedding, we could notice in the Gypsies too the custom of marriage portion by the bride's brother, in the case that her father had died. If we study the marriage contract, we will conclude that it is quite a large portion of fortune, which includes clothing, movable and immovable assets. The religious (orthodox) identity is obvious in the beginning and the end of the contract.

The presence of artisans is not negligible; actually, those artisans are called "masters" [μάστρο] and they are mostly copper artisans, while in the censuses of 1692, 1711 and 1714 there are porters, fishermen and priests. At the same time, there is a money-lender, lending money to both Gypsies and non-Gypsies, thus proving his economic vigor.

As regards the language, we have no evidence proving the existence of a linguistic particularity. It is certain that the Romà of the time know and used the Greek language, which is tractable mainly in the notarial acts.

Finally, we must emphasize that the Gypsies that live on the island today are not related to those that lived there in the past centuries. We are in the position to ascertain that new populations reach Corfu every time, while the older Romà were integrated and ignored their origin, as may be the case in some of us, who either ignore or do not consider important the revelation of our origin, no matter what it would be.

Giannis Georgiou – Maria Dimitriou

The Social approach to the history of the Gypsies and its perspective today.
The contribution of George Soulis.

Abstract

This paper explores the present situation in the study of the Gypsies' issues where special importance is given exclusively to the research of the Romani language and the focus on the Roma community itself. But along with this dominant tradition which has political motives and implications, another crucial heritage in the study of the history of the Gypsies is coming into view and challenges the prevalent paradigm.

The social perspective analysis is a new rhetoric but also a forgotten one which approaches the Gypsies within wider and more complicated frames and contexts which sheds light to their unknown historical past.

This paper argues that this social angle on the history of the Gypsies, which is exemplified in the work of Dutch social scientists today, was firstly elaborated by the historian George Soulis, who viewed the Gypsies within the social context of the Byzantine Empire. The paper will focus on his work and contribution which opened a new way of seeing things in history and which still remains *terra incognita* in modern historiography.

Who are the Gypsies?

Theorising Travellers: A Cultural Assessment of the Conceptual Understandings of Gypsies and Travellers.

Introduction.

The literature relating to Gypsies and Travellers is complex in its diversity and quality. It ranges from stories/biographies or collections of anecdotes (Sampson 1997, Fonseca 1995, Stewart 1997) to disciplined and rigorous academic study (Okely 1983) and the beginnings of a socio-historical approach (Willems 1997, Lucassen, L. Willems, W and Cottaar, A. 1998). All of this material has at least some interpretative value, in terms of understanding the position and perception of Gypsies and Travellers. However, the direction of reading for this paper is, to some extent, dictated by the research concerning itself with English Gypsies and notions of Gypsy/Traveller identity and ethnicity. It will not attempt to make a distinction between Travellers and Gypsies as there seems to be no definite agreement about the boundary between these labels (see for example Hawes and Perez 1995, p7) and some doubt concerning the integrity/authenticity of either (Willems 1998, p17-34). As such the terms have been used interchangeably.

The field of literature selected represents the most influential thinking referring to the historical, sociological, cultural and anthropological analysis of Gypsies and Travellers in the British context since the end of the Second World War, the period of central concern to the paper. But the topic of central concern to this paper is Gypsy identity and as such the argument it makes is applicable to a range of European and American contexts.

It is recognised that areas of the literature appertaining to Gypsies have been questioned, in particular Clebert 1963, by 'Gypsiologists' and that research relating to Travellers has been elaborated on within what has become known in some places as 'Gypsy' or 'Romany' Studies from the time of publication to the present day (for instance, Acton 1974). However, this material has remained influential and/or seminal; its contentions have informed the literature that has consistently reiterated its conceptual flaws, function, ethos and effect (as shall be evident by the analysis which follows) and as such it reveals much in terms of the nature of the way Gypsies are

theoretically conceptualised and the character of the literature relating to Travellers.

The literature demonstrates that during the post Second World War period Gypsy identity has been energetically subjected to a focus that has had a kind of anthropological character. For example, Lucassen et.al. (1998) have assessed the work of Fraser (1992) as representing the tradition of Gypsy research and although they concede that Fraser displays a vast knowledge of the existing literature they argue that his analysis is, “Mainly leaning on linguistic research” (p5) and upholding

...the view that Gypsies have to be considered a people with Indian roots, who would have succeeded in keeping their ethnicity intact since they fled their country of origin. (ibid.)

For Lucassen et.al. (1998)

...this interpretation is not unproblematic and is in many respects based on speculation mixed with a fair proportion of teleological and wishful thinking. Fraser and others with him, refuses to integrate competing evidence in his analysis and only uses what fits with his preconceived idea of one Gypsy people. (p6)

The type of analysis used by Fraser (1992) has influenced most of the ideas relating to Traveller identity. The rigour of the enterprise has varied greatly. Most of the research has over emphasised the role of genealogy and/or heritage in establishing Traveller identity. The position is, in short, one of biological determinism. This has been covertly or overtly postulated in the form of a Gypsy ethnicity and/or related concepts such as race and culture. For example:

Roma, commonly known as Gypsies, a traditionally nomadic people found throughout the world. The Roma share a common biological, cultural, and linguistic heritage that set them apart as a genuine ethnic group. (Encarta Online 1998, p1).

To a large extent this ignores the sociological and everyday (macro) social context within which the very diverse groups that make up the Traveller population exist (Willems1997, p17). The literature tends not to give appropriate consideration to social conditions, context, activity and interaction that may contribute to the development and maintenance of this population (for example see Clebert 1963 and Hawes and Perez, 1995).

The paper will aim to begin to redress this situation by offering a more sociological

perspective and suggest a significant social influence on the development of the Traveller population.

The impression given by much of the literature is that those groups loosely labelled as 'Gypsies' are a homogenous ethnic group and/or race (maybe made up of a number of 'ethnicity's'). Although other categories of Traveller are identified, such as Didikois, these groups have, latterly, been referred to under the collected category of 'Travellers', and portrayed within a continuity of history and origin. Lucassen et.al. (1998) demonstrate the flaws in this approach relating to Fraser (1992):

The possibility that through a process of labelling other itinerant groups have become known as Gypsies as well and in the end have internalized this image, or the fact that many Gypsies intermingled with others from the end of the Middle Ages onwards, make only minor inroads in his ideas. Moreover, he too easily discards the possibility that the 'people' concept is a fairly recent phenomenon, triggered by nineteenth-century nationalistic ideology and not in the least promoted by the Gypsy Lore Society itself, in which footsteps he clearly follows. (Lucassen et.al. 1998, p6)

Okely (1994) refutes the idea of exotic origin and the idea of a 'Gypsy race':

A divisive process also occurs in Britain where there are said to be "real" Gypsies and "counterfeit" ones. The counterfeits are dismissed as drop-outs from the dominant society. By contrast the real ones are allegedly of a distinct "race"; originating from abroad, allegedly India, on the basis of linguistic links. Ideally the so-called "pure-blooded" ones are self-sufficient, good mannered and isolated in rural enclaves. All this is of course fantasy and tells us more about the dominant society's need to project its longings onto "other" imaginary peoples. The Gypsies or Travellers working with scrap metal near urban areas are dismissed as drop-outs, since it is held that the real ones are extinct. This stereotyping process is familiar both to Travellers and to those closely acquainted with them. (Okely 1994, p6)

However, her position is made in order to develop a notion of homogeneity in terms of the Traveller population. Okely argues that this group is intrinsically connected to society;

Travellers do not and cannot live, work and survive in a vacuum. Gypsies, Tsiganes, Tinkers or Travellers are a unique group around the world. They do not fall into the classical anthropological typology of nomads, for they are interdependent with a wider sedentary economy. They do not live in the wild off natural produce as hunter-gatherer nomads, nor do they depend mainly on animal herds as do pastoral nomads. (ibid., p4-5)

But she sees them as maintaining an essential difference that connects them, even though this can be given up or lost:

What do the English or Welsh Gypsies and Irish or Scottish Travellers have in common? They share a resistance to wage-labour, a multiplicity of self-employed occupations, often a need for geographical flexibility and an ideological preference for trailers or caravans. Among all groups there are extremes of wealth or relative poverty, some may move into housing, some may "pass" into the dominant society, marry people outside the ethnic group and choose to take up wage labour. (ibid., p8)

Although seemingly moving away from the notion of an exotic origin, this analysis still mystifies the nature of the Traveller population. It portrays Travellers as 'the same but different', connected but separate. Okely, to an extent, can be seen to be replacing 'exotic origin' with 'ideological preference' to underpin what she continues to call an 'ethnic group'.

This paper seeks to illustrate and analyse this situation. It will attempt to challenge what Lucassen et.al.(1998) have identified as the dominant contortion of 'Gypsy origins';

Although many Gypsy studies experts are aware that the term Gypsy was constructed by the dominant society and is used to indicate certain nomadic groups, most still hold the opinion that it refers to a people (or 'race'). (Lucassen et.al. 1998, p5)

This analysis, in effect, argues that the Traveller population has a wider aetiological basis than indicated in the literature relating to this group. Following a Weberian analysis, it will be contested that Traveller activity is part of the constant flux of human social organisation:

*...race creates a 'group' only when it is subjectively perceived as a common trait: this happens only when a neighbourhood or the mere proximity of racially different persons is the basis of joint (mostly political) action, or conversely, when some common experiences of members of the same race are linked to some antagonism against its members of an **obviously** different group. (Weber 1922, p385)*

The most pertinent part of Weber's position for this work is that:

...ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity. (ibid., p389)

This argument can be seen as both a disconnecting force (in terms of an entire population) and a pressure that interconnects and mixes various categories, groups and types (like Gypsies). This paper begins the process of demonstrating that the Gypsy and Traveller population is a rich mixture of culture and very much part of the

society in which it exists but it, in Weberian terms, coagulates and arises out of political pressures. I will seek to provide a consideration of social, political, cultural and economic forces as contributory factors to, and generators of, itinerant and travelling life-styles. This perspective, as will be illustrated below, is for the most part neglected in the area of study.

The literature recognises the multifarious character of the Traveller population, but at the same time it contains an under-current that presents Gypsy connectivity. This position is problematical (as Lucassen et.al. 1998 confirm); it suggests a tenuous collective of 'Gypsiness', grouping people together around fragmented similarities of language, ritual or tradition, often with little correlation between these considerations. For example, a group may share snippets of language, but have very different life-styles. It is an exercise that would not be dissimilar to an attempt to define contemporary Britishness or Irishness for example in terms of habit, tradition or even language.

Although it may be important for individual and group identity to emphasise various ethnic boundaries, tastes, style etc., the effort to seek to identify habits or defining traditions/traits on behalf of a particular group, that has an effect of merely distinguishing or categorising, seems to be highly questionable in terms of its political or social motives. The practice of aggregating Traveller identity may also result in outcomes that amount to little more than subtle forms of discrimination. For example, an underlying theme in the literature (see for example Kenrick and Clark 1995 and Kenrick and Bakewell 1990) is the implication that people, once identified as 'Gypsies', belong on a site. A human being, categorised as a 'Gypsy', has a logical 'place' in these terms (as, under the South African apartheid regime, blacks belonged on a Bantu).

The practice of defining 'Gypsy' characteristics, from a very broad life-style basis (living in a caravan for example) and what is a diverse collection of people, from a range of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (see Lucassen et.al.1998 and Willems 1997) might be likened to the making of claims about 'white' racial tradition or ethnically 'black' behaviour. Such distinctions are racist in themselves in that they fail to consider, and in effect deny the existence of, the wide and varied nature of cultural traditions and ethnic identities within this very limited taxonomy of colour. It is valuable to ask what purpose there is in labelling uniquely 'Gypsy' behaviour or 'ways' (see Hancock, Dowd and Djuric 1998 and Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group 1992 for example). How could such distinctions have anything

other than extremely limited applicability in a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, cross-cultural society? Although this paper cannot really address this propensity it is hoped that it will act as a question mark over the literature.

Difference defined.

Analysis of the literature identifies five main forces that are used to postulate Gypsy connectivity:

1. Ritual and rite
2. Language
3. Travelling
4. Self identification
5. Romanticism

These are elaborated below. The perceived nature of difference is directed by social and psychological motives, although the consideration of broader social issues is conspicuous by its absence. It is not the purpose of this paper to seek a reason for this, but such a gap served to generate a critical reading which enabled the work to focus on the social processes impacting on the generation of the Traveller population.

Although Lucassen et.al.(1998) go much further than others in demonstrating that Travellers derive from various origins (see especially Cottar, *ibid.*, p114-152) and critique what they call, “The inadequacy of traditional answers” (*ibid.*, p1-16) found in research surrounding Gypsies and other itinerant groups, they continue a traditional, if an uneasy consensus within the literature that sees there being ‘a Traveller population’, that might be thought of as a single entity (in as much as they have an overarching label, ‘Travellers’) being made up of a diversity of ethnic types, where inclusion into the whole seems to be based on rather open qualifications. From this perspective it might be reasonably asked if travelling sales-people might be considered to be Gypsies. This group, as occupational travellers, could be seen as a modern equivalent to the Tinkers or "Showmen", whom Acton (1974) connects with Gypsy identity (p76-79). Workers obliged to live alongside their 'moving' employment on civil engineering projects, in caravans, could also be recruited to the Gypsy ‘socio-cultural continuum’. For Acton (1974. p58) there is no clear overriding indication of what is needed, other than an itinerant life-style, to be part of this

collectivity. However, for Clebert, 1963, Gypsy culture is quite closed:

Gypsies represent an exceptional case: they are the unique example of an ethnic whole perfectly defined, which, through space and time for more than one thousand years, and beyond the frontiers of Europe, has achieved success in a gigantic migration - without ever having consented to any alteration as regards the originality and singleness of their race (Clebert 1963, pxvi-xvii).

Calling oneself a 'Gypsy', 'Traveller' or 'New Age Traveller', self-ascription, seems to be, for most of the writers, a major factor in terms of establishing Traveller identity (for example, Okely 1983, p68-69). However only Rehfisch (1975) states overtly, that the main marker of Gypsy identity is self-ascription. For all this, the social categorisation, 'Gypsy', is, at least in part, created by groups and individuals in the wider social field, following Weber's (1922, p385) understanding. One manifestation of this wider social field might be academics of the type that write about Gypsies (see Willems 1997, and 1998, p29-32). Given the feelings of ethnic discontinuity that appear to exist within the Traveller community (see Okely 1983, p72-73) those groups that make up the category 'Gypsy' would seem less likely to see themselves as part of a tight whole than interested non-Gypsies. Of course, the most obvious 'Gypsy trait' to the outside world is caravan dwelling, so it would seem the most likely person to be a Gypsy would be one who ascribes this label to themselves and who lives in a caravan, but this seems a vulnerable and uncertain measure of ethnicity.

It can be suggested that the five factors of 'Gypsiness' collectively produce a range of responses to those conscripted to or adopting Traveller/Gypsy identity. For example, fables about travelling are intimately connected to the romance of the Traveller life-style. Also, exotic language, 'unity in difference' and political affiliation are hard to separate in the Traveller context. There is some overlap in these factors of interpretation; especially as none of them exist as isolated aspects of identity, they are interrelated and mutually supporting. On this basis the material that follows seeks to illustrate that Traveller identity has been subject to a limited and questionable analysis.

Underlying unity in difference.

Samuels (1992) provides an example of how the literature sometimes presents

Gypsies as a distinctive racial grouping:

A long shared history. A conscious sense of distinctiveness or difference. Distinctive customs. Their own folklore. A tightly knit community. Birth into the community. Inter-marriage. A minority group. A distinctive dialect. Nomadic. (Samuels 1992, p73)

At the same time, most of the literature suggests that the idea of a homogenous Traveller population is tenuous and thus questionable, implying that the whole 'race' is made up of a number of different ethnicities. There is an obvious tension here. An insistence on an underlying or primal unity is built on the basis of diversity. For example, Acton (1974) at points argues against a clear or distinctive racial or ethnic Gypsiness, seeing the Traveller population as a, "disunited and ill-defined people", who possess, "continuity, rather than a community, of culture" (p54). However, he makes many statements that suggest distinctive origins and ethnic categories, for example referring to Romani speakers leaving India 1,000 years ago (p1). He suggests the presence of a, "caste hierarchy" (p54) but goes on to question the validity of this, arguing that one, or a number of, "socio-cultural continuum" (p58) exist in relation to Gypsies. Acton's position is further complicated by his definition of different categories of Travellers (p60-78) and groups of Gypsies.

It is clear that Acton replaces an ethnic or 'caste hierarchy' with a series of social boundaries. It is difficult to discern from his analysis exactly what difference this makes. Neither does he specify how "continuity" is distinct from "community". In effect Acton is arguing that Travellers are a distinct group. He presents diversity as a key factor, which for him is based on Gypsy and non-Gypsy stereotypes, producing "ethnic sub-group categories" (p54). This analysis superficially suggests that Gypsy ethnicity is socially generated, but social and cultural identity is not central to of his theoretical analysis. What seems to be Acton's primary concern is an effort to make a case for the existence of a whole by attention to the sum of diverse groups that are portrayed as parts. In short this argument implies 'homogeneity of difference' but, within this it is conceivable that any group could be adopted as Gypsy.

Clebert (1963) might be seen as the precursor of Acton (and Fraser 1992 and Hawes and Perez, 1995, Acton's successors in the field of Gypsy studies). Clebert, in postulating a similar idea to Acton, depicting wholeness or homogeneity arising out of obvious heterogeneity and diversity, uses the same mixture of romanticism and

historical conjecture employed by Acton when establishing a notion of Traveller identity.

For Clebert (1963) there is a general failure "to appreciate" Gypsies as "a whole people" (pxvi), who are "Jealous of their ethnic unity, conscious of their racial originality" (ibid.), being a "unique example of an ethnic whole perfectly defined" (ibid.). For him, Gypsies have never, "consented to any alteration as regards to the originality and singleness of their race." (ibid., pxvii). He then goes on to consider, "The indispensable distinctions", "within Gypsy ethnology", they being a 'race' that differ in custom, look and dialect. This contradiction in conviction is ameliorated by Clebert's argument that this 'ethnic whole' is held together by the maintenance of "original roots" and "a basic tongue" (ibid., pxix). As is the case in much of the literature, these claims are not backed up by any solid evidence. The idea of a definite racial or ethnic group is often presented as unproblematic. For example Kendrick and Puxon (1972) write of the arrival of Gypsies in the United Kingdom at the turn of the sixteenth century (ibid., Ch.1) this claim is based on documentary evidence of the time that labelled any foreign group of uncertain origin as 'Gypsy' (the origin of the word 'Gypsy' most writers agree is a derivative of 'Egyptian' a term given to people of 'Eastern appearance' see Clebert 1963, p5 for example). However, Kendrick and Puxon, like most other writers, assume that the sixteenth century had a reliable taxonomy of racial types ('peoples') comparable with contemporary understanding (see Malik 1996, p4-5, p42-45 and Lucassen et.al.1998, p6).

Liegeois (1986) takes a European perspective, and at points, a worldview of the history and character of Gypsies. He consistently makes the point that what he is looking at when referring to Gypsies is "a rich mosaic of ethnic fragments" (ibid., p13); a collection of different groups, with different names. He can thus be understood to be agreeing with Clebert (1963) and Acton's (1974) interpretation. He argues for an overall connection between these groups, although this is fragile and tenuous in nature. Liegeois argues that the world population of Gypsies is the sum "of small diverse groups" (ibid., p49). For him, Gypsies are connected by a flexible and constantly changing structure, which is derived from their consistent persecution.

Liegeois (1986) contends that contemporary studies of Gypsies are inaccurate because they do not allow for the very complex and "multi-faceted reality" (ibid., p49) of Gypsy identity. For him, portrayals of Gypsies are slanted by over generalisation and are based on stereotypical images, which are hundreds of years old. He argues that such a group cannot be adequately described in generalities, "any synthesis" (ibid.)

necessarily being an over simplification. At this point Liegeois seems to hold a dual understanding; Gypsies can be taken to be a very diverse, loosely connected group, but at the same time we must see this 'synthesis' as doubtful.

According to Liegeois (1986), Gypsy culture is not unchanging or passive. The diverse grouping that he refers to, as 'Gypsies' cannot really be thought of as having a straightforward line of development. Although he does use generalisation throughout, he constantly reiterates that the character of those groups that share Gypsy identity is diverse. Reinforcing this point he informs his reader that there is no single word for a 'Gypsy' type in the various Romany dialects. This contradicts the likes of Clebert (1963), Fraser (1992) and Hawes and Perez (1995) but it is a much more secure analysis in the light of Willems (1997) and Lucassen et.al.(1998) the latter showing the basic historical analysis of Traveller origins to be spurious and the former clearly indicating the ethnic label 'Gypsy' to be primarily socially generated.

Much effort is expended in the literature justifying the 'exotic' version of Gypsy origins, tradition and language being cited as cementing factors. This argument, as Liegeois (ibid.) suggests, is a fragile basis on which to found theories of identity. Liegeois (ibid.) does provide a more flexible view of those placed in the category of 'Gypsy' than Clebert (1963), seeing them as a grouping with a diverse range of social, political, cultural and ethnic origins, but his position ties him to the 'diversity = unity' analysis that Acton (1974) and Clebert (1963) promote.

Okely (1983) makes the point, like Liegeois (1986), that Gypsy identity is amorphous. In common with Acton (1974) she sees the groups that constitute the Gypsy population as having a range and mixture of backgrounds. In her second chapter, *Modern misrepresentations*, she suggests that Travellers have been portrayed as "victims of cultural disintegration" (Okely 1983, p28). She argues that they are not a separate or complete cultural group. For her, Travellers have changed with the dominant order, in that they are and have been connected to and are interdependent with the wider economy. This, according to Okely, is exemplified by the presence of rural and non-rural groups of Gypsies. Although Okely represents a 'soft' position, relative to Clebert (1963) and Acton (1974) she continues to portray Traveller identity

as a collective, connected by difference, a contradiction that does not help her analysis.

Hawes and Perez (1995) also argue that travelling people have "never constituted homogenous group" (p7) and that, "they are a most disunited and ill-defined people" (ibid.). Taking the lead from Acton (1974) they see Gypsies as possessing a, "continuity rather than a community of culture" (Hawes and Perez 1995, p7). They support Liegeois (1986) seeing Gypsies as "a whole, whose component features are linked to one another; a structure that is not rigid but ever-changing." (ibid.). Hawes and Perez continue;

The Irish Travellers in particular, whose Celtic origins and background to some extent set them at odds with the rest, are nevertheless so closely identified, interbred and integrated with the Gypsies, over at least 200 years, that their experience is directly related to our purposes. (ibid.)

Hawes and Perez (1995) draw attention to post-war problems of homelessness (p18) the extensive encampments along the Thames marshes, which they refer to as, "sprawling shanty towns", and "the post-war housing shortages" that coincided with the rise in ownership of mobile homes to a total of 150,000 (p20). They state that these issues gave rise to the 1960 Caravan Sites Act and also point out that this legislation was not primarily concerned with Gypsies and Travellers, its rationale being to control the unlicensed sites. However, they do not see this situation as having any great impact on the make up or social perception of the Gypsy population.

More recent legislation (the Public Order Act 1986 and the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act for example) can also be clearly seen to address broad social issues rather than a particular ethnic group (see Belton 2003). Given the recent history of itinerancy, it is difficult not to speculate that those seen as New Age Travellers may well have counterparts throughout history and that these groups would be likely to interact both with other itinerant groups and settled populations:

With each new piece of legislation, there was less and less attempt to differentiate between the various kinds of itinerant. The 20th century equivalent, in some respects; is the advent of New Age Travellers". (Hawes and Perez 1995, p12).

This recognition that New Age Travellers have predecessors contradicts the assertion that the authors make that this group are a, "more recent kind of Traveller" (Hawes and Perez 1995, p6) who is, for them, a "quite different group of nomads" (ibid.). However, they recognise that shortages of social housing, together with other considerations create, "loose groupings of articulate people from the settled population..." but for Hawes and Perez their "... origins are considerably different from those of the traditional Gypsy or Irish Traveller." (ibid.). How they have this intimate knowledge about origins is not explained, but their link between housing shortages and those taking up an itinerant life-style does indicate that there might be a diversity of origin of the Travelling population and suggests social forces have played a part in its development.

This comparatively recent set of considerations, alongside the historical evidence makes it hard to ignore the potential admixture of Traveller origins. Hawes and Perez state:

We may guess at the many social and economic pressures which could have driven previously settled people to take up life on the road in those times, no doubt to add to the numberless peddlers; hawkers; vagrants and beggars which made up the Elizabethan underclass. (ibid.)

The argument that Hawes and Perez (1995) are proposing suggests that there have been constant additions to the Travelling population from the settled community over time. As a result it becomes difficult to sustain a notion of a traditional, blood lineage of Travellers. On the contrary their position does seem to support the probability that Britain's Traveller population is essentially a social phenomenon rather than an ethnic or racial type.

Hawes and Perez (1995) assume the intellectual voice for Gypsies. They do not clearly articulate or establish the relationship that Travellers have to the state because the social reality/origin of Travellers is given no definite meaning. This argument is vague about the social generation of the Traveller population in an effort to promote a notion of a collective origin of the group. The analysis follows the tendency of the romantic tradition established by other writers, for example Kenrick and Clark (1995) and Clebert (1963), who suggest that the Traveller population is the result of family, blood or even tribal lineage. A position of this type allows such writers to theoretically champion 'an oppressed ethnic group', and fight the cause of 'minority

rights', but it obscures other possible forms of group generation arising out of the relationship between the Traveller population and social phenomena affecting a much wider constituency.

Sutherland (1975a) demonstrates the omnipotence of this perspective. She looks at the social, political and ceremonial patterns of groups of Travellers in the USA (in particular around the town of Barvale, California). She applies the Romani term *kumponia* to these activities and interactions. Sutherland, in her effort to uncover the economic organisation of, "Rom in American" (p38), refers to a number of formally travelling family groups under the collective name of 'Rom'. Like other writers (some using the other generic labels, Gypsy or Traveller for example) she deploys this as an umbrella term for varying collections of current and former nomadic peoples, including Machwaya, Mikalesti and Gurkwe. She provides no explanation of her rationale other than seeing that the connections between the life-style she describes as evidence of this ethnic typology.

Most of the people Sutherland (1975a) writes about were not full-time nomads, although constant and consistent travelling interspersed by short to long sedentary living was not uncommon, (families spent between 6 and 66 percent of their time travelling. p15). Sutherland goes on to look at economic relations between these groups and between the whole category of 'Rom' and non-Travellers, including welfare considerations.

The main weakness of Sutherlands' analysis is that what is being portrayed is a group of families that have carried nomadic traditions from their East European origins or who have adopted this way of life since arriving in the United States (the exact character of travelling genealogy is not examined). The basic connection between these groups is their background as travelling people. Their customs, traditions and economic structures have no *necessary*, 'Rom', cultural or ethnic bias. Sutherland (1975a) does not seem to see the possibility that the cultural and economic ways of the community she examines could emanate from a shared life-style and migrant background as much as from a cultural tradition set in an ethnic framework of 'Romhood'. This can be seen from Sutherland's (ibid.) critique of Clebert's (1963) attempt to identify Gypsy occupational categories, like musicians or metal workers. In

short, she argues that 'Rom' have very wide range of economic relations, proposing that the basic tenet of these relations is co-operation between Rom for the exploitation of non-Gypsies (Sutherland 1975a. p22). She gives little consideration to the possibility that this occupational network may be life-style generated, rather than part of an ethnic mechanism; it may be materially energised and not culturally rooted.

This unproblematic connection between ethnicity and behaviour is taken up by others (A. and F. Rehfisch, Fredrik Barth and parts of Kornblum, Guy and Okely, all 1975). For example, Miller (1975, p41) examines what she calls the "American Rom", specifically focusing on an "Ideology of Defilement". But again, the basic weakness in this work is that it assumes that various groups of nomadic people are a homogenous ethnic category - *Rom*. The problem with this argument is highlighted by Guy (1975, p221-2) when he states that, "How Roms should be characterized is a basic problem". He goes on to point to the confusion amongst,

...social anthropologists who have pursued an inconclusive search for definitive objective criteria of the ethnic group.

He cites the attack made by Barth (1970) on this whole approach. For Barth,

...the ascriptive aspect is logically prior to any objective characteristics of the ethnic group. (Quoted by Guy 1975, p222).

This position seems to be indicting that there is a propensity amongst social anthropologists to *create* ethnic types on the basis of certain observed characteristics, which appear to have similar elements. Thus, it could be argued that caravan dwelling is an, "ascriptive aspect" that exists prior to the anthropologist labelling it an "objective characteristic". The possibility that a range of people, from varying backgrounds and ethnic groups, could live in caravans is not addressed, especially if they can be described as carrying other "ascriptive aspects" (for example, employment, see Okely 1983, p49-65) that in turn become "objective characteristics". These other ascriptive aspects may have more to do with caravan dwelling life than any ethnic propensities. This possibility is not considered.

In contrast Kornblum (1975), looking at Boyash Gypsies, notes that a family, the Ivonovich's, although not Gypsies, maintain a "nomadic style of existence." (p131).

Their family economy and their relations with other groups in the camp are very much grounded in the rootlessness and disruption (ibid.).

This brings them to adopt 'Gypsy ways':

In consequence they often have need of advice and material support which the Gypsies are in a position to provide (ibid.).

Kornblum (1975) noted certain ascriptive aspects that correspond to the objective characteristics of Gypsy life-style, but saw that this did not automatically lead to being part of a Gypsy category. This conclusion was based the relative comfort expressed or observed amongst non-Gypsy migrants and Gypsies. Although an entire catalogue of ascriptive aspects might have been fulfilled by this family, the rather abstract and vague notion of comfort excluded them from being seen/portrayed as Gypsies. For Kornblum (1975) the Ivanovich's relative discomfiture with a travelling life-style showed them to be involved in a temporary response to the economic/social position they found themselves in at the time and not expressing a permanent ethnic or genealogical propensity.

Willems (1997) agrees that:

As a rule Gypsy specialists concentrate on striking likenesses and have far less keen an eye for differences... This fixation on the supposed uniqueness of Gypsies has meant that no comparative studies of people in roughly the same circumstances were forthcoming. (p298-299)

His conclusion, when discussing Dutch Travellers, is not too far from Kornblum (1975 above)

When several years ago, a colleague of mine in the company of British anthropologist Judith Okely, visited a caravan camp in Leiden, they saw parallels with British and Irish Gypsy-Travellers. They knew for certain that these were Gypsies. The Dutch women living in the caravans, however, were having none of it and stressed that they were native Dutch. That social surroundings can, as it were, compel people to behave in a certain way is something that Gypsy specialists do not acknowledge sufficiently. (ibid., p299)

Willems goes on to demonstrate the prevalence of this type of analysis:

The writers of an analysis of begging of Gypsies in seventeenth-century western Europe omit to mention that at the time the number of beggars was, in any event large. Elaborate discussions of the deceptions perpetrated by Gypsies throughout the German countryside in the eighteenth century lose much of their ethnic charge if we realize that a legion of drifters struggled to extract themselves from the swamp of poverty through ruses and tricks. (ibid.)

The collective analysis in Rehfisch (1975) suggests that there may be some consistent patterns of activity amongst groups of Travellers, but it demonstrates that there is no overriding connection between the very disparate groups that make up the category, apart from the need, wish or obligation to travel. Even this is questionable, as Guy (1975. p202) points out. This could link Gypsies to Bedouin, Bushmen, Aborigines, and Inuit, any and all of the worlds' itinerant peoples. Are they all Gypsies? It can be seen that there has been a failure on the part of writers on Gypsy issues to explain the Traveller population as a distinct group based on tradition, habit or life-style.

This propensity has a history. As Willems (1997) explains:

...the notion of a Gypsy people has become dominant and other group categories such as pilgrims, spies, criminal vagabonds, heathens and the mixed category of social outsiders has faded into the background. (p301)

Here Willems points to an historical process that has merged various travelling groups into one all embracing category – Gypsies. Many of these itinerant groups travelled for economic reasons rather than an ethnic drive or a racial urge. These groups would have included show-people, weavers, landless labourers, knife-sharpeners, drovers, beggars and so on (Mayall 1988 and 1995). The “ascriptive aspect” (travelling) although existing prior to categorisation by anthropologists, has been used by the same to define all these groups under one *ethnic* label.

Allegiance to ‘the model Gypsy’.

The confused analysis that arises out of this situation, wherein a range of travelling/ itinerant groups fall into one homogenous, ethnic category, made up of a diversity of

cultural types is exemplified by O'Nions (1995). She argues that when Gypsies are seen as, "...simply a social bonding of nomads with no distinctive culture or group identity", this is no more than "a myth" (p1). She goes on to assert that:

The common perception that they are merely a 'social group of nomads' with no bona fide cultural values distinct from the host society (Liegeois 1987) has threatened to undermine the Gypsy identity. (p3).

O'Nions sees this 'identity' being sustained after five hundred years of co-existence with the dominant population. She argues for a definite and distinct Gypsy ethnic/racial group, seeing the idea of assimilation as futile (p12) but, citing Nicholls L.J. in *CRE v Dutton* 1989, she advances her position on a confused and contradictory analysis:

The fact that some have been absorbed and are indistinguishable from any ordinary member of the public, is not sufficient in itself to establish loss ofan historically determined social identity in [the group's] own eyes and in the eyes of those outside the group...despite their long presence in England, gypsies have not merged wholly in the population as have the Saxons and the Danes...They, or many of them, have retained a separateness, a self-awareness, of still being gypsies (paras 313(j) - 314 (a)). (O'Nions 1995, p13)

O'Nions starts out by arguing that "five-hundred years of co-existence with the dominant population", (ibid.p3) have resulted in there being no 'true-gypsies'. She suggests that nomadic groups have merged to such an extent that any differentiation is "meaningless" (ibid.). However, she goes on to postulate a lasting separateness (unlike the Danes and Saxons) within a level of assimilation. This position is flawed in that, moving beyond the likes of Acton (1974) who propose difference within unity, O'Nions is arguing that Gypsies have been totally assimilated yet, as a group, remain distinct.

The usefulness of this analysis is that it reiterates a traditional propensity within the study of Travellers. O'Nions falls into a double bind that, according to Willems (1997) has marked the historical analysis of Traveller populations. For him, the character of Gypsy identity has been obfuscated by the nature of research into Gypsy identity (most of the writers looked at in this paper have been effected by this). Willems notes how the early writers interested in Gypsies collected historical and

mythological fragments relating to a range of travelling/itinerant groups. From this somewhat random collage they developed a Gypsy racial history and identity. According to Willems, writers like Fraser have followed and built on this foundation. When, as might be expected, no 'true Gypsy type' can be identified (for example Nazi research of the 1940's, Willems 1998, p29) one that corresponds to this 'primal model', it is concluded that this category has disappeared, having been integrated/assimilated to a greater or lesser extent according to the level they correspond to the 'ideal'.

Although Willems (1997) later, alongside Lucassen and Cottaar (1998), strongly implies that the Traveller population is a socially generated phenomenon, being made up of a variety of ethnic types brought together (for the academic and juridical gaze only) by socio-historical forces, including the rise of nationalism (Willems 1998, p22-24) he does not elaborate on the underlying social forces and economic relations that can give rise the creation of and/or conscription to an ethnicity. Neither does he postulate, in any definite manner, possible 'external' binding factors between Travellers.

Political affiliation

One means of looking at links between Travelling people is through political affiliation. This is demonstrated within the literature to some extent, although it is often seen to connect people through a shared life-style rather than a common ethnicity. The social and cultural problems faced by New Age Travellers are indicative of this. This argument has been complimented by English law restricting itinerancy. Methods of law enforcement have created degrees of unity between itinerants that could be understood as political solidarity. It may be argued that itinerancy is part of these peoples' rites, rituals, traditions and culture, but it is not this that binds them politically. What unites this group is a common feeling of oppression and injustice. This may well be the catalyst of a shared identity unrelated to ethnic or racial considerations (Weber 1922, p389).

Most of the post war legislation effecting Travellers has a wider constituency impacting on other sections of society. For instance, the Caravan Sites Acts of the

1960's made caravan dwelling much more difficult, both for 'traditional' Travellers and those who might have chosen or been obliged to take up such a housing resort. Before the Caravan Site Acts of the sixties, it was relatively easy to use caravan dwelling as an alternative to what might be called the 'norms' of the housing market (rented or mortgaged 'bricks and mortar'). Although Travellers have been most likely to suffer ill treatment from the effects of enforcement, having relatively restricted recourse/less access to the apparatus of social protection, legislation of the kind exemplified by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) or even the likes of the 1960 and 1968 Caravan Site Acts, are broad examples of socially corrective power that embodies action limiting the activity of, in the case of the 1994 Act, tens of millions of people. Such legislation is not centrally concerned with relocating the relatively small Gypsy population, or 'ethnic cleansing', as Hawes and Perez (1995) would have it. This would be paradoxical as a primary aim of state activity of this scale.

The one-dimensional focus on the effects of the above legislation on Travellers suggest laws effecting Gypsies have little direct consequence for a wider social constituency. It also distorts the meaning of Gypsy and Traveller identity as it promotes a perspective that legislation is aimed specifically at a '*type*', rather than more social outcomes. This approach invites eugenic interpretations of these groups (see Clebert 1963 for example) which concentrate on racial/ethnic distinctions and fails to adequately take sociological perspectives into consideration. The general social impact of legislation is often relegated to a secondary status in the literature focusing on Traveller issues because the primary focus is on a racial/ethnic type or category.

The path of analysis is as follows:

- *Concentration on interpretation of legislation (such as the 1994 Criminal Justice Act) as an attack on ethnic/racial interest*

Which leads to:

- *The obscuration of the meaning/purpose of legislation (such as the 1994 Criminal Justice Act) as a vehicle for far reaching social discipline*

and

- *The portrayal of a far reaching tool of social normalisation as being primarily an incursion on minority life-styles.*

In the final part of his analysis, Liegeois (1986) makes it clear that the main motivation for Traveller organisation that reaches as far as a notion of Gypsy nationalism can be linked with the persistently harsh treatment of those living an itinerant life-style. But this harassment, for Liegeois, seems not to be premised on notions of race or ethnicity, but on non-Gypsies feeling threatened by Travelling people:

Gypsies moving about in their nomadic groups were seen as physically threatening and ideologically disruptive. Their very existence constituted dissidence. (Liegeois 1986, p104)

For sedentary people nomadism, whether real or imagined, is dangerous and perverse, a threat to the stability of civilisation. (ibid., p139)

Historically, modern methods of control can be seen to be no more than recent variations on a traditional theme:

When, over the centuries, this tactic of expulsion proved limited or ineffective, the only alternative was to confine the dissidents: in prisons, in factories or under daily police surveillance on the fringes of society (ibid. p.104)

The site, being on the fringes of society, fits well into this control system. What might be called 'housing dissidents', those unable or unwilling to take up conventional, sedentary forms or modes of housing, can be assigned or obliged to move to the site. The view of the site as a locale or means of control is confirmed by Liegeois (1986). According to him Gypsies can see sites as "traps", facilitating police surveillance. He argues that sites across Europe fit this description. It is not unusual to find guardhouses at the entrance and social amenities placed at a focus point where, panoptican like, the whole site might be observed (p136) making sites areas of confinement and control. It could be argued that this exemplifies the 'sin' of itinerancy.

Liegeois (1986pCh.3) argues that Gypsies have been a constant target for persecution and although he fails to consider the fact that any legislation effecting itinerant groups or those living outside housing norms has an impact on Gypsies and non-Gypsies alike, what becomes clear from his analysis is that many groups of people have been categorised as Gypsies. It seems that unconventional and/or transient ways of life are

the basis of persecution rather than Gypsiness. However, this is not an overt part of Liegeois' analysis, his focus is more on forms of categorisation and identity rather than questions about origin and cultural meaning.

Okely (1983) is aware of the political advantages of creating a homogenous Gypsy identity, that a racial/ethnic grouping can prove useful to groups that have no other means of combating oppression. As Stuart Hall has pointed out:

Paradoxically, marginality has become a powerful space. It is a space of weak power, but it is a space of power nonetheless. (Hall 1991, p34)

For Hall the weak and oppressed are placed at the margins of society and as such have no access to conventional routes to power. This being the case they make the source of their marginality an asset. Okely does not overtly state that this may be a primary force behind the manufacture of an analysis, which suggests common origins, Arguing that:

Traveller groups are as much a social construction as a genetic or biological entity. (p35).

According to her a 'Gypsy race' does not exist (ibid.). But she goes on to note that the portrayal of collective racial and persecutory elements have the capacity to supply impetus for solidarity. However this perspective may also be counter productive. Okely appears to suggest that oppression can become a means to gain resources. Therefore it is in the interest of the self-proclaimed oppressed to continually assert (preserve) their oppressed (deficit) status. Okely recognises that all roles ascribed to Gypsies by non-Gypsies, "trickster, exotic or victim", carry the "risk of self degradation and a dangerous sense of unreality" (Okely 1983, p77). This is an insightful point. The adoption of roles described by others is something warned against in the colonial context (Fanon 1961, Biko 1987); the process can be part of the wider control nexus - 'we are not as worthy as they, that is why we have an inferior status'. This analysis highlights the possible political and social outcomes of ethnic categorisation. However, Okely does not expand on this point. In fact what looks like the start of an informative analysis of the social meaning of ethnic categorisation regresses by way of her claim that the 'ethnic boundary' of Gypsyhood is based on

pollution beliefs, founded on the practice of "inner purity" (Okely 1983, p78). This argument subscribes to the 'exotic' origin analysis, although she refutes the notion of Indian derivation. Okely appears to be putting forward a contradictory position, but it allows her to acknowledge, what might be called, the social generation of the Traveller population, while at the same time maintain a link with the romantic tradition of writing about Gypsy origins.

In terms of the political dimension as a cementing factor of 'Gypsy ethnicity' Norman Dodds (1966) can be seen as something of a pioneer. He was the first post-World War Two writer on Gypsy issues to chart the progress of legislation effecting Gypsies and Travellers. Following the Second World War Dodds was also one of the most energetic of parliamentary pro-Gypsy activists.

Dodds' analysis aims to compare and contrast the treatment of Gypsies in various countries, but the main part of his work is devoted to his experience of campaigning on behalf of Travellers between the late forties and early sixties. Although initially something of an integrationist, Dodds ends up making a case for sites. He recommends that "...we should have to find suitable sites where they could live..." (p145). As such, he can be seen as one of the precursors of a movement that continues up to the present time that seeks, on behalf of Travellers, to pressurise for 'the rights of Travellers'. When analysed these rights are of very different nature relative to non-Traveller rights. Dodds thus can be seen as one of the innovators of a social differentiation of rights in respect of Travellers and non-Travellers, this being premised on the need and requirement for sites to facilitate, 'a Gypsy life-style'. He asks:

"What do Gypsies want? A piece of ground, with a hard course so that they are not plodding in the mud all the time. They also want what each must have - water, sanitation facilities for ablutions. A camp site should be large enough to take 50 or 100 caravans. Such a community would warrant at least a wooden building, which would serve as a school at the beginning. (Dodds 1966, p146).

This thinking promotes the site as the rightful/natural place of the Traveller. The site and the Gypsy become as synonymous, as 'Eskimo' and igloo, or 'Indian' and reservation, the Black and Ghetto, the Jew and the concentration camp in other

geographical and historical contexts. However, this describes the movement that came out of post-war parliamentary sentiment, more than Dodds' own perspective. He saw the contemporary legislative activity relating to Travellers as amounting to "segregation laws" equivalent to the South African apartheid regime (Dodds 1966, p142). This suggests that his own instincts were against the notion of the site as the 'natural' resort of the Traveller.

The value of the material set down by Dodds is that it adds to the analysis of the rationale behind the Caravan Sites Acts of the 1960s. The conspicuous absence of any explanation as to why Travellers became, suddenly, to be seen as a problem during a time of great housing shortage, together with a focus on Travellers as a 'traditional type', with a need for new and 'specific rights' is revealing. Travellers are not seen as a group 'of society', with existing rights that are simply denied or withdrawn. Dodds, whilst writing within this framework, does suggest that the 'rights' proposed for Travellers are closer to constraints, in that he invites comparison with the 'rights' of blacks in South Africa in terms of designated homelands. These 'rights' also echo the 'rights' of Native Americans with respect to reservations and convict rights relative to the prison. This raises the question as to why a population that Dodds sees as approximating 100,000 should incite such strong political reactions and provokes the conclusion that other factors underlie the nature of legislation effecting Travellers.

According to Liegeois (1986) those who qualify as Gypsy can be determined by political motives (p45) rather than other considerations. This is perhaps why Liegeois considers the people with whom Gypsies live as being crucial in terms of establishing and confirming Traveller identity. He seems to imply that the category of 'Gypsy' relies on social identification. For Liegeois Gypsies have built strength in resistance to discrimination, and have asserted their identity through opposition to non-Gypsies (p84). He suggests that collective oppression has, at times, given rise to an almost nationalist whole, in that it has created a concrete political affiliation, including representation at United Nations level. He concludes that Gypsy identity is based on social experience as much as any other consideration (p165).

According to Liegeois (1986) Gypsy solidarity is made more difficult because

conventional forms of political organisation are antithetical to Gypsies. He does not elaborate on this contention, or how he arrived at it, although given that, according to Liegeois, the Gypsy population is very diverse, it may be that many of those designated as part of this group do not see their so called representatives as working for their interests. It may be that elements of this amorphous category do not see themselves as a homogenous whole, under the label of 'Gypsies'. More precisely, the apparent lack of 'Gypsy solidarity' may betray the disparate nature of the Traveller population. This, again, throws doubt on notions of shared identity or origin, the basis of organisation perhaps being more a form of social categorisation than some fundamental connection of ethnicity, blood, race or shared origin.

Those who are active in promoting the Traveller population as a definite collective may well be attracted by other motives. As Liegeois states:

The Gypsies, like many other minorities, are highly marketable these days. The fashion for Gypsies has now become a feature of the environment in which they live. This threat to turn their culture into spectacle is a danger more difficult to apprehend than the effects of the various regulations or of social work and schooling. There is now a risk that lack of respect will give way to pseudo-respect. In some ways this is worse, because it is garbed in an insincerity and fraternalism that are more dangerous than the paternalism that preceded it. (Liegeois 1986p180)

Here we can see a critique of the 'romantic tradition' found in the literature and Liegeois (1986) clearly identifying the motivation of some writing on Gypsy issues. The identification of 'the other', seen in a positive light, marks out 'uniqueness' and 'difference' that can easily be reinterpreted as 'strange' and/or 'alien'. In an academic and intellectual environment it is difficult to sustain a doctrine of innate human differentiation based on race (see Montagu 1997, Montagu (ed.) 1968, Montagu (ed.)1975 and Stepan 1982) that includes prescriptions that certain 'types' 'belong' in particular places. However, it is acceptable to make a position 'supporting' 'ethnic diversity' or 'distinctiveness' and 'campaign' for the 'rights' of labelled individuals and groups to be placed in their own 'cultural space', for instance, the trailer, on the site. It may not be that some writers on Gypsies have a conscious hidden racist agenda. However, as Liegeois recognises, the desire for ethnic categorisation might be stimulated by unconscious forms class anxiety, discrimination and prejudice. The potential for discriminatory motivation is especially disturbing when ethnic categories seem to be based on very insubstantial premises.

Acton (1974) argues that "New Gypsy politics" (p47) arose from clashes between Gypsies and non-Gypsy society during the 1960's. According to him, this was the result of economic and cultural changes, both in society and amongst Travellers that caused loss of role for Travellers and/or contradiction between Traveller and non-Traveller situations. This restricted, what might be called the 'Gypsicentric' perspective, does not consider the wider implications of local and central government policy that effected Gypsies. Acton is convinced that legislation and enforcement activity is the product of discrimination and prejudice exclusively directed at Travellers. No alternative social analysis is put forward; Acton (1974) fails to consider the possible wider meaning of the political activity effecting Travellers in the 1960s and as such is unable to comprehend the relationship the resulting legislation had to a more general promotion of housing/family norms and social discipline. The essence and spirit of the Caravan Sites Acts of the period can be seen as part of a much broader concern about the family and community life that was changing dramatically at that time. For example, housing shortages were a contradiction to traditional perceptions of family life and the political values related to the family as an institution; for the family to be maintained as a viable social unit, families had to be housed. At the same time the adoption of alternative life-styles, based on communal values rather than 'nuclear consumer units', represented a more permanent threat to housing and other market norms. The seeming simple answer would have been a greater state commitment to forms of social housing, however this would have contradicted the move towards the privatisation of housing supply, that, in Britain, was all but complete by the mid-sixties. As such, what might be called, 'housing discipline' had to be enforced in legislation and the threat of law.

Acton does make an effort to set the analysis of Gypsy politics and situation in a wider context, but he is unable to see the issues effecting Travellers as part of a general social dynamic. It might be argued that this is not his aim, but a project seeking to explain political activity and change concerning any given social phenomenon must look to its context for meaning. What Acton (1974) offers does not provide meaning, it describes events and issues and as such its use in terms of exposing the nature of Traveller existence and activity is limited by a restrictive and ultimately separatist analysis. This is emphasised by his late but detailed examination

of Gypsy Nationalism (Acton 1974:Ch.19) that concludes by suggesting that this movement is both positive and valid.

Hawes and Perez (1995) effect a similar position, but use the 'oppressor' as the engine of categorisation. Emotive expressions, including "Ethnic cleansing", "holocaust", "apartheid" and "clearances" pepper the claim that "official violence" is being perpetrated against groups that seem to pose a threat to "collective well-being". Such oppression is portrayed as having an historical consistency in terms of the treatment of Travellers. For Hawes and Perez (1995) contemporary legislative activity represents a "draconian change of direction" and a "radical shift in policy" (p1). The consultative document of 1992 (Department of the Environment 1992) that was a precursor to 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, for them, signalled an end to "the co-operative approach to policy on Gypsy and Traveller issues that had existed since 1965" (p2).

Hawes and Perez (1995) quote Acton (1974) when making a case for a move from Elizabethan "state racism" to "sincere benevolence" of Victorian society. They characterise non-Traveller involvement at this point as a mixture of "manipulative benevolence" and "the continuation of the direct repression backed by legal measures" (Hawes and Perez 1995, p17). This analysis seems little different from what the writers call the "era of consensus" when one takes a critical perspective on the activity of this 30 years prior to 1993.

Hawes and Perez (1995) see the long-term aim of current policy effecting Gypsies as being

...to alter the fundamental life-style of Gypsies and travelling people in a way which would remove them, as a distinctive culture, altogether from society. A people whose origins, history and culture revolve around the concept of mobility, as a basis for ontological security, would be absorbed into the majority culture in which a house and relationship to one place are the essential basis for development. (p4).

They appear to be unable to differentiate between the essentially sedentary experience of site living and an itinerant way of life. Because the Caravan Sites Acts of the 1960's contained provision for the building of sites does not, in effect make this

legislation any better than the impact Hawes and Perez see resulting from the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. Indeed, they point out that the effect of the 1960 Caravan Sites Act was to reduce the number of sites (Hawes and Perez 1995, p20)

This analysis offers little more than a psychological explanation for the social and political position that Travellers find themselves in. This is expanded upon in chapter seven "The Politics of Prejudice" (Hawes and Perez 1995) where they put forward the simple idea about the need to change, but the analysis lacks a solid strategy on which to build for the same. At worst the general theme of the work engenders aimless guilt. The authors seemingly set themselves a rather modest mission:

In facing the detailed formulations of public policy as they relate to the provision of services for Gypsies and Travellers, particularly the provision of legal sites, the book attempts to identify those elements which could be said to represent discriminatory or oppressive measures against this minority group.
(Hawes and Perez 1995, px)

They follow this statement with the wish not to enter into the debate on ethnicity. This hesitancy is understandable given the very vulnerable nature of any theory relating to a 'Gypsy ethnic type', but given the phraseology that Hawes and Perez use in making their argument, and the subtitle of their book ("The Ethnic Cleansing of British Society") their desire to avoid a discourse on ethnicity seems to lack analytical conviction. Indeed, the analysis is similar to Acton (1974). Like Acton they define official activity as an effort to control Travellers and ignore the effects of legislation on a much broader swath of society. This perspective is premised almost exclusively on psychological responses to ethnic/racial categorisations and amounts to a restricted interpretation of legislation, seeing it as being energised and framed with the comparatively small Traveller population as an exclusive target. In a sense the argument perceives Travellers in a 'ghetto focus'

The erection of a 'sameness through difference' construct, places Gypsies within an apparently fixed identity. This 'categorical chamber' situates Travellers within the parameters of an ethnicity, with most writers using a covert biological corollary alongside behavioural, attitudinal and traditional considerations (see for example Acton 1974,

p15-21 and more explicitly Kenrick and Bakewell 1990, p9-17). This essentialist position focuses on notions of blood and race. It is usually premised on the physical make-up of the body, but in the case of Travellers it is seen to emanate from where the body is situated, that is no fixed location. Whilst providing some ground for political solidarity and strength, this essentialism is also used as a political tool to deflect a range of social ills onto groups of people who are primarily categorised as 'Gypsies' over and above their immediate origins. As such, political affiliation or identity politics founded on 'being a Gypsy' is a double-edged sword, which seems, at least via the indications of the popular media, to cut more one way than the other.

Ritual and Rite

According to Boas (1911) customs, rituals and habits are of vital importance in the maintenance of societies. He drew on the romantic vision of culture as heritage and habit, the role of which is to allow the past to shape the present. Tradition and history moulds individual behaviour, and culture arises out of this. For Boas, the particularity of cultures is essential for continued social stability. Durkheim's (1915) 'collective representation', the beliefs, values and symbols that are common to any particular society, served as a means of perceiving the environment, giving it meaning. According to Durkheim, individual modes of thinking and feeling are shaped by collective representations imposed by the society of which they are part.

According to Radcliffe Brown "Every custom and belief....plays some determinate part in the social life of the community" (quoted in Kuper 1983, p43). Goldschmidt (1990) argues that ritual is used, "at points of culturally defined crisis", "which focus on the group and reinforce its unity." (p175). According to him rituals manipulate human feelings to create a common sentiment and reaffirm social ties. For Goldschmidt they:

...reorient feelings associated with life crises, to alleviate fear, anxiety and guilt, to cope with personal stress. In sum, they are designed to create an emotional climate that enables groups to act in concert and to induce in its constituent members the sentiments necessary for the requisite performance and the desired participation. (p175-176).

Burns puts forward the argument that:

Ritual, like etiquette, is a formal mode of behaviour recognised as correct, but unlike the latter it implies the belief in the operation of supernatural forces. Religion is

characterized by a belief in, and an emotional attitude towards, the supernatural being or beings, and a formal mode of approach - ritual - towards them. (Burns 1992p366)

This being the case rite and ritual appear to be markers of general social affiliation rather than specific ethnic boundaries. It would seem that ritual and rite are firstly social bonding agents. Ritual relates to ethnicity as a secondary effect. Ritual and rite mark out one social or community group, but these 'cultural markers' may not be shared by another group who occupy the same ethnic category. This seems to be the case amongst Travellers. For example, Clebert (1963: Ch.4 and 5) chronicles the various everyday traditions, habits, beliefs and life-styles of the very diverse groups to whom he ascribes the umbrella title of 'Gypsies'. Whilst he shows there to be certain shared elements of activity, interest and tradition within this 'Gypsy' grouping, the level of allegiance to and from these phenomena is not consistent across the whole of the 'Gypsy' population referred to. Neither has this claim for 'distinct traditions' been subject to any comparative analysis with host communities who might share so called 'Gypsy' interests and traditions as profoundly as any group within those categorised as Gypsy.

Okely (1983) states that Gypsies do have coherent ethnic boundaries (p34), based on various traditions and what she calls 'rites'. She later reinforces this argument by stating that Gypsies do not take on the beliefs of the wider society (p77). For Okely, cultural separation between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is based on "images of opposing systems". The two populations, according to Okely, see themselves as distinctive groups and as such evolve and follow distinctive ethnic paths (p37). For her, this can be crystallised in "the Gypsies symbolic work" that "is seen as subversive" (ibid.). This 'subversion' seems to be premised on the informal nature of much of the work traditionally associated with Travellers, but given the rise of the 'car boot sale' and 'odd job' culture of post-Thatcher Britain, this would seem to be a more wide spread 'symbolism'. This apart, it is possible to argue that this general notion of separateness seems to contradict Okely's ideas about the interdependent and connected nature of the relationship between Gypsies and the wider society (p34).

Another question arises from 'symbolic work' being given such a defining role in Traveller identity. Given the strong emphasis placed on 'belief' and 'values' in the

various definitions of ritual and rite, can work, as the central locale of Traveller symbolism, sustain a social identity and by implication, ethnic identity? 'Gypsy rites' based around hygiene, or cleanliness (Okely 1983, p80-86) can be cynically understood as middle-class and academic interpretation of essentially working class traditions, home-spun lore engendered through a lack of education and inadequate health care and inherited 'good advice' (Hoggart, 1957). The very cross-cultural interaction that Okely points out can be seen, by anyone brought up in, or influenced by, pre-war working-class traditions, habits and received medical wisdom deformed into coded behaviour that may be interpreted as superstition, as the source of many of the 'customs' and 'rites' that Okely identifies. Given these considerations, the rites, rituals and symbolism that Okely sees so central to ethnic identity can be criticised as fragile markers of differentiation. She seeks to make a case for ethnicity being partly based on a distinct symbolism, ritual and rite, looking to identify a Gypsy 'type' of behaviour and from this to extrapolate an ethnic character. The question that this analysis begs is why can we not see other behaviours, within different groups, being based on symbolism, rites or rituals, as creative of ethnicity?

It appears that a Traveller life-style incurs some central values and beliefs around separateness and the need, want and/or wish to be travelling. If a travelling population were to have distinct rituals and rites, activities that were central and confirming of a way of life, it would seem that they would need, by definition, to be connected with these aspects of their existence. Okely (1983) does begin to depart from the traditional views maintained in the literature on the nature and future of Travellers, putting forward the notion that housing Gypsies does not necessarily mean an end to Gypsy identity (ibid.p129) and that the separation between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is, in part, a social construction (ibid.p35) but she does not develop these ideas.

Language

Writers on Gypsy issues, as this section will seek to demonstrate, have consistently seen language as an important marker of ethnic identity. However, in common with ideas relating to ritual and rite, the claims made for language as an effective bonding

agent within the homogeneity of the Traveller population do not stand up to critical scrutiny. Okely (1994) for example argues:

*Language moves and changes separately from groups of people. Whether one likes it or not, the prevailing language in Ireland is English. But this does **not** mean that the Irish are descended from the English! Language gives us clues to some past relationship – e.g. colonial conquest or trade. (p7)*

Acton (1974) makes the case for persistent and widespread use of 'Gypsy' languages' (p55-57) to confirm the separateness and distinctiveness of Gypsies. However, the language link as a marker of ethnicity is somewhat brittle. Fraser (1992) states:

Historical linguistics cannot determine the racial and ethnic origin of early Romani-speakers. There is no inherent or necessary link between language and race. (p22).

Even where a whole mode of verbal communication is evident, this does not necessarily indicate a separate language, ancient origins or a distinct heritage. Donall P. 'O Baoill, Head of Structural Linguistics at Institiuid Teangeolaiochta Eireann has stated that the creation of Irish Traveller Cant come about in the last 350 years. For him this means of communication doesn't constitute a distinct language as its structured is indelibly connected to English. (O'Baoill 1994, p155-169).

Various activities, social and employment groups, all have specialised language particular to them. Even alongside unique ritual and rite, dress codes and social structures, this does not give rise to ethnic categories enveloping such groups.

If one looked at an housing estate in Glasgow, and another in Moscow, it is likely that one would find similar 'traditions' and perhaps even shared fragments of language (particularly in respect of consumerist contexts; advertising, television and cinema for example). This does not demonstrate a strong connection between the origins of people; it reflects the interchange and mobility of culture. If one goes on to compare the estate 'rites' with those of Travellers, one could again find similarities, probably more between the Glasgow estate and urban Scottish Travellers and the Moscow estate and Western Serbian Gypsies respectively.

Clebert (1963) indicates that the most definite bonding agent of 'Gypsiness' is that of language. He asserts that, "A century of gypsology has proved that this language is of

Indian origin." (p191). He then goes on (Ch.:6) to provide a detailed analysis of elements of 'Romani' pointing out possible derivatives from ("kinship", p191, with) Sanskrit and Hindi. However, he eventually makes the point that this language, "in its purity" (ibid.) is practically dead, in that it is not used by Travellers. Even the fragments that are still used are not understood between various groups of Travellers (ibid.).

Fraser (1992) relies on connections between elements of language of some communities and the names that a range of nomadic groups give to themselves for his presentation of 'Gypsy homogeneity':

There is, however, at least one ethnic inference to be afforded by the language. It lies in the Gypsies' widespread name for men of their own race. (p25).

Even if one were to accept the debt that Romani has to language with its roots in the sub-continent, being the cradle of the Indo-European family of languages, comparative linguistics has suggested that the East is the root-source of all European languages, this has questionable validity as a definite 'proof' of the Indian origin of the descendants of former users of Romani. (Willems1997, p80). Languages are not restricted genetically they are socially learnt, they move via political, social, environmental and geographical channels. It has been suggested that Gypsy groups adopt a core vocabulary to the grammar of the country where they reside. But they have also been influenced linguistically through trading posts and cultural transmission (Renfrew 1987 and Mallory 1989). As such, the move from 'language' to 'people' is not necessarily a logical or unproblematic step (Willems 1997, p83). For example, a Chinese person living in the USA may speak perfect English, having command of not a word of Mandarin, but this is no guide to 'racial' identity (Jones1993, p186-187). On this basis it is difficult to sustain the place language holds at the centre of ethnic identity as a defining element of 'Gypsiness'.

Travelling.

Mobility is seen by many writers on Traveller issues to be a marker of ethnic identity but as Guy (1975, p202) argues, travelling, as a form of ethnic/racial identification is tenuous. The resort to caravan living may not be one of choice (see Belton 2003). This was exemplified at a global level when a young Gypsy in conversation with

Hillary Clinton was reported to have stated, "I would like to live in a larger house" (Nando.net 1996, p2). It is also likely that many people living in caravans or involved in an itinerant way of life are not Gypsies (Kornblum 1975, p131). Guy (1975) makes the point of how difficult it is to say anything very certain about 'Gypsy traits'. He critiques Clebert's claim that, "the Gypsy is primarily and above all else a nomad." (Clebert 1963, p246) arguing that in countries with the largest numbers of Roms the majority of them are sedentary (see Fonseca 1995). Liegeois (1986) argues that not all Gypsies are nomads. According to him, since World War Two travel has become difficult, given local authority and boarder controls. The industrialisation of Western Europe has restricted the economic adaptation of Gypsies whilst the accompanying urbanisation has made the setting up of camps increasingly problematic. For Liegeois (1986) the strength of Traveller groups lie not in a shared nomadism but is founded on their diverse life styles and their, "absorption or borrowing from the cultural environment in which they find themselves". This "is achieved without weakening the essential and distinct collective identity." (Liegeois 1986 p8). Hawes and Perez (1995) also suggest that nomadism is no guide to Gypsiness and that a Gypsy need not be a nomad (p7) and concede that when discussing the situation of Gypsies it is impossible not to acknowledge,

"...that large numbers of people who live in caravans do not conform to generally accepted notions of what is meant by that term. " (ibid.).

According to Sandford (1973) a quarter of those included in the 1967 Government Survey of Travellers in England and Wales said that they had lived in houses (p181). He also refers to a group of people he became aware of whilst in the process of research,

...who, starting as Gorjios, had made the leap into Gypsydom by going on the road, thus forming a new generation of Gypsies. (ibid.)

Thus not all Gypsies have sub-continental ancestry. This claim of 'instant ethnic/identity generation' is deeply problematic. One might adopt the life-style of an Inuit or an indigenous Australian, but this does not mean that one would then be part of a new generation of the group into which one has assimilated. One would not be regarded by society as 'Eskimo' or 'Aborigine'. Can an individual claim identity or even ethnicity or race because they have 'melted' into the host group? This may be possible in terms of entities like nation states, wherein one may be enveloped within a

political/geographical boundary, but the categories of race or ethnicity involve much more inflexible notions that call on concepts relating to 'internal' states of the individual; 'blood', 'stock', 'instinct' and 'nature'. Such 'facets' are reliant on the semi-mystic genealogy often supported by selective scientific references to genotypes and inheritance.

Self-identification/ascription.

Self-identification is cited by a number of writers as a means by which a Traveller ethnicity may be postulated (see for example Okely 1983, p72-73). When analysing the position of Irish Travellers O Siochain, Ruane and McCann (1994) argue that:

It is not a question of historical “fact” to be resolved by historical investigation. The crucial question is how Irish Travellers understand their experience at the present time. (ibid., pxiii)

This is maybe the least helpful marker of Gypsy identity. Just to say 'I am a Gypsy' , or that, 'I understand myself to be a Traveller' does not imply any consistent or agreed set of criteria. One could mean that one is a wanderer, a mystic, one who lives in a caravan, or the individual making the claim could be a deluded lunatic living in a fantasy world. Statements of this type can mean anything and everything. However, by its very elasticity self-ascription is appealing to certain individuals who want to belong to a different, exotic, 'oppressed' ethnic group, perhaps feeling that they might gain some kind of kudos, influence, respect or power from this identity. However, this flexibility can have an equal negative impact; one is only who one says one is and no more.

Okely (1975, p60) sees “self-ascription rather than 'objective' traits” as the most appropriate means of identifying Travellers. This coincides with Barth's view as cited by Guy (1975, p222). For Barth, an ethnic group is constituted by those who identify themselves as a category that might be distinguished from other categories of the same order. At the same time this group will be recognised by others (ibid.). Thus, Gypsy identity is established, for Okely, in terms of commitment to the same (Okely 1975, p60). However, she appears to back track on this position stating that familial and kinship relations are necessary in terms of claiming 'Gypsy identity' (Okely 1975,

p61). From here she goes on to make the same kind of assumptions as Miller (1975) and Sutherland (1975a) by assuming that various groups of nomadic people are a homogenous ethnic category. This contradictory stance is further complicated by her later claim that Travellers are connected to and interdependent with wider society (Okely 1983, p35) but that Gypsy status is ascribed by birth, one Traveller parent being required for a legitimate Gypsy identity (p67). She argues that non-Gypsies who marry into Gypsy groups are not to be allowed to forget their origins (p68). Okely does not elaborate on how this is achieved, but claims a former Gorgio will be able to participate in day to day life and that their children will be 'incorporated' (ibid.) into a given Traveller community. This interpretation is somewhat confusing when she later states that the biological model for Gypsies is misleading as many Travellers are as close to non-Travellers as they are to Travellers, although her position is perhaps made a little clearer by her argument that:

The principle of decent provides a method both for inclusion and exclusion. Thus, Gypsies, like any ethnic group, have procedures for releasing or absorbing a number of individuals without weakening their boundaries. Ascription by the individual is subsidiary to the group's continuing self-ascription. (Okely 1983, p68)

This position seems to give a secondary importance to decent, it being overridden by group ascription, but it is hard to conceptualise how decent can be subsidiary to ethnic self-ascription. Okely does not show how she established the presence of such a hierarchy. The notion is also problematic given that identity is not a one-way process, needing both social and self-ascription (Jenkins 1996).

From Okely's analysis (1975, 1983 and 1994) it is not clear to what extent Traveller identity can be based on heritage/genealogy. Even the presentation of 100-year-old 'Traveller names' (Okely 1975, p59) brings little security in terms of establishing a continuity of Traveller identity via lineage given that no evidence is provided about local non-Traveller names or the presence of other names in the Traveller population looked at. Other considerations also have to be taken into account. As Okely (1994) points:

Travellers rarely if ever give their names to outsiders...If necessary English Travellers may present themselves as Smith – a surname which is suitably widespread and anonymous.(p15)

One of the most common 'Gypsy names' is Smith (Okely 1983, p173-4).

Other theorists are no clearer about self-ascription and Gypsy identity. The problems with the connection are revealed in the American context by the presence of the kind of analysis exemplified by Nemeth (2002) who recognizes a *spontaneous self-ascription...ethnic identity and membership being no longer fixed and bounded in time and space, but increasingly flexible and fluid* (p6). Astonishingly enough Nemeth goes on to damningly critique his own conclusions by admitting that his approach is a, *pastiche of intellectual and emotional scholarship, and not strictly scientific* (ibid). In short, this position has it that, 'Gypsies are there because they are there and that people say they are' and that this proposition is acceptable because, *Gypsies defy commensuration...which is, the turning of things into numbers and that ...this "thing" called the Gypsy...cannot be counted and mapped* (ibid.p4). This type of twisting and turning of reality (which is typical of the literature appertaining to Gypsies) works to confirm and perpetuate the 'mystic tradition' surrounding the Gypsies. Those groups thus labelled become a kind of *Jabberwocky* of ethnicity, corralled as a mythical tribal people, a 'cryptic' group, which, as such, are vulnerable to the 'Humpty Dumpty school' of social anthropology, whose adherents, looking to develop their own profile as esoterics, cobble identity together out of anecdote, 'pastiche' and/or romantic parody, making phenomena mean just what they want it to mean *neither more or less*. It is tempting to assert that no sane and/or coherent social analyst could reasonably accept this unproblematically. However, it may be enough to suggest that the erection of such fragile 'ethnic' structures might prove to be at least irresponsible and maybe even dangerous. The creation of difference on the strength of whim or ephemeral 'sign' or 'trace' evidence may have unseen repercussions and/or unforeseen consequences (see Montagu 1997).

Rao moves on from claim to be a Gypsy to a point where this assertion is all that is needed to demonstrate ethnicity/racial identity and a connection with the history /heritage/roots of the same:

I shall use the word "Gypsy" as a general term to cover all persons claiming to be "Rom", irrespective of their cultural, linguistic or religious differences; and whatever the degree of their nomadism or sedentarization. (1975, p139).

This argument is followed by the assertion of “the certitude of a common Indian origin for all the Gypsy groups” (p140). The consequence of this position is that if one claims to be a Gypsy one has an Indian origin and identity. This theorisation fails to offer substantive evidence or coherent explanation. It seems that the researchers have found no firm basis for theoretically relying on self-identification as a substantive indicator of ethnic identity. In contrast it appears to be a highly fragile marker of Traveller ethnicity. The overall impression given by the research in Rehfisch (1975) is that the answer to the question of 'who is a Gypsy?' is, 'a Gypsy is anyone who says they are', but this is not secure. Another answer to the same question might be someone 'who has', or say they have, 'one Gypsy parent'. Of course, both of these contentions could amount to the same thing. How could anyone reliably check if ones parents were Gypsies? Even if I may be able to ‘prove’ that my father was a Gypsy and thus justify my own claim to ‘Gypsyhood’, in order to substantiate my father’s Gypsiness, I would have to show that at least one of his parents was a Gypsy and so on. Given the ‘outsider’ status traditionally associated with Gypsies, excluded as many of them would have been, by choice and circumstance, from the bureaucratic interventions of community and state, it would seem that the reliance on public records would to be a tenuous and very limited means to establish the Gypsy lineage of all but a very few beyond two generations. For the most part one would need to rely on hearsay or family legends. Interesting and meaningful as such phenomena are as narrative, they cannot be regarded as a concrete foundation on which to build an ethnic identity.

Romanticism

Many writers looking at Traveller issues romanticise Traveller culture and life-style. For example Lee, P.J. (2000) and Lee, W. (1999). O'Nions (1995) critically asserts:

...there is the romanticised image of the Gypsy as a primitive rural character often depicted with a horse and painted wagon. (p3)

This depiction of a ‘pure’ yet ‘foreign’, rural, roving type, involved in esoteric

employment (fortune telling for example, palms/crystal ball) and 'clan' pass times (bare knuckle boxing, cock fighting) encompasses many of the ethnic markers outlined above including exotic notions attached to origin, nomadism, tribal affiliations and language. Concepts of 'blood' and 'the natural' abound. For instance, in Clebert (1963) notions of "stock", "purity" (p80) 'mother tongue' and 'blood' run throughout, but these terms are never really explained. A diverse range of people, "all kinds of real Gypsies, by whatever name they may be known", are seen to be "united in the same love of freedom" and their, "eternal flight from the bonds of civilisation, in their vital need to live in accordance with nature's rhythm" (ibid., pxix). The nobility and grand separateness of the Gypsy as both victim and 'free' person, dominates the character of the text. Biblical origins are explored alongside what Clebert calls "Gypsy legends". This material is intermixed with historical references to Gypsies that portray them emerging from various exotic locations. He commentates on a process wherein almost anyone of a travelling ilk, looking the least bit foreign was ascribed as having affinity to 'Gypsies' (ibid.:p8-25). In the course of this exercise he notes how Indian scholars, "show an awkward tendency to name *all* 'nomads' as Gypsies (ibid.:p21). Clebert (1963 ch.2) presents a catalogue of historical references to various nomadic people's/tribes. He defines most of them as Gypsies on the strength that, "Gypsies were never given a name except by the natives of the countries" (ibid.:p27). These are then placed in a chronological and geographical order. The result of collation is presented as the progress of the 'Gypsy exodus'. For Clebert (1963), the "clear connection between the basic Gypsy language" and the dialects of Northern India, mark the start of the "Gypsy exodus from India" that took the form of a sudden scattering of Gypsies over the East (ibid.:p23).

Clebert (1963) represents the extreme of the kind of romanticism found in the literature. In many ways, in his work, he includes all the excesses of this tendency that many academics have since replicated. One doesn't have to dig too deep in to the most contemporary writing on Gypsies to find the romantic model reiterated and related as a species of 'fact' or the foundation of 'research'.

The Gypsy Diaspora

The concept of diaspora, although rarely used in the literature relating to Travellers, has become part of the discourse on ethnicity and identity (for example see Brah 1996, Clifford, J.1997, p283-9; Hall and du Gay 1996, p92,101; Azoulay 1997, p9,51-2; Fenton 1999, p28,30,33; Hutchinson and Smith, 1996, p217-20) but the contention to an Indian origin followed by a dispersal means that the notion has an underlying presence in the analysis of Traveller identity. At the same time the function and meaning of diaspora are distinctly romantic. For Stuart Hall, the peoples of diaspora are:

...products of hybridity. They bear the traces of particular cultures, traditions, languages, systems or belief, texts and histories which have shaped them...They are not and never will be unified in the old sense, because they are inevitable products of several interlocking histories and cultures, belonging at the same time to several 'homes' – and thus to no one, particular home. (Hall 1992, p8)

To this extent, the notion of a 'Gypsy Diaspora' from a direct or 'pure' Indian origin is unrealistic. Hall, in seeing the diaspora as a composite of sentiment and subjectivity confirms the basis of Cornell and Hartmann's stance on the subject:

Diasporas have become a common feature of the modern world...One of the effects of the growing salience of such identities in some people's lives is to reduce the sense of affiliation to the states in which those diasporic populations reside. Those states become the settings of identities "whose center is elsewhere" (Taylor 1994:63), an elsewhere that may not be geographical at all but consists of an imagined core of understandings and experience, a narrative of diaspora itself. (Cornell and Hartmann 1998, p250)

This position suggests that the notion of diaspora is essentially a means of explanation of people's feelings about and affiliation to the locality in which they were born and live. It has been used as a tool by theorists and academics and this may have done much for the proliferation of the concept over recent times. As Huseby-Darvas demonstrates (1995, p171-173) the reality of diasporic notions are somewhat abstract, often having mythological elements, which have the potential to fuse minority groups together around ethnic or nationalistic enterprises. Thus the romanticism of the diasporic notion is evident, but the concept of diaspora also has a narrative force, premised on a level of exclusion or separateness and it may be argued that these phenomena are prime generators of diasporic feelings. However, it seems that the

notion of diaspora is applicable to the understanding of the development of Gypsy and Traveller identity within the literature.

The analysis is circular:

- 1) *Travellers are seen as set in diaspora (Indian origin):*
- 2) *Travellers are understood to be an oppressed, widely dispersed, yet distinctive group that maintain cultural and ethnic links:*
- 3) *Travellers are portrayed as having origins beyond their place of residence and little cause for affinity to 'host' communities:*
- 4) *Writers and theorists have thus sought confirmation of the diasporic heritage in an idealised, foreign, relatively exotic origin and noted what they see as arcane, archaic traditions and preserved language traits:*
- 5) *This is the perception of Gypsies that underlies Traveller identity as presented in the literature:*
- 6) *Travellers are seen as set in diaspora (romantic, exotic, alien, foreign, 'otherness').*

Clebert (1963) exemplifies this process. He focuses on Gypsies on a country by country basis. He systematically chronicles their oppression and interaction with 'host-populations'. Very little space is given to possible recruitment to the Traveller population from non-Gypsy sources; this would undermine the romantic, diasporic narrative by the use of mundane empirical material to expose routine social causation.

Pseudo-sociology

Clebert (1963) does say that many British Travellers "are not pure Gypsies " (ibid.:p81) but what would constitute 'a pure Gypsy' is never established in any definite sense. This kind of empty dichotomy is taken on to establish a 'blood' stratification or order in the, "Supplementary Notes on British and American Gypsies by the Translator" (ibid.:p213). Here the British Traveller population is broken down as follows:

1. Romanies: about 10,000 - these are true Roms
2. Posh-rats: about 10,000 - half-bloods
3. Didikois: about 10,000 - mixed, less than half-blood
4. Travellers: about 20,000- no Gypsy blood

It is made clear that these are not official figures but "careful and 'conservative' estimates" made by, "Mr Derek Tipler" who Clebert describes as 'an enthusiastic amateur' and someone who is, "deeply interested in these people and, failing any official figures, decided to make his own census, which is probably not far wrong." (ibid.). In touting this 'pseudo-sociology' Clebert again typifies the genre, as exemplified in Willems (1997).

For Clebert (1963), assimilation into the Gypsy population seems almost impossible. Marriage to "a Gypsy woman" (p124) is the least that needs to be done, although according to Clebert this is disapproved of (it is not clearly stated who does the disapproving). For Clebert, this disapproval will most often result in exclusion "from the tribe" (ibid.) the, "outlaw no longer has the right to the name of Gypsy (whether it be a man or woman who weds in an 'unrighteous' marriage)" (ibid.). No concrete evidence of this 'Gypsy propensity' is provided.

In his detailing of the Gypsy lineage of persecution, the central unifying element of the 'race', Clebert fails to consider the possibility that any problematic group might be called/reported as being 'Gypsy' (again this would disturb the romantic/diasporic narrative) for the sake of political convenience/expedience. For example, he cites an incident of 1782 (ibid.:p72), involving the Hungarian military driving 'Gypsies' (Poligari) in to dangerous swamps (he sees this as the origin of that people's "phobia for wet places"). According to Clebert, this group (the Poligari) were seen as God-less heathens, cannibals and child abductors. Who would be more deserving of persecution than such people? Of course, if the group driven into the swamp had been benign, even devout wanderers or landless labourers, such treatment would have been unacceptable but what came first, the label 'Gypsy' or the alleged antisocial behaviour?

Within this analysis it is possible to identify much use of the imagination but little empirical evidence. There is movement from an historical record of an attack against a group of people to an assumption that this fits into a pattern of Gypsy persecution:

Historical reference	The possible contemporary analogy
1) <i>This group was Poligari (nothing else)</i>	<i>The group are itinerant (nothing else)</i>
2) <i>The Poligari were child abductors etc.</i>	<i>The itinerants are layabouts and 'spongers'.</i>

- | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------------|
| 3) | <i>The Poligari were/are Gypsies</i> | <i>The 'Gypsies' were moved on</i> |
| 4) | <i>Gypsies are phobic of wet places</i> | <i>Gypsies are anti- authority</i> |

Alternative theory:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| i) | The group were poor peasants - not able to pay taxes. | The group were homeless. |
| ii) | Because of their poverty they were perceived as a threat. | The group contradicted the housing norm; conventional (psychological) forms of social control could not be applied. |
| iii) | The group had to be labelled as evil/subhuman (else the military/the King could be seen to be evil/inhumane). | The group had to be labelled as inherently corrupt (else the system could be seen to be operating in the interests of the market). |
| iv) | The group was murdered. | The group were harassed. |
| v) | Poor peasants fear tax collectors. | The homeless are alienated. |

Much of the literature, which concentrates on Gypsy experience (for example Acton 1974, Hawes and Perez 1995), view the situation of Travellers, 'from behind the barricades'; the position of Gypsies and Travellers as part of a social context is not established. Clebert's (1963) romantic focus on the Hungarian Army verses the Gypsies is typical of this propensity. The act he refers to cannot be understood or decoded without the context of events attached to the murder of the *alleged* Poligari ('Gypsies'). Thus, Clebert's claim for a Gypsy 'race' or 'ethnicity' can be seen to be perilously tangential. It is based mostly on legend, or myth; it is a prime exempla of romantic narrative set within the 'Gypsy diaspora'. A 'real', 'racially pure', Gypsy is identified by a complex code of behaviour, not entirely articulated, that may relate or correspond more or less to perceived patterns observed or translated elsewhere by, 'deeply interested' or 'entranced' amateurs like 'Mr Tipler'. Other aspects of this

theoretical position include ideas about an inherited language set within a 'community of blood', that cannot be transgressed, infiltrated or polluted by outside influences. These elements of a 'Gypsy ethnic paradigm' are questionable indicators of origin. Clebert (1963) does not see this and as such provides little substantive evidence concerning Traveller origins.

Fraser (1992) is also seemingly distracted by the romantic, diasporic narrative. He moves unproblematically from the observation of itinerant groups to the certitude of ancient origins, removed from current conditions and modern considerations. Fraser (1992) is an exhaustive, world wide study of the records relating to the appearance, practices, traditions, language and cultures of a diverse number of itinerant groups, tribes and communities which Fraser places together under the label of, 'The Gypsies'.

Apart the rather fragile reliance on language, that he concedes is an unreliable indicator of ethnic origin (Fraser 1992, p22) Fraser provides no definite rationale to explain why these very different peoples, that appear at different times and places, should be placed in a single category, other than their itinerant background/life-style. He gives little consideration to the possibility that these groups may not be of like origin. Neither does he feel the need to address the effect the process of industrialisation or modernity may have had on the Traveller population. Fraser states:

On the basis of such distinctions, some 20 principal tribes have been identified for the former Yugoslavia, and many of these can be further subdivided. Each may have its own territory, possess its own subculture, pursue its own distinctive occupations, speak its own dialect, and conduct marriages within its own group. (Fraser 1992, p294)

In a similar way to Clebert (1964) and Dodds (1966) Fraser (1992) is not able to establish who is a "pure Romany", but unlike Fraser (1992) Dodds (1966) cites influences, other than simple heritage, as adding to the Gypsy population. He mentions the Irish potato famine and the depopulation of the Scottish Highlands. Dodds (1966) also makes the point that when discussing Gypsies we are referring to, "Britain's' outcasts and refugees" (ibid.:p142). This provides some hope that the

analysis will include definite consideration of social influences on the Traveller population, but Dodds, like other writers, subscribes to the idea that Travellers have Northern Indian origins (ibid.:p17) and really does not take the matter any further. This is surprising given Dodds' energetic contribution to Gypsy affairs. Although he does make the point that, "There are plenty of romantic books about the life of Gypsies...there is nothing at all about the human problem" (ibid.:p142), at no time does he connect the post Second World War housing crisis with the seeming growth in the numbers of people, who became 'visible' after 1945, resorting to caravan dwelling, that is, fundamentally, a form of temporary shelter.

The problem of seeming continuity

Much of the literature focusing on the social experience and history of Travellers assumes that there is a continuity of treatment or discrimination in respect of this population. Clebert (1963) is followed by Acton (1974), Fraser (1992), Kenrick and Clark (1995) and others in deciphering historical events, attitudes and circumstances as if modern human taxonomies have been constant throughout time. However, concepts such as ethnicity, race, nation, 'people' are relatively recent forms of categorisation whilst ideas about self, difference and even skin colour are historically specific terms (Malik 1996, p225). As Stuart Hall points out:

There have been many significantly different racisms – each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way, whatever common features it may appear to share with similar social phenomena. (Hall 1978, p26)

Even this statement is specific to a historical period wherein race is a recognised form of distinction. There could be no 'racism' in a social environment wherein no concept of 'race' existed.

Unreliable chronology; written records

Fraser (1992) traces the progress of the movement of what, he sees, as the 'original Gypsy's' mostly through written evidence, some accounts are hundreds of years old.

He unproblematically connects these writings with contemporary understandings of ethnicity and culture. Out of this a 'Gypsy Diaspora', the path of Gypsy migration, is traced. However, Fraser (1992) like others before him (for example Clebert 1963, Acton 1974) gives no consideration to the possibility that the written record might have been produced after the physical arrival of the 'itinerant tribes'. This time span (between arrival and recording of the same) is likely to differ over time and place. This factor would disturb the seeming chronological process Fraser presents. At the same time he does not consider the likelihood that itinerant groups would have conscripted/recruited people of other origins on their travels (see Kornblum 1975, p131) whilst losing personnel through assimilation and integration into 'host' cultures. Neither does Fraser contemplate that the groups labelled as Gypsies (or alternative 'titles') could have been other (non-Gypsy) groups who were simply unrecognised or misrepresented. Any group in his analysis could have been the target of false description to justify maliciousness towards an offending community or minority. In the same vein the depiction of, 'strange, exotic types', entering an area could have been used to create a diversion from misrule through pogrom (see Barth 1975, p286). This myopia preserves the romantic, diasporic narrative but the cost of this is that Fraser's theoretical conclusions lack the necessary rigour needed to accurately discern definite ethnic origins.

Pseudo-science

Guy (1975) identifies similar weaknesses in Clebert (1963), when Guy points out that Clebert may be appointing himself as:

The custodian of the "authentic Gypsy culture" as he conceives it, rather than the chronicler of choice actually made by Roms in concrete historical situations...(Guy 1975, p202).

Guy goes on to point out that:

How Roms should be characterized is a basic problem that faces all administrators and researchers concerned with them...(ibid.,p221).

He sees that researchers are confused:

...especially social anthropologists who have pursued an inconclusive search for definitive objective criteria of the ethnic group. Fredrik Barth has recently attacked

this whole approach, arguing that the ascriptive aspect is logically prior to any objective characteristics of the ethnic group...(ibid., p222)

This kind of weak analysis limits the value of Fraser's (1992) work in terms of establishing Traveller identity or the probable make-up of, what might be called, the 'Traveller community'. Fraser moves the reader away from possible social and political explanations of the Gypsy population towards an argument that portrays Travellers as a definite ethnic 'type' that has a kind of victim relationship with the rest of society. Whilst there may be trace 'archaeological' credence and interest in the debate that Fraser promotes, it fails to explain the current position and make up of the Traveller population. Fraser (1992) offers a limited perspective; the analysis could be understood as representing the "pseudo-science" that Okely refers to:

Another critique is based on a pseudo-scientific theory of race which equates to social groups of Gypsies with distinct genetic groups...outside observers use blood and so-called "genetic inheritance" more as metaphors for their own social categories...The "real" Gypsy is identified by selective cultural traits which appear most exotic or picturesque... (Okely 1975, p59-60)

Fraser (1992) seeks to give archaic racial or even 'volk' myths some kind of analytical/factual credence. In the process he creates a kind of clinical separation of peoples, unsullied by economic or political factors. This borders on the fantastic given the nature of modern society.

Distinctiveness and mysterious continuity

Acton (1974) experiences something of the same set of problems. He sets the scene for his book with the subtitle: "The development of ethnic ideology and pressure politics among British Gypsies from Victorian reformism to Romany Nationalism". Like Fraser (1992) and many of his predecessors and successors, Acton's work is devoted to the romantic, even heroic notions of the type embedded in the subtitle, the phraseology of which perhaps gives away an aspiration emerging out of 'Guevarist' symbolism, embodying a kind of 'Nuevo-Gypsy romanticism', shaped in the middle-class student rebelliousness of the sixties. What makes Acton a little different are these radical undertones, related to "pressure politics" and "nationalism".

Acton (1974) seems to want to include everything that has ever been said about Gypsies in his analysis (this is mirrored in the layout of the book and the chapter titles). As such the work is confusing. It is difficult to extract any clear or consistent line of thought. He makes a case for "change as continuity" (p2). This seems to be

based on a notion of maintenance of role inviting a continuity of response. In short, this predisposition prevents the incursion of wider society into the 'continuance' of Gypsy culture, although Acton states that it would be unrealistic to see Travellers cut off, or separate from, outside influences. Again, like other writers, it seems that he wishes to promote the idea of Gypsy separateness; an ability to remain relatively untouched as a cultural entity by the surrounding society, even though the need to state the likelihood of incursion cannot be resisted. What is being suggested is that the distinctiveness of Gypsies sustains a mysterious continuity. This is perhaps a symptom of the nature of Acton's focus. In a similar manner to Fraser (1992) Acton (1974) views the world from a standpoint of a minority life-style, and calls upon a strange mixture of research, including folklore, but also uses a rather dense sociology of ethnicity and 19th century lay anthropology. The work is not quite able to conceive of the experience of Travellers in the context of the wider social realm; the analysis seems to be cut off at the borders of its subject.

The problems with this stance are partly addressed by Liegeois (1986) who states that, in the case of Gypsies it is:

...arbitrary - and often sociologically, politically, anthropologically and culturally irrelevant - to separate groups of Indian from those of indigenous origin (and sometimes even impossible to do so). They interact both locally (contacts between family groups; inter-marriage) and more widely (in international Gypsy political organizations) and they occupy identical positions in an environment that treats them all the same. (Liegeois 1986, p45)

This argument is enforced by the existence of other major migrations throughout the last 150 years from Romania, Ireland, Yugoslavia and Portugal. For Liegeois (1986) Gypsies, having constantly interacted with each other, non-Travellers and other divergent nomadic and itinerant groups, hold a huge diversity of cultural and linguistic traditions and represent a wide and varied mixture of people. Liegeois (1986) when looking at the theories of Gypsy origin, suggests that theories relating to the subject can owe more to imagination than substantiated facts, and may be "spiced with romanticism" (p18). He states:

One more or less representative feature of some particular nomadic group would become the foundation for an entire theory... Alleged facts that fed prejudice and stereotypes always spread faster than the findings of research. (ibid.)

Liegeois (1986) defines the idea of Indian origins applied to all Gypsies as largely the stuff of legend (p22)

...random structures are concocted out of wholly gratuitous assertions of myths that have nothing to do with Gypsies at all. Most of the hypothesis are no less fabulous than the legends. (p23)

However, he argues that trace elements of Hindi having been identified in Romany languages may indicate that contemporary Gypsies have a connection with ancient migrations of people from India to the West (although classic studies of the language used by Gypsies in Wales have also established Welsh, Greek, Slav, Iranian, English, Romanian, German and French influences as well as the fragments of Hindi). This movement is characterised by Liegeois (1986) as a continuous flow of nomadic peoples (ibid.:p33). For all this, he indicates, calling on Clebert (1963) that those seen as Egyptians, a favoured medieval expression for mysterious travellers thought to be of Eastern Mediterranean origin, need not have been of exotic origin: "...all highway mountebanks and tricksters were dubbed as Egyptians" (ibid.:p28). He argues that:

For most of the five and a half centuries Gypsies have been in Europe they have been lumped together with vagabonds and vagrants; in laws and commentaries alike. (Liegeois 1986, p102)

Added to this complication of terminology, according to Liegeois (1986) the ancestors of these migrants may well have been absorbed by indigenous Travellers (ibid.:p44). As such, Gypsy culture can be understood to reflect a mixture of a number of origins (ibid.:p45). He states that:

Recent migrations merged with communities that had been criss-crossing all Europe since the fifteenth and sixteenth century. (ibid.:1986, p50)

Liegeois (1986) notes that the answer to the problems that host communities have in connection with this wide and complex group of itinerants has traditionally been banishment. He does not however see the possibility that such practice may have obliged the continuance of an itinerant existence and/or be part of the social generation of a category of travelling people. He is not able conceive of a process that could lead to an historical merging of individuals and groups, the outcastes of society, who for a range of social, political and religious reasons, have been obliged to wander. The likely intermingling of the socially peripatetic, the rootless of history, is problematic in terms of the proposal for the notion of a distinct 'Gypsy lineage' and a

‘Gypsy diaspora’.

Perhaps Liegeois is caught in the same trap as other writers. Okely (1983) points out, in the opening chapter, “Historical categories and representations”, that non-Gypsies have written Traveller history. The paradox of this is obvious, but her coverage of the Traveller in history is amongst the most balanced in the literature. This is exemplified by her useful critique of the 'Gypsiologists' and their interest in identifying racial categories, couched in a tendency to seek out and perpetuate, what Okely calls, 'exotic' origins. She pulls the two sides of this critique together when she points out that the claim to Indian origins was not introduced by Travellers. Okely (1983) sees all roles ascribed to Gypsies by non-Gypsies, "trickster, exotic or victim" (ibid.,p77) as carrying the "risk of self degradation and a dangerous sense of unreality" (ibid.). However, this is not expanded upon. In fact Okely contradicts herself by claiming that the 'ethnic boundary' of Gypsyhood is based on pollution beliefs, founded on the practice of 'inner purity' (ibid.,p78). This demonstrates a level of romanticism in her analysis, although, as pointed out earlier in this paper, she contests the grand notion of an Indian origin.

Okely (1983) suggests that the bringing together varied and heterogeneous groups under the title of 'Gypsy', is perhaps a questionable pursuit. She states that she was able to, 'crack the code' of "historical and folklorist data" (ibid.:p47) through coexistence with Travellers. This re-energises the very 'exotic', sentimentalist and romantic interpretations that she criticises. This, to some extent is unavoidable, given her ambition to justify an ethnic paradigm.

In chapter 4, “Economic niche”, Okely (1983) argues that for Gypsies the

...greatest opportunities lie in those occupations which others are less able or less willing to undertake... (Okely 1983, p49).

This is a somewhat vague assertion, and suggests that Gypsies take on a sort of scavenger role in terms of work. Again, this need to ascribe definite modes and characteristics to behaviour is indicative of the anthropological perspective. General

statements of the type that Okely (1983) makes about the 'economic niche' of Gypsies offer only a stereotypical view of Travellers, very much akin to the Gypsologists Okely attacks. Neither does it sit well with a later assertion that Gypsies "denounce the dominant wage labour system" (Okely 1983, p231). This implies choice rather than an inherent propensity, via 'ethnic position', to undertake the work that non-Gypsies reject.

Okely's claim to be free of the misinterpretations of others because she lived amongst Gypsies is tempered by Rehfisch (ed.). (1975). This work provides a very wide ranging and probably one of the most rigorous anthropological/sociological studies of Traveller culture throughout the world, including examinations of Traveller communities in the USA, Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Ireland and Norway. Most of the contributors demonstrate the same useful scepticism that Rehfisch exhibits in his opening remarks when he identifies a propensity amongst Travellers to offer elaborate and heavily embroidered explanations regarding customs and life-style, as these often elicit greater rewards than more realistic interpretations. He goes on to suggest that previous studies of Traveller groups have been unreliable due to this and other reasons connected with the attitudes and dispositions of those involved in research. (Rehfisch 1975, Preface).

In the same book Okely (1975) gives an example of how ethnicity can be generated by anthropological wish fulfilment. Although she goes on to make the case for an ethnic identity by pointing out that 19th century family names attributed to Gypsies can still be found amongst current Travellers in Southern England, she points out that her research demonstrates that Gypsy family trees almost invariably include non-Gypsies (Okely 1975, p59-60). This position appears to indicate a definite scepticism about concrete notion of Traveller identity based on the literature. This is emphasised when Okely states that those who have taken up a Traveller life-style from a non-Traveller background, are denigrated. This would make the claim of a non-Gypsy heritage or origin less likely (to avoid 'denigration' one would claim to be a 'true Gypsy'). This, together with her contention that stereotypes have been exploited by Travellers (ibid.:p60), confirms Rehfisch's point (Rehfisch 1975, Preface) regarding the contortion of Traveller traditions and identity for the ears of interested non-

Travellers.

Guy (1975) points out, when working with Gypsies, “one encounters deep ambivalence towards their identity”, and that they are, “Righteously angry at the hostile stereotype others hold of them” (ibid.:p223). This would, perhaps, be a useful reply to most of the conclusions about Traveller identity. It does seem to be the case that much of Gypsy identity is in the eye of the beholder who, looking for 'Gypsiness' finds it.

Barnes (1975) seems to typify this approach. For her Irish Travellers, being mainly of Celtic origin, are different from the “Gypsies” that “hail from India” (ibid’:p258). Not only does this conveniently neglect the historical antecedents of the Celts, that have been claimed to be sub-continental/Asia Minorian (Hobsbawm,E. and Iaanger,T. 1983, p67) she moves from contemporary Traveller life-style to an ancient people who arrived in the geographical area several thousands of years ago. This is like saying that the current occupants of Southern England are Jutes, or the present residents of Rome go back to the first days of the Caesuras. Barnes creates a Traveller lineage by simply stating it and then she moves on as if this has in some way been established or confirmed. Given the migrations to and from Ireland and the incursions by Vikings, Normans, Puritans, Presbyterians and Elizabethans, the claim of 'Celtic origins' for all Irish Travellers is doubtful. That Tinkers could be a population group consistently energised and modified by the historically constant social, economic, agricultural, religious, political and industrial upheavals in Ireland, Scotland and England is not considered. Yet, this 'development' model would seem much more credible than the 'hygienic heritage' model suggested by Barnes (1975). But of course, the former would imply connection rather than separation, and become more the province of sociology than anthropology. It would also depart from the conventional romantic narrative. It is perhaps more attractive to be the ancestor of a Celtic Prince than a grocer from Lanark.

Sandford (1973) provides a similar type of analysis to Barnes (1975). He presents a collection of sixteen Traveller biographies and anecdotal material that fit with Sandford's general view, which he makes clear from the start, referring to his subject as "Gypsy citizens" (pxv). The first part of the book is littered with sweeping,

unsubstantiated contentions about the character of Travellers, this includes claims that there are about 25,000 Gypsies living in houses, that some intermarry with 'non-Gypsies', that they speak English with a "sprinkling of Romany" and that "India is the place from which their ancestors came" (ibid.:p4).

For Sandford (1973), "Gypsies have rejected much of our culture..." (whatever 'our' culture is) "...not in an intellectual way but instinctively..." (ibid.:p3). Within the literature on the meaning and motivation in Traveller culture, one often discovers an ill-defined concept of 'the natural'. In Sandford's case some of the material he presents gives this position a glint of validity, where informants provide a mixture of the idyllic, nostalgic, romantic, sentimental and tragic. Traveller life is portrayed as a kind of drama, or soap opera. The respondents claim Gypsy or Romany identity, but this is not elaborated in terms of genealogy or other corroborative material. Typical is the statement made in the final anecdotal section of Sandford (1973) "Water Gypsies". The informant claims to be a "dark person", the same as, "Gypsies", even though the life-style described is very overtly that of a barge dwelling family: the bald statement or claim of identity is made and Sandford (1973) proceeds as if the fact of identity has been established. In this way identity/ethnicity is 'invented' within the pages of the book; it is not referring to definite external or neutral markers, the Gypsy is generated by a wish to 'see' Gypsies. It seems for Sandford (1973) one could find oneself in almost any situation and claim a Gypsy lineage. This, as Lucassen (1998) and Willems (1997) confirm, has been the tradition of Gypsy studies.

The final section of Sandford (1973) is concerned with legislative matters and informal politics, but it is still blighted by sweeping, unsupported statements. For example, when referring to the attitude of Gypsies that have moved into housing he states that:

They will tell you, when you knock at their door, with pride, that they are Gypsies. Not for them the uncertainties of some Gypsies on the road who will deny being Gypsies or ask you to refer to them by euphemisms. (ibid., p181)

Throughout Sandford (1973) Traveller identity or culture and the motivation to travel, seems to be based on a way of life or a rather loose notion of 'image' (ibid.:p184-85). However, none of Sandford's respondents demonstrate more than two or three of the

'image facets' referred to, such as the use of slang, an interest in horses and, "The gathering and selling of wild flowers" ("the travelling gypsy is a born naturalist"). These, essentially behavioural traits are for no apparent reason, connected with "Gypsy blood" (ibid.:p184).

I have looked at Sandford (1973) because it is part of a writing tradition within the 'Gypsy genre' that picks up on the romantic tradition, but swaths it in a technique that looks scientific, using, popularist sociological/anthropological language, together with references to legislation and welfare rights. This is not an accusation of dishonesty on the part of the likes of Sandford, but it is pointing out that such material is based on well meaning assumption and myopic enthusiasm, rather than rigorous research and disciplined analysis. As with much of this type of literature, Sandford does not leave the reader very much wiser in terms of the nature of Traveller identity and the formation of the ethnic category of 'Gypsy'.

A partial paradigm

A. and F. Rehfisch (1975) reflecting on the study Scottish Travellers argues that:

Literally gallons of ink have been utilized developing theories as to the origin of these people. It would seem to me to be an exercise in futility to review all of these and even more to attempt to justify any of them. Their origin is lost in the far past and can hardly be reconstructed. For many centuries references exist mentioning the presence of nomadic bands wandering through the length and breadth of Scotland and occupying the economic niche, to a greater or lesser degree, that Travellers do today (p272)

Barth (1975) makes a plea for more cautious approach to research relating Taters ("a Gypsy-like" people) in Norway:

Taters thus form a despised group of very low economic standing - are indeed, a typical pariah section of the population. As such, the problem arises whether they constitute a true organised group within the larger Norwegian society, or whether the term Tater is merely a general label for a despised rural social status; sociologically comparable to "criminal" or "poor man". This problem is discussed by Heymowski who points out the several, partly contradictory criteria for the ascription of individuals to the group - decent, mode of life, physical appearance - and draws attention to the great fluctuations between different census accounts in the estimated number of Taters; based on ascription. (p286)

The effort proposed by Barth and the insight offered by A. and F. Rehfisch (1975) stands in contradiction to the approach fostered in the literature surrounding Gypsies that in short propose a definite, 'pure' group, being sustained over hundreds of years. This striving to present a unified whole, an identifiable grouping that may be categorised as a 'type', harks back to authoritarian Fascist regimes. Although this analysis is couched in terms of anti-racism and political correctness, it seeks to differentiate people in terms of a typology based on custom, tradition, ethnicity or race. This seems an inherently racist analysis. The promotion of a non-social, non-contextual perspective only serves to heighten the ethical, moral and analytical flaws in the literature. However, this perspective has other implications. Setting the position of Travellers within a discourse of ethnicity and race with a focus on discrimination, racism and oppression, that turns non-Travellers into the pariah group (the 'oppressors' - see O'Nions 1995) does not adequately explain the position of the Traveller population. In fact it merely creates another realm of abstraction as demonstrated by Okely (1994, p20) when she calls on Sartre's *Reflexions sur la question juive*, as part of her attack on what she calls "Non-ethnic, 'universalistic' categories" (ibid., p19):

There may not be so much difference between the anti-semitic and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leave nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man. (Sartre 1973, p57)

For Sartre, the ethnic/racial category is at least as important as all other considerations that define 'personhood'. The sum of individual humanity is equated with 'type'; he clearly states that 'type' is the essence of humanity, he does not consider that we are made up of all sorts of other considerations that make us 'unique' individuals. We are not separated from being, "the abstract and universal subject", merely by ethnic or racial distinctions. In taking this position Sartre is not far from the doctrine of the political right in seeing one's racial or ethnic type as decisive. In one way or another, most writers concerning themselves with Travellers show some level of affiliation with this perspective.

The literature on Travellers produces an ethnic/racial focus arises out of a tendency to portray Gypsies in highly emotive way, set in romanticism and thus promoting a subjective analysis based on notions of individual and group psychology. It does not allow for the possible effects of phenomena like social action (Kasler 1988, p150) or the dynamics of disciplinary society that move inextricably towards social norms that compliment and confirm the character of the social formation, in areas like housing, by means of social control and punishment (Foucault 1977). Therefore, the analysis of the situation and nature of the Traveller population, as contained in the literature, is partial.

Conclusion

In this paper I have looked to critique the notion of Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity as developed in the literature focusing on Traveller identity. I have pointed out the limitations of the literature, highlighting the overall failure to consider the social and economic context within which the Traveller population has developed. I have also identified the propensity within theory surrounding Gypsies to present Traveller identity within a paradigm of romanticism and a biological/hereditary nexus. Out of this framework emerges the contradictory proposal that travelling people are a homogenous population made up of the heterogeneous groups. I have shown that although this constructed homogeneity has been challenged in recent times (Willems 1997, Lucassen 1998 et.al.) it continues to dominate the discourse around Traveller identity and is the foundation on which the claim of difference and the assumption of Traveller ethnicity is premised.

I have further illustrated that Traveller ethnicity is based upon particular ethnic markers all of which I have demonstrated to be tenuous and vague.

Overall, I have suggested that the Traveller population or constituent proportions of this group cannot be accurately understood as a hygienic continuity of blood, race, ethnicity or hereditary factors. Considering the position of New Age Travellers, research looking at the identity of other Travellers and historical data relating to Gypsy and Traveller groups I have begun to build a position that suggests that social

and economic considerations need to be included in the analysis of Traveller identity in order to produce a more precise analysis of the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is particularly necessary if we are to fully understand legislative activity effecting Travellers, develop adequate policy initiatives and provide appropriate welfare, educational and housing services for those categorised as being part of this population.

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"European Discourse on Gypsies: Incorporated Ideology and Possible Implications in the implementation of educational measures"

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SUMMARY

The education of Gypsy children has been a topical issue in the European educational policy since the early 1980s. The main European organisations, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, despite the differences in their institutional character, have launched a common approach towards issues concerning Gypsies. The Gypsy Research Centre constitutes their common outside body in the documentation, promotion, co-ordination and assessment of the activities on the education of Gypsy children at the European level.

The policy aims at the amelioration of gypsies' situation with a simultaneous respect for the "gypsy culture". Gypsies' conceptualization as a distinct and unified cultural group, as a "European minority", has provided the grounds for interpreting the school-related phenomena in terms of the gypsy culture, which in turn is claimed to be incompatible with the school-education. Moreover, the respect for the gypsy culture conditions all the proposed measures for the education of gypsy children.

Nevertheless, the tenability of the widespread assumption about the common culture of Gypsies is strongly criticized by the contemporary academic discourse. Furthermore, the European projects on the education of gypsy children are characterized by contradictions regarding their highly optimistic ideology and their implementation, indicating their limited potentialities. The conceptualization of Gypsies as a European minority and the implementation of similar measures to groups with different national, economic and social characteristics are equally problematic from a human rights perspective.

Conclusively, the European discourse, while concealing the economic and social factors, may undermine the Gypsy children's right to education, and may

provide a convenient argument for segregation policies in the educational systems in Europe.

Introduction

Since the early 80's Gypsy groups and particularly the education of their children have been topical issues in Europe. The main European organizations, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, despite their differences in their institutional character (E.U.: a powerful supranational economic and political organization, CoE: a powerful regional human rights organization) have launched a common approach in dealing with issues about Gypsies in the whole of Europe.

The Gypsy Research Centre (University Rene Descartes, Paris) has been their common external body, assisting both the European Union and the Council of Europe in the documentation, promotion, coordination and assessment of all the activities on the education of gypsies. The European Union has dealt with these issues not only within its member states through its internal activities, but also in the candidate member states both through its enlargement policy and the co-operation with the Council of Europe.

On 22nd of May 1989 the E.C. Member States adopted the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council on school provision for Gypsy and Traveller children. The big importance of this legal instrument lays on the fact that it

- set out views and intentions of action jointly held by the Member States and
- that all the subsequent action taken by the E.U. bodies and the Member States is based on it.

Since then a number of activities have emerged: studies, conferences, working groups and projects.

According to the Resolution of the Council, the involvement of the European Union attempts to launch a global structural approach in dealing with the education of gypsy children in its member states and in the rest of Europe.

A uniform approach, though, means a common conceptualization of Gypsies. The scientific argumentation on Gypsies and their education is

incorporated in the study “School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children: A Synthesis Report¹”, by Jean-Pierre Liégeois (Gypsy Research Centre), which was published in 1986 by the Commission of the European Communities (as part of its Document Series).

The Synthesis Report is very important because it provided the scientific basis for the Resolution of the Council. Its examination can enable us to better comprehend how Gypsies are perceived and conceptualized in the European discourse and how this perception influences the suggested educational measures.

¹ The terms Gypsies and Travellers are used in an undifferentiated way in Liégeois, 1987 to designate the whole of the group. The explanation given by the author of the Synthesis Report is because the distinction between Travellers, who are “of predominantly indigenous European origin” and Gypsies, who are “travellers of predominantly Indian origin” is not considered to be always relevant nor possible. (Liégeois, 1987, p. 11).

1. The Conceptualization of Gypsies in the European Discourse

The overall European policy on Gypsies is characterized by an intention to improve the situation of Gypsies without destroying their separate identity and culture. The Synthesis Report emphasizes that all the educational measures should be “firmly founded on the dynamics of Gypsy culture²”.

In the E.U. discourse Gypsy groups in Europe are perceived and dealt as one unified group. The elements that unify all these groups are the following:

A. their common history. Starts on 11th century with their “appearance” in Balkans, after they had fled away from their country of origin – India. On 14th and 15th centuries they are found in Central and West Europe after successive waves of migration. Since then, their historical experience has been mainly characterized by deportations, displacements and persecutions³.

B. The one and the same “dynamic original culture”.

Gypsies are claimed to have managed to preserve “a permanence of lifestyle and a profound sense of identity”⁴, because:

- They only adapt to their surroundings, while the “core” of their culture remains unaffected.
- Although they co-exist with non-Gypsies, they transform the influences by the surrounding society, they “gypsify” them, maintaining at the same time the “quintessence” of their culture⁵.

In other words,

- The gypsy culture lies in the core of the ethnic boundary that Gypsies put between them and the “non-Gypsy world”, and Gypsies are presented to be unanimous in their diametric opposition to the entire non-Gypsy World.

² Liégeois, 1987, p. 230

³ Idem, p. 8-10

⁴ Idem, p. 31

- The most significant expression of the “gypsy ethnic boundary” is Gypsies’ nomadism. Nomadism is claimed to be a ‘structural component’ of the gypsy culture, which connects Gypsies all around the world in a unified ethnic and cultural group. The concept of “Structural Nomadism”, as introduced by the Synthesis Report⁶, distinguishes the “Gypsy nomadism” from the classical nomadism, i.e. the act of moving from one place to another. Nomadism for Gypsies constitutes “a state of mind”⁷, and is an essential identifying symbol for those concerned. Consequently, structural nomadism applies to all Gypsies, either they are nomadic or not.

EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

The formation of an educational policy for Gypsy Children is considered that should seriously take into account specific parameters. The emphasis of the suggested measures is on the respect towards the gypsy culture⁸, which is a constant argument of E.U. bodies on issues concerning Gypsies.

According to the Synthesis Report, one of the basic characteristics of the Gypsy culture, is considered to be the Gypsy way of structuring reality. Under this principle, Gypsies are claimed to have their own way of perceiving and using literacy and school education.

Illiteracy is claimed to constitute an “ethnic determinant”⁹ for Gypsies and that they reject literacy because they consider it to be alien, to belong exclusively to non-gypsies. Gypsies are presented to “reject” or “utilize” school¹⁰ for various reasons:

1. The main reason, though, is claimed to be the Gypsies’ attempt to preserve their culture from the alienating influences that school exercises, because of its

⁵ Idem, p. 31.

⁶ Idem, p. 34

⁷ Idem, p. 35

⁸ “It is essential that all measures be firmly founded on the dynamics of Gypsy and traveller culture”, Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 230

⁹ Idem, p. 48

¹⁰ Liégeois, J. P., 1980 b, quoted in idem, p. 166

high impact on the child's socialization, which may have a detriment result in the child's cultural identity.

2. The school rejection is considered to have a “functional”¹¹ role as well, for the preservation of the “social and psychological equilibrium of the group”¹². It is argued that the group's social cohesion (mainly in the sense of the family and wider social control) can be jeopardized with the child's school attendance particularly in the case of his/her scholastic success¹³. It should be stressed that the preservation of the group's cohesion at the expense of the individual development and choice is presented as a desirable fact for Gypsies.
3. An additional reason is its threat to Gypsies' economic viability and prosperity. According to the Synthesis Report, the time spent in school can be almost pointless because for Gypsies the reproduction of their reality is a “desirable fact”¹⁴, a “value”¹⁵ and their economic success is only connected to their “working-patterns”¹⁶.

Following the above considerations, the school education is suggested that should be done within well-defined parameters. The threat that school poses to the existence and maintenance of gypsy culture is the very argument used by Liégeois for examining the goals and structures of school education. He explicitly characterizes all structures – both segregated and integrated – as “equally valid and legitimate”¹⁷.

It is thus recommended that if a structure - even a segregated one - has proved to be suitably adapted to the needs of some children, it shouldn't be “rejected or a priori classified as ‘temporary’.”¹⁸. Nevertheless, the segregated classes are claimed to provide better and more suitable education for Gypsies, because they show a bigger respect towards the gypsy culture¹⁹.

¹¹ Liégeois, 1980 b quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 166.

¹² Liégeois, 1980 b quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 166.

¹³ Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 157

¹⁴ Cotonnec, A., 1983 quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 160.

¹⁵ Cotonnec, A., 1983 quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 160.

¹⁶ Liégeois, 1983 b, quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 157

¹⁷ Idem, p. 111

¹⁸ Idem, p. 126

¹⁹ See characteristically the extract from Liégeois, 1983 b, concerning recommendations on structures made by the Council of Europe seminar on “The training of teachers of Gypsy Children”, 1983, quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 124: “ ‘Ordinary’ schools do not, as yet, offer either the teaching quality nor the

The conviction that the “reproduction of the present situation” (habitat, parents’ trades) is a “value” for Gypsies, conditions all the educational suggestions and particularly the ones concerning secondary education, which is more related to the students’ professional future.

cultural respect characteristic of specialized schools, nor have they the essential flexibility of rules and timetable”

3. CRITICAL COMMENTS

The proposed theoretical scheme on Gypsies seems to have some substantial ambiguities. Gypsies, despite their individual differences, are presented as a unified group, and are suggested to be dealt as such. The reality, though, of the lives of the gypsy groups in Europe is very diversified and a series of questions arises by ignoring the big differences between the so-called gypsy groups within a country and between the different countries.

The unification of different groups of people with the claim of nomadism as a structural element and particularly the application of similar measures towards them are not at all unproblematic. Moreover, the above approach seems to ignore the objective factors, which influence people's attitudes, while at the same time presents the preservation of ethnic boundaries (as well as the consequences of that preservation) as a free choice made by the members of the various ethnic groups.

In addition, the contemporary academic discourse questions the influential, widespread assumptions about the common history and common culture of the so-called Gypsy groups.

3.1 Possible implications of the European Union discourse on Gypsies

The conviction that all Gypsies don't wish for social and economic changes, but they just want to preserve their culture and reproduce their present reality²⁰, although doubtful²¹, excludes the possibility of their individual choice about their lives and can also provide a very convenient argument for depriving them of alternative means in all the fields of their lives.

The idea that Gypsies are a unified group legitimizes the application of similar measures to groups with different economic, social and cultural characteristics, while the reality of their lives has a marginal position in the

²⁰ Cotonnec, 1983 quoted in Liégeois, 1987, *idem*, p. 160.

²¹ For the Gypsy parents' recognition of the role of school in the professional career of their children see in Papakonstantinou, G., Vasileiadou, M., Pauli-Korre, M., Financial, social, cultural situation of Roma in

proposed measures. (It is very characteristic that in Synthesis Report the mobile classes are proposed not only for the itinerant but also for the sedentary gypsy children).

Although the respect for the gypsy culture suits very well to the rhetoric about the respect for diversity and cultural enrichment of the European societies²², is likely to “favor racist prejudices”, which picture Gypsies as a group with specific cultural characteristics, that can explain school-related phenomena²³, such as illiteracy, dropouts, absenteeism and low scholastic performance²⁴.

In the European Union discourse, Gypsies are presented as a group with unique characteristics totally different from other groups. Their way of thinking, their needs and wishes are presented to be totally different from the non-gypsy population. It is even claimed that they also have a “different philosophy of education”²⁵ and that there is a need for founding a “Pedagogy for Gypsies”²⁶ based on the “study of gypsy thinking”²⁷.

In this context, educational practices for special schools, special classes, special teaching materials and special teaching methods for Gypsies²⁸ appear as legitimate. This choice, though, in the name of the respect for diversity, is very likely to lead to educational segregation.

3.2 The incorporated ideology in the European projects on the education of Gypsy children in an overall context of the European projects on education.

Greece, in greek, unpublished paper submitted to the project “Educational integration of Roma children in the greek education system”, 1998, p. 81, pp. 83-84 (the survey refers to Roma in Greece).

²² See in the Commission of the European Communities, 1996, p. 88: “The set of activities launched in the framework of the Resolution adopted by the Ministers in 1989 can continue to be seen as a demonstration that cultural diversity and action geared towards respecting it are a source of enrichment for all pupils, and for european society as a whole”.

²³ Maurogiorgos, 2000, p. 82.

²⁴ In Liégeois, 1987, the school-related phenomena concerning Gypsies are interpreted in cultural terms.

²⁵ Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 164.

²⁶ Piasere quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 164

²⁷ Piasere quoted in Liégeois, 1987, idem, p. 164

²⁸ Maurogiorgos, 2000, p. 83

The trend in the E.U. projects on education is dealing with the most obvious ‘victims’ of the educational inequalities, who, in addition, are defined through their (real or alleged) cultural identity.

An educational policy, though, cannot be effective, when it is limited to the most disadvantaged students, but only when it is directed to the student population as a whole, and when at the same time comprises part of a general social policy with measures for employment, housing, health and social security²⁹.

School-related phenomena like illiteracy, dropouts, absenteeism, and low scholastic performance are not only confined to Gypsies. As these phenomena are related to economic and social factors, they can be generally found in students from the ‘less privileged social classes, while in the case of Gypsies appear with a “dramatic way”³⁰.

Moreover, the European educational projects are highly idealistic, short-term interventions and cannot be effective when they substitute for the national funding for education, but only when they have a complementary role to the national education policies.

If the above criteria are not fulfilled, the rhetoric of political statements concerning the amelioration of social and educational inequalities can in practice be proved of limited effectiveness.

3.3 Critical comments from a human rights perspective

Although the European Union is not a human rights organization and does not have any human rights legal instruments in its legal regime, its involvement in the human rights issues has increased lately.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that E.U. constitutes a powerful regional organization with a supranational character, which gives a profound status both to the conceptualizations expressed in its documents and mainly to its subsequent action.

²⁹ Maurogiorgos, 2000, pp. 83-84.

³⁰ Maurogiorgos, 2000, p. 84

Notwithstanding the absence of the human rights word in the E.U. documents, it can be deduced that the conceptualization of Gypsies is done in terms of a European minority group.

- In the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 22 May 1989 on school provision for gypsy and traveller children it is stated that: “gypsies and travellers have formed part of the Community’s cultural and linguistic heritage for over 500 years”
- In the Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the measures envisaged in the above Resolution, 1996, Gypsies and Travellers are characterised as a European cultural minority group³¹.
- In the Synthesis Report, Liégeois clearly advocates the recognition of Gypsies as a European “cultural minority”³².

This conceptualisation, though, arises a series of questions from a Human Rights point of view. First of all the recognition of a minority group is only a matter of the national legislation. Even in the case that a state has ratified an international or regional minority legal instrument granting special provisions to minorities, these provisions can apply to a group only if it is officially recognised as a minority by the respective state. Moreover, in the international and regional minority rights legal instruments, there is no generally accepted definition of the minority concept.

Another important aspect is that the minority status granted to a certain group of people is not only connected with its real or alleged difference from the majority of a state and its willingness to preserve its specific identity but mainly with its claim to be recognised as a minority group.

In the European Union discourse Gypsies are granted the status of a European cultural minority, without first examining if the above criteria are fulfilled for the Gypsy groups in the member states.

³¹ “ [...] their (Gypsies’) difficulties in surviving as a cultural minority group”, Commission of the European Communities, 1996, *idem* p. 7. “Gypsies’ and Travellers’ characteristics make them a Community population par excellence”, Commission of the European Communities, 1996, p. 10. The text in brackets is an explanation by the author of the thesis.

³² Liégeois, 1987, *idem*, p. 2, p. 23, and p. 175.

Another aspect connected with the recognition of a minority group is the character of the rights granted to it. The dilemma between granting to the minority groups collective rights (rights exercised by the minority group as a whole) or individual rights (rights exercised individually by the members of the minority group) has not reached any agreement at the international level. The compromise formula that has been adopted in the international and regional legal instruments is the phrase “persons belonging to minorities” and the assessment of whether a right is individual or collective has to be done in the “individual context” of each right³³.

Particularly, the educational rights of the minority children pose serious problems of human rights whether they should be dealt under the right to education or under the minority rights.

Minority education rights are comprised by two fundamental aspects³⁴:

- The first is the equality of opportunity, in which the focus of education is on the maximisation of the individual potentials and talents so that the members of the minority group can fully and equally participate in the life of the state, where they reside.
- The second aspect is the pluralism, in which the emphasis of the education is on the maintenance of the minority identity in a context of respect for cultural diversity.

When the right to education is dealt under the minority rights, the problem that may arise is whether the equality of opportunity or the pluralism should prevail in the case of a conflict between them. This dilemma has to be dealt with big caution, and particular considerations should be borne in mind in cases, when, in the name of the preservation of the minority identity, segregated structures are created for the minority children.

Moreover, the state choice of giving supremacy to the pluralism over the equality of opportunity provides a very convenient argument to the majority for holding the minority responsible for its failure in the educational field. The failure is attributed to the minority group culture while at the same time the absence of

³³ Benoit-Rohmer, F., 1996, p. 19

³⁴ Cullen, H., 1993, p. 143

fair institutions, in the sense of providing same opportunities to everyone, is obscured³⁵. In this case the minority culture is used as a trap for the members of the minority group.

The conflict between the two aspects of the minority education rights can be resolved in favour of the equality of opportunity when the educational rights of the minority children are dealt under the right to education³⁶. The right to education as it is incorporated in the Human Rights legal instruments emphasises the goals of the “full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity” [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13 (1)], “the development of the child’s talents and mental and physical abilities to their fuller potential” [Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29 [1(a)]. in order to “enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society” [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13 (1)].

In the case of the European Union discourse, the right to education for Gypsy children is dealt as a minority right putting the emphasis on pluralism. The whole range of the suggested measures is examined under the scrutiny of the alleged threat that school poses to the gypsy culture and to the group coherence and the educational suggestions are based on the alleged respect for the gypsy culture. It is characteristic that in the case of a conflict between the individual right to education and the maintenance of the group cohesion, the latter is given supremacy at the expense of the individual choice and development.

Moreover, the European Union discourse perceives and describes the gypsy culture as static. Anthropology though acknowledges that cultures are not static but flexible, and consequently the recognition of the values of a certain group by no means implies that these values are a “constant or static factor in the lives of current or succeeding generations of the same group”³⁷.

Following the above considerations, the european discourse on Gypsies may in practice undermine their right to education, may provide a convenient argument for its inadequate protection and provision and may lead to segregation policies in the national education systems.

³⁵ Simon, R. L., 1990, quoted in H. Cullen, 1993, *idem*, p. 157.

³⁶ Cullen, 1993, *idem*, p. 143

³⁷ Shestack, J. J., 1998, p. 232.

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The “Gypsies” of the Muslim minority in Greece

Introduction

Under the Lausanne Convention (signed in 1923) there was a compulsory exchange of the Orthodox Greeks who were established in the Turkish territory and the Muslims who were established in the Greek territory. The Muslims of western Thrace and the Greeks of Istanbul, Imvros and Tenedos (two small islands at the entrance of Straits) were excluded from the exchange. Their legal status as minorities was defined by the same Lausanne Convention. According to the 1991 census, the members of the Muslim minority were 114.000, almost 1/3 of the total Thrace population (today they are estimated to amount to about 80.000). However, the Muslim minority should not be seen as a homogeneous entity. It could be more accurately described as a stratified whole, consisting of different groups. The differentiation within the minority is mostly registered on ethnic terms. Therefore, it is estimated that 48% of the minority members are “of Turkish origin”, 35% are “Pomaks” and 17% are «Gypsies»¹.

The case of the members of the Muslim minority who are defined as “Gypsies” is quite interesting for a lot of reasons:

- (a) Most of the “Gypsies” in Thrace do not accept this definition. Furthermore, it is very curious why people who are established and they do not speak the romani language –that is, they lack “basic characteristics” of the so called “gypsy identity” (let alone that the vast majority of the Greek “Gypsies” are Orthodox), are so persistently called “Gypsies” by the others.
- (b) The Muslim “Gypsies” in Thrace are the only Greek “Gypsies” who are members of an officially recognized minority. Since nowadays the opinion that “Gypsies” should be recognized as an official minority becomes more and more popular, considering the consequences of being subjected to the minority status might be quite informative.
- (c) Finally, the case of the Muslim “Gypsies”, as a social policy field, indicates the problems which arise when “ethnic categories” become the basis of policy making. Furthermore, their case indicates the restrictions of any discourse which claims to describe social reality mainly, or even exclusively, on cultural terms.

¹ Athens Academy, Centre for the Research on the Greek Society, *Η Ανάπτυξη της Θράκης. Προκλήσεις και Προοπτικές (The Development of Thrace. Challenges and Perspectives)*, Athens 1994: 47.

What are the Muslim “Gypsies”? The variety of definitions²

The Muslim “Gypsies” live in different areas. Some live in quarters at the edge of the three prefecture capitals. (Drosero, at the edge of Xanthi, Alan Kuyu and Ifestos at the edges of Komotini, Avantos at the edge of Alexandroupolis). Some live in “cloves” within the cities. Others live in small towns and villages all over Thrace. Most of them make a living as land workers or doing other occasional jobs (porters, scrap metal traders, wood choppers, house cleaners etc.). Those who live in villages some times own small pieces of land. Several Muslim “Gypsies” are sailors. From 1970 (mostly from 1980) onwards a lot of families have migrated to Athens or Thessaloniki or even abroad (to Germany, to The Netherlands etc.). Most of Muslim “Gypsies” face serious financial problems and some live in extreme poverty.

The “non-Gypsy” inhabitants of Thrace –both Muslims and Christians- have no doubt about who are the “Gypsies” in their city or in their village. The spatial and social seclusion of the so called “Gypsies” reflects clearly that certainty.

Actually there are members of the Muslim minority who do define themselves as Gypsies (“Gyftoi”). However, there are several dimensions of that self- definition:

(a) Common origin:

Some people define themselves as “Gypsies”, meaning that they have certain “roots”, to which they attribute their customs, their language etc. (Most of the romani speakers are located in the quarters of Drosero and Alan Kuyu). We should note, though, that the “Gypsy origin” is not claimed as opposed to the “Greek ethnicity” but as a variety among others within that context (That also seems to be the case for the Christian “Gypsies”). Especially in Thrace the Muslims who define themselves as “Gypsies” often seem to claim validation of their status as members of the Greek society by opposing themselves, through that self-definition, to the so called “Turkish” members of the Muslim minority. In the quarters of Drosero and Alan Kuyu can be found people who were christened or use Greek names together with their Turkish ones. There is no doubt that in many cases people act like that just out of the necessity to hide their Muslim identity in order to find a job (especially when they live outside Thrace). Or the baptisms and the double names are the results of sheer pressures. But there

² The remarks which follow are mainly based on research made in various “Gypsy quarters” in the Prefectures of Xanthi and Rodopi, during 1998-1999, **Politou, E.**, *Η (ανα)παραγωγή και η ομοιογενοποίηση του «ειδικού» μέσα από το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα. Η περίπτωση των Τσιγγάνων σε κοινότητες της Αττικής και της Θράκης (1980 και εξής) (The (re)production and the homogenization of the “special”. The case of Gypsies living in communities in Athens and Thrace (1980 onwards))*, unpublished thesis, University of Athens, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Education, Athens 2001. Needless to say, the following classification is quite schematic. I should also remind that when people talk about themselves, they are inevitably influenced by the questions set to them. Therefore, I would not claim that the following remarks on Muslim “Gypsies” ’ self-definition give an exhaustive picture of how those people define themselves.

is something else too. Sali who becomes Savas and Kadrin – Katerina do not just pretend that they are something different from what “they really are”. Those alternative names express their carriers’ hopes and efforts for socialization in a space less restricted than the one which is presently accessible to them, being considered “the minority of the minority”. Nevertheless, acceptance of “Gypsy origin” does not imply any feeling of relativity to all those who are defined as “Gypsies” in Thrace or in Greece or throughout the world.

(b) Common reality:

Other people define as “Gypsies” all the inhabitants of the “Gypsy quarters” –including themselves. That definition, though, is not related to any common origin. The inhabitants of the “Gypsy quarters” are defined as a group because they experience a common way of life and they face common restrictions and problems. A basic dimension of that kind of community feeling is the internalization of the seclusion imposed on “Gypsies” by both “Greeks” and “Turks”.

(c) The standard theory about the “Gypsy race”:

In Thrace, very few people search through the books about the “Gypsy race” for their own history. They are mainly people who –suffocating in a quite limited life- search for information on “Gypsies” in order to reconstruct their own identity in a more positive way than the one they actually experience. So, we have the “paradoxical” search of the “Gypsy history and tradition” as a means to escape from the “Gypsy reality”.

Those who spent part of the year in Athens or in other big cities are usually more informed of the standard idea about the “Gypsies”. However, the majority of the “Muslim Gypsies” who live in Thrace hear that “all Gypsies in Greece are the same, part of European or even a universal minority” from TV people –if they watch Greek TV. Their reaction towards that (new) idea depends on which aspect of the “Gypsy” public image comes up each time. For those people the “Athenian Gypsy” who claims his rights, the “Gypsy student”, even the highly stereotyped heroine of a most popular TV series, are all images including promises. Or, at least, they offer them a romantic way out of their hard reality. On the contrary, they clearly differentiate themselves from the “criminal Gypsy” or the “miserable Gypsy” image. Nevertheless, the fact is that Muslim “Gypsies” learn from TV things they certainly did not know not only about “their people” but also about themselves. For example, people in Drosero are very surprised to realize that “street children”, for whom they feel pity gathering that they are children abandoned by their families, is a term also referring to their relatives’ or even to their own kids.

On the other hand, most of the so called “Muslim Gypsies” do not accept that they are “Gypsies”. Moreover, a lot of them do not speak the romani language and they believe that their family has never spoken that language. How do those people explain their social position?

(a) The professional status and the financial situation:

A lot of people attribute their definition as “Gypsies” to the kind of jobs they do -or they used to do, to the position they have within the minority and, generally, to their low social status and to the financial problems they face³.

(b) The minority status:

Some families or –in some cases- the inhabitants of a whole quarter define themselves as “Turks” and they stress that there is no difference between them and the rest of the Muslim minority members. They keep (or they would like to have) relations with the Turkish Consulate and with the representatives of the Muslim minority. The most striking example is Ahmet Faikoglou, from Drosero, who was elected as a Member of Parliament in the national elections of 1990, standing as an independent candidate. Faikoglu (for a short period) was highly supported by the Turkish Consulate⁴.

(c) The religious identity:

Others define themselves mainly as Muslims, though without making any connection between their religion and any ethnic claims. Some searchers have claimed that people who do not find their “Muslim identity” incompatible with their “Greek identity” just hide or avoid trouble. In my opinion, that should not be necessarily the case, as long as religious beliefs have both political and spiritual aspects. Moreover, the Muslim “Gypsies”, exactly like anybody else, conceive and experience religion in a variety of ways. As a matter of fact, among Muslim “Gypsies” can be found both “liberals” and “traditionalists”.

(d) The locality:

A lot of people define themselves mainly through the place where they were born and live. In some cases their being locals is experienced as a source of proud, as well as an argument for claiming their rights. (That is the case in Avantos⁵). In other cases, the opposite happens: the native area is felt by some people as the reason for their being secluded and stigmatized. «In that place where we ended up, although we are not the same, we will all be called “Gypsies”», remarked bitterly a young man who was born in Drosero.

³ See also in **Sinapidis, V. S.**, *Φυλετική καταγωγή, ήθη και έθιμα των Κατσιβέλλων Διδυμοτείχου (Racial origins and customs of the Gypsies in Didimotihon)*, Archives of the Thracian Ethnological and Linguistic Treasure, Second Period, Vol. 18, 1953: 294, **Troumbeta, S.**, *Κατασκευάζοντας Ταυτότητες για τους Μουσουλμάνους της Θράκης. Το παράδειγμα των Πομάκων και των Σαγγάνων (Constructing Identities for the Muslims in Thrace. The case of Pomaks and Gypsies)*, KEMO-Kritiki, Athens 2001: 209, **Avdikos, E.**, «*Το κατσίκι αν πηδήσει το μαντρί, θα βρει να φάει πιο πολύ*». *Ζώντας στην οδό Άβαντος, στο χώρο εκείθεν της Γραμμής* (“If the goat escapes the pen, it will find more to graze”. *Living in Avantos street, beyond the Line*), in *Roma in Greece*, Greek Ethnology Society, Athens 2002: 214.

⁴ **Dodos, D. H.**, *Εκλογική Γεωγραφία των Μειονοτήτων. Μειονοτικά κόμματα στη Νότιο Βαλκανική, Ελλάδα, Βουλγαρία, Αλβανία (The Voting Geography of Minorities. Minority Parties in the South Balkans, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania)*, Exantas, Athens 1994: 38-46, **Kottakis, M.**, *Θράκη. Η μειονότητα σήμερα (Thrace. The minority today)*, Nea Synora – A. A. Livani, Athens 2000: 36.

⁵ Avdikos, 2002.

Indeed, the so called “Gypsy communities” –at least, the big ones- are far from being homogeneous. In those quarters coexist groups of various origins, who ended up at the place through different “routes”. The names of the “intra-community groups” are often the relics of a geographical origin, a professional specification etc. However, people live together and the old differentiations fade out, while new ones arise, as the inhabitants of the quarter work out different ways to survive and as there are several new arrivals. On the other hand, the people who have migrated tend to form a new “group”. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the identity of all those people is formed to a large extent through their opposition to their neighbours.

After all, which is the truth? Why there is such a variety of self-definitions? Do all those people who do not accept that they are “Gypsies” ignore or hide their origin? Have those who claim that they never spoke the romani language forgotten it? Do they just fake ignorance? And why most of our informants reject so persistently their relativity to all those people who are defined as “Muslim Gypsies”? I believe that searchers who have written about the Muslim “Gypsies” of Thrace, no matter how careful or well informed they are, often assume a lot of things: They assume, for example, that all Muslim “Gypsies” spoke the romani language sometime in the past. They assume that they were all “on the move” before they established in the various areas where we find them now. They are hesitant to believe that big historical events had on “Gypsies” the same impact they had on other people. As a result, the authors often doubt the validity of their informants’ words because they believe that any information given merely forms part of a “self-presentation strategics”. Of course, there is no doubt that Muslim “Gypsies”, like anybody else, “select” the information they give about themselves in order to handle the situations they are in. However, if we correlate their relations about the adventures which brought them to a “gypsy quarter” and kept them there to the historical context and the sociopolitical changes which influenced the wider area of Thrace, we will find out that a lot of our informants’ “stories” can be well documented. Therefore, I say that we should be hesitant to adopt interpretations of what “Gypsies” say as imaginary projections of “what they would like to be, although they are not”. “Gypsies”, like everybody, register objective data in their ideological schemes.

Historical and socioeconomic events having influenced the status of the Muslim “Gypsies”

The whole area of Thrace was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878. The Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878 was the first in a series of events which changed dramatically the lives of people in the area. The Balkan wars (1912-1913) and the First World War followed. At the same time the hard struggle over the Balkan States boundaries pushed thousands of people away from their homelands. During that period more than 100.000 Muslims were forced to live their places in Northern or Eastern Thrace and seek refuge

in Western Thrace⁶. V. S. Sinapidis gives an example “after the 1877 Russo-Turkish war more Muslim Gypsies arrived [in Didimotihon] from Bulgaria. They built places where they settled until the 1912 Balkan war, when they had to move in the caves where they live now [the text was written in 1953]”⁷. Some of the “Gypsies” who finally settled in Alan Kuyu as well as the first inhabitants of the quarter in Avantos⁸ were –according to their evidence- refugees from Eastern Thrace. In the period 1913-1919, when Western Thrace became part of Bulgaria⁹, the government settled in the area Muslims from Bulgaria, in order to work the land. That was the period when the population in a lot of villages where Muslim “Gypsies” live today increased significantly¹⁰. Those people faced a lot of problems after 1919 (Neuilly Convention¹¹), because they were pressed to live the area so that Greek refugees could be attracted back in Western Thrace. Moreover, people who used to work on the Rodopi mountains¹², being insecure and having to deal with the restrictions of the new national boundaries, had to leave the mountains. This is the case of “Balkancti”, a group which finally settled in Drosero.

In 1923 the Lausanne Convention was signed. The Muslims of the (Greek, after the Sevres Convention) Western Thrace were excluded from the compulsory population exchange. However a lot of Muslim land-owners and, generally, people who had the means to do so, rushed to Turkey immediately after the Convention was signed. The Muslims who remained in Western Thrace belonged mainly to the less powerful strata in the local society. According to evidence, the socioeconomic position of some of the Muslims who stayed back deteriorated that much, that they ended up being considered “Gypsies”.

Nevertheless, the Lausanne Convention had a significant and long-lasting impact on the lives of the various groups of Muslims who lived in Thrace. Firstly, the Convention imposed on them an official relation with the Turkish state, which certainly influenced the stratification within the minority. For example, the Turkish language was acknowledged as the language of the minority schools. Secondly, everything concerning the minority (housing, education etc.) got “trapped” in a very complicated legal system and, as a consequence, the Muslims in Thrace depended heavily on various mediators. Thirdly, the

⁶ **Divani, L.**, *Η εδαφική ολοκλήρωση της Ελλάδας (1830-1947). Απόπειρα πατριδογνωσίας (The spatial integration of Greece (1830-1947). An attempt to learn about our country)*, Kastaniotis, Athens 2000: 552-611.

⁷ Sinapidis, 1953: 296.

⁸ Avdikos, 2002: 193.

⁹ Under the London and the Bucharest Treaties, 1913.

¹⁰ **Anagnostidis, M., Asprogerakas, H., Kaloudis, K., Katsimigas, K., Papadopoulos, A., Passopoulos, A., Tassos, A.**, *Αναγνώριση της αρχιτεκτονικής φυσιογνωμίας των αγροτικών οικισμών του Νομού Ροδόπης (Tracing the architectural profile of the agricultural settlements in the Rodopi Prefecture)*, Ministry of Housing and Environment/ Prefectural Council of Rodopi.

¹¹ Under the Neuilly Convention Bulgaria lost Western Thrace, while there was volunteer exchange between the Bulgarians who lived in Greece and the Greeks who lived in Bulgaria.

¹² **Koutzakiotis, G.**, *Οι Ορεισίβιοι Μουσουλμάνοι της Ροδόπης (τέλη 18^{ου} – αρχές 19^{ου} αιώνα): Σκέψεις για την εικόνα τους στα ταξιδιωτικά κείμενα της εποχής (Muslims living on the Rodopi mountains (end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th century). Reflections on their depiction through the contemporary travellers' texts)*, Ethnology, Vol. 8/2000, Greek Ethnology Society, Athens 2001: 259-260.

members of the minority a lot of times found themselves in the position of a “hostage”, whose luck depends on the development of the relations between the Greek and the Turkish state.

From 1941 until 1944 Thrace was occupied by the Bulgarians. The Bulgarian authorities encouraged massive settlements in Thrace, in order to lay permanent claims to the area. The “authorized” settlers were followed by a “mob” of poor families. A lot of them were Muslims –“Gypsies” or “non Gypsies”- who were pressed by the government to leave Bulgaria (especially “Gypsies” were in great danger, since Bulgaria was a Germany’s ally)¹³. Those people had no official license to settle, so their life in Greece was not easy. The Muslims who stayed in Western Thrace after the Bulgarians withdrew were included in the Muslim minority. Such families can be found in Drosero¹⁴.

The consequences of the Second World War, as well as the Greek civil war, which followed, made a lot of poor Muslims (landless or small land - owners) seek refuge in Turkey in the 1940s and the 1950s¹⁵. Although those people were –unofficially- encouraged by the Turkish Consulate to do so, they actually found out that they were not welcomed in Turkey: “After the recession of the civil war operations, the Turkish government started to send the illegal immigrants –especially Gypsies- back to Greece”¹⁶. Those who came back lost the Greek citizenship while, obviously, they never acquired the Turkish one. The loss of the Greek citizenship - on the ground of the article 19 of the Greek Constitution¹⁷, cancelled since 1999- has been a lasting problem for the minority members. Some Muslims, having fallen into a non-citizen status, took “shelter” in “gypsy quarters”.

After the war the countryside in Thrace, having been ruined, became a convenient ground for the development of political clientele networks. Some Muslim villagers got help either from the Greek State or from the Turkish Consulate. It seems that at the beginning the “Gypsies” were excluded from the allowances. In 1956 a Greek officer wrote: “Are there any Muslims without land? No. There are only Gypsies and young men who married after their families were allowed land”¹⁸. Things changed later. The Turkish Consulate included “Gypsies” in its “allowance policy”¹⁹ and so did the Greek State. It is notable

¹³ **Kotzageorgi, X.**, *Εξοδος Ελλήνων και εποικισμός Βουλγάρων στην Ανατολική Μακεδονία και τη Θράκη κατά τη διάρκεια της βουλγαρικής κατοχής (1941-1944)* (*The eviction of Greeks and the Bulgarian settlement in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace during the Bulgarian Occupation*), International Conference: *Macedonia and Thrace, 1941-1944. Occupation – Resistance – Liberation*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki 1998: 90, **Puxon, G.**, *Rom: Europe’s Gypsies*, Minority Rights Group, Report No 14, 1975: 8, **Crowe, D. M.**, *A history of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1995:: 18 – 20

¹⁴ See also in Troumbeta, 2001: 165.

¹⁵ **Andreadis, K. G.**, *Η μουσουλμανική μειονότητα της Δυτικής Θράκης* (*The muslim minority in Western Thrace*), Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki 1956: 29, **Christidis, Y.**, *The Muslim Minority in Greece*, Nonneman, G., Niblock, T., Szajkowski, B. (eds), *Muslim Communities in the New Europe*, Ithaca Press, 1997: 159-160.

¹⁶ Andreadis, 1956: 51.

¹⁷ See also in **Pamboukis, H.**, *Το άρθρο 19 του Κώδικα Ελληνικής Ιθαγένειας* (*The article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code*), in *Σύγχρονα Θέματα* (Contemporary Issues) 63, April – June 1997: 37.

¹⁸ Andreadis, 1956: 27.

¹⁹ **Damaskinos, Metropolitte of Maronia and Komotini**, *Η συμβολή της τοπικής Εκκλησίας εις την αντιμετώπισιν των εθνικών προβλημάτων της Θράκης* (*The contribution of the local Church in the confrontation of the national problems in Thrace*),

that a lot of Muslim “Gypsies” at the villages built houses with loans they took from the Greek government between 1964 and 1974, while, at the same time, laws prohibiting the minority members from buying land, building houses etc. were brought up (those measures were cancelled in the 1990s).

Other “Gypsies” had to move to the towns. They mostly settled in areas outside the plan of the town and –as a consequence- they built their little houses (mostly sheds) illegally. For example, people started to establish in Drosero around 1939, while a new –larger- settlement wave was noted in 1956²⁰. However, until the middle ‘80s that quarter lacked electricity and water supply. With the town expansion of the 1960s and the 1970s the shed dwellers were repeatedly pushed to the receding urban periphery. The example of Ifestos is characteristic: Those people used to live by the center of Komotini, until 1935, when the town authorities decided that the settlement should be moved to the urban periphery. Two years later, as Komotini expanded, the settlement was again near the center of the town, in the neighbourhood of the “National Stadium”. Then, people were pushed outside the town, where Ifestos is located now. The other edge of Komotini (where “Alan Kuyu” is located) was the point authorities chose in 1961 to settle the “Gypsy” flood victims who, since 1922, lived in other central neighbourhoods²¹.

In the 1970s, after the case of Cyprus, the situation in Thrace reached a point of high tension. Several Muslims, forced by both the economic underdevelopment²² and the political tension, went to work in factories around Athens, doing jobs which everybody else avoided to do. In 1985, the Muslims’ move to Athens was encouraged by the Greek state. Jobs in the public sector were promised to the Muslims who would transfer their civil rights from Thrace to Athens²³. Several people who lived in the “gypsy quarters” moved to Athens in that perspective. However, the measure was scarcely applied, so the ex land workers – having moved to the city- turned to new jobs (selling flowers in night clubs, trading scrap paper etc.).

At the end of the 1980s, after the fall of the communist regimes, “Gypsies and new refugees from Bulgaria and the other ex communist countries” end up in Thrace²⁴. Moreover, the Greek government chose Thrace for the settlement of thousands of “Pontian” refugees, coming from ex Soviet Union. Houses were built but no measures were taken for the occupation of those people. Therefore, the unemployment problem deteriorated again. The Muslim “Gypsies” were among the groups mostly

Metropolis of Maronia and Komotini, Komotini 1989: 25, **Magriotis, G. D.**, *Η Θράκη σε κρίσιμη καμπή (Thrace on a crucial curve)*, Athens 1994: 7.

²⁰ **Smaropoulos, H., Trihopoulou, A., Tsamkirani, A.**, *Έρευνα για τα κοινωνικά χαρακτηριστικά των περιοχών Τέρμα Ανδριανουπόλεως (Αλάν Κουγιού), Ήφαιστος (Καλκάντζα), Δροσερό και Κας-Κανέ Ξάνθης (Research on the social characteristics of the areas Alan Kuyu, Ifestos, Drosero and Gas-Hane in Xanthi)*, 1989: 8.

²¹ Troumbeta, 2001: 161, **Zenginīs, E. H.**, *Οι Μουσουλμάνοι Αθίγγανοι της Θράκης (The Muslim Gypsies in Thrace)*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki 1994: 58, **Kelesidis, T.**, *Ιδού, η Ροδόπη μας. Οικισμοί, τοποθεσίες και τοπωνύμια του Ν. Ροδόπης (This is our Rodopi. Settlements, places and names in the Rodopi Prefecture)*, Alfavito, Komotini 2003: 92

²² Athens Academy, Centre for the Research on the Greek Society, 1994: 52.

²³ **Trimis, D.**, *Η «ενσωμάτωση» στο Γκάζι ή στις πηγές του ρατσισμού (“Integration” in Gazi or reaching the sources of racism)*, Σχολιαστής (Commentator) 36, March 1986.

²⁴ **Htouris, S.**, *Μια σύνθετη πολιτισμική γεωγραφία (A complex cultural geography)*, in *Music of Thrace. An interdisciplinary approach: Evros, Οι Filoi tis Mousikis*, Athens 1999: 68.

influenced by that and in some cases people, having lost the jobs they did before, fell back to a “gypsy status”²⁵.

The limits of the “identity policies”

After all, the inclusion of “Gypsies” in the Muslim minority did not seem to have contributed to their social emancipation. The “protection” they enjoyed as members of an officially recognized minority did not lack “side effects”. Even today, when sociopolitical situation is quite “liberal”, the minority status seems to cause more problems than the ones it solves:

- (a) The chances for social activity those people have depend on the “conformity statements” they are continuously required to make. Moreover, the quality of their life depends on two “intermediate networks”, which act in rivalry. So, if somebody tries to get a building license, for example, he may get the required documents from the local Civil Services. However, that will possibly make him “suspicious” to the community council, so the man may not get the documents he needs from them. Or things may happen the other way round. The fact is that such a situation favours enormously “professional mediators” and keeps people dependant on them.
- (b) The minority members get very often low quality services, since a lot of matters concerning housing, education etc. are defined by circulars, mutual agreements between the Greek and the Turkish state, committee decisions etc. which, although sometimes are obviously out-dated, cannot be easily reformed. Minority schools are a good example. Their operational problems are obvious, the quality of the knowledge provided (by both the Turkish and the Greek curriculum) is poor. Nevertheless, the “knots” of the legislation concerning the minority put obstacles to any reformation attempt.

Needless to say, the Muslim “Gypsies” face a multiplicity of such problems, given the low position they usually have in the minority stratification.

From the 1990s onwards, various individuals and institutions have propagated the idea that Muslim “Gypsies” would emancipate from the “minority identity” if they emphasized on their “Gypsy identity”. That idea, which relates to the opinion that minority should split up into three groups, has been supported by several politicians, although it has never been officially proclaimed. Therefore, individuals, on their own initiative, have established “Roma Associations” and try to revive “Gypsy customs”. The Muslim “Gypsies” themselves are very hesitant about such initiatives and sometimes they get even hostile.

²⁵ A characteristic example is given by Avdikos, 2002: 201 – 202.

Nevertheless, there are people who try to find a way out of the “minority identity”. The problem is that nowadays “identities” have become the basis of policy making in general and the “identity” policies often differentiate people. As Zygmunt Bauman remarks, “The welfare state used to institutionalize commonality of fate, since its provisions were meant for every participant (every citizen) in equal measure [...] The slow retreat from that principle into the means-tested, “focused” assistance for “those who need it most” has institutionalized the diversity of fate”²⁶. As a matter of fact, special projects, funded by the European Union and focused on the language, the “culture”, the religion, the family status, the age or the sex of those to whom they address tend to substitute for the required State expenditure on Education, Social Welfare etc.

The first time that the Municipality of Xanthi supported “Gypsies” of Drosero, so they could participate in the local carnival, they were asked to disguise themselves as... Gypsies! People’s move from the Alan Kuyu sheds depends on the realization of the European Union projects on “Gypsy housing”. In case the Muslim “Gypsies” decide to attend a non minority school, there is a strong possibility that they will find themselves in a “special class for Gypsy kids”, isolated from the rest of the school and providing low quality education, if this is how the education authorities have interpreted “intercultural education”.

On the other hand, it is clear that people do not chose freely the social identities attributed to them neither do they necessarily agree to those identities. That is not surprising, since “the new identity theories merely reify anew what is in fact a multiplicity of historically varying forms of what are less often unified and singular but more often «fractured identities»”²⁷. The Muslim “Gypsies” themselves seem to have realised better than anybody else that “identity cannot be collapsed satisfactorily into interest or made to reflect it except as part of a personal and/or political project”, as Craig Calhoun puts it²⁸. So, they may answer our questions about “what they are”, but mostly they are interested in what they can do. And I hope we do remember that a lot of us got interested in “what Gypsies are” because of our commitment to enable them to do more things than the ones they are allowed by their present status.

²⁶ **Bauman, Z.**, *Morality in the Age of Contingency*, Heelas, P., Lash, S., Morris, P. (eds), *Detraditionalisation*, Blackwell, 1996: 55.

²⁷ **Somers, M. R., Gibson, G.**, *Reclaiming the Epistemological Other: Narrative and the Social Construction of Identity*, Calhoun, C. (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Blackwell, 1994: 56.

²⁸ **Calhoun, C.**, *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Calhoun, C. (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Blackwell, 1994: 27.

Leonie Herwartz-Emden

Lecture in IONNINA 18.10.02

Cultural difference and identity: Children and young people with an immigrant background in Germany (the example of the 'Aussiedler')

Starting point

I would like to start my lecture with the current data concerning the 'Aussiedler' group and the history and circumstances of the 'Aussiedler' migration process. I shall then go on to characterize the situation for children and young people, their problems and chances of integration and the special conditions of development under the experience of cultural (and gender) difference.

With regard to the general situation of *children with a migration background* in the German educational system, we can summarize by saying that even those children who were born in Germany or who have lived in Germany since they were very young do not reach the same educational standard as that of children *without* a migration history (according to the results of the PISA Study, the latest large-scale empirical study which included a random sample of migrant children). There are, of course, differences between migrant groups and groups from different countries - for example, Italian children and children with a Turkish background can also be found at the lowest level in the school system. Differences depend on nationality, varying cultural attitudes towards education, the language skills of the individual, the language practices of the family and also, quite simply, the length of time the person has been in Germany. But these factors do not completely explain the low educational standards of children with a migration background. An additional factor is the varying resources of families from different ethnic groups, as well as the ability of the family to support the educational needs of their children. However, at present we do not have the empirical data to explain the current situation and the latest developments in the education sector, we do not have longitudinal studies and there are not enough studies comparing perspectives with regard to the situation of various ethnic groups in different German states.¹

¹ There are obvious empirical indications in the recently published PISA Study that the school careers of a large group of these children, which are generally not very promising, are due to a lack of language skills. Language skills have proved to be the decisive hurdle in the educational career of children from the most diverse groups of

The migration process - conditions of the context

'Aussiedler' children ('Spätaussiedler' = ethnic German migrants) belong to a group where there is ongoing immigration. They are children who have themselves experienced migration, which means that they are an excellent example for all other groups of children undergoing a migration process. (In comparison: children and young people from other immigrant groups in Germany are usually the second or third generation, which means they live in families with a migration experience, but they did not undergo the migration experience themselves.)

Up until 2001 more than four million (4,222,966 It. BMI) 'Aussiedler' immigrated to Germany; in 1991 the number was about 2.1 million. The current immigration of 'Aussiedler' to Germany can be characterized as a migration movement of a young population - a fact of particular relevance for both the present and the future, e.g. for the educational system (Herwartz-Emden 1997c). In 2001 about one third of this subgroup comprised children and young people under the age of 18 (29.1%, It. BMI) compared to the group as a whole; 46.6% were aged between 18 and 45 - more than 75% of the group were under 45 years old. The whole group can be characterized as a young group of immigrants who make up a considerable proportion of the pupils in the German educational system. To put a number on it, at present there are about 500,000 young 'Aussiedler' immigrants living in Germany; they form one of the largest groups of young immigrants. According to an assessment carried out in 1999 by the Ministry for Family, Pensioners, Women and Young People (BMFSJ), a total of 1.7 million children and young people of 18 or under who are not of German descent live in Germany – the 'Aussiedler' group is additional to this.

'Aussiedler' are, on the whole, a very heterogeneous group with regard to economic and social factors, but also from a religious and ideological point of view (cf. K.J. Bade, 1994). Not only do they differ in the degree to which they master the German

migrant families. Neither their social situation nor cultural distance are, as such, primarily responsible for disparities in the successful participation in the educational system. The ability to master the German language at the appropriate level for each stage of their education is of far more decisive importance, according to the conclusions drawn by the authors of the PISA Study (Baumert & Schümer, 2001, p. 374). Against the background of analyses of the content of the pupils' competence and the causal factors of their lack of success, it becomes obvious from the PISA results that, if migrant children are to have a successful educational career, considerable

language and their different concepts of Germany, but they can also be distinguished according to their countries of origin, the way in which their ancestors immigrated into those countries and to what extent and in what way their German identity was oppressed. Other aspects are the fact that they have felt like Germans over a period of several generations, and how their individual life was influenced by forced displacement and deportation (cf. *ibid.* p. 160).

It is generally known that 'Aussiedler' migration is on the decrease², but there is still a large group of people immigrating from the former USSR to Germany.³ **Currently it is assumed that there will be a drop of about 20% in 2003 as compared to 2002.** The figures for the influx of 'Aussiedler' into Germany show a downward trend, especially with regard to the number of applications. In 2002 (January to December) only 66,833 people applied for entry; in the previous year 2001 the number was 83,812 and the year 2000 it was a number of 106.895. **29.841 people applied for entry in the period from January to August.** As well as language tests, the reorganization of the foreign support program - within the framework of the "'Aussiedler" Policy 2000' - is, among other things, responsible for this decrease. This program offers people of German descent who wish to remain in their country of origin help in situ. The German minorities are supported by cultural, economic and humanitarian measures, in order to break down discrimination.

Most of these people come from the succession states of the former USSR. At the same time, the proportion of German nationals has fallen again in comparison to the non-German family members immigrating with them. This is the continuation of a trend which began in the middle of the 1990s: of the people admitted in the first four months of 2002, only 22.29% were German nationals who received an admittance certificate of their own. (A comparison with the previous years: 1995: 55.44%, 1996:

flaws in the educational system need to be removed – flaws that, first and foremost, are clearly concerned with the area of linguistic education.

² It is now more difficult to immigrate, especially since language tests are compulsory. Benefits for immigrants in Germany have likewise been cut; therefore the number of new applications has fallen.

³ In addition to the 'Aussiedler' entering the country from the area of the former Soviet Union and the accompanying family members, who are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, there are further groups of migrants, such as Jewish quota refugees from the Ukraine, Moldavia, White Russia and Russia; asylum seekers such as deserters from the Soviet/Russian army; working migrants with a legal residency status; sometimes also illegal immigrants such as "sex workers".

46.68%, 1997: 39.71%, 1998: 34.50%, 1999: 29.49%, 2000: 26.34% and 2001: 24.36%).⁴

There has been a steady shift in the proportion of people entering the country from those who are immigrants of German origin ('Spätaussiedler') to family members who, independently of their nationality, are currently still able to enter the country with German family members without having to show proof of German language skills. This makes the integration of the families and their acceptance by the native population more difficult, according to the German government's 'Aussiedler' representative. Since the beginning of the last decade, the number of these people entering the country, as opposed to those who are truly classified as 'Spätaussiedler', has risen from 20% to 75%.⁵ They frequently have no or insufficient knowledge of German (according to a press release from the German Home Office in: Info Heft Deutsche Aussiedler (Information leaflet about German immigrants), Leaflet No. 115). 'Aussiedler' come to Germany under a different regulatory framework from people with a 'foreigner' status, and can count on special integration measures. Their citizen status guarantees them security of residency and integration aid such as language lessons, social counseling and aid to social assimilation which is intended to make integration easier. These entitlements do not apply equally to accompanying family members. Their entry into the country through inclusion on the admittance certificate of the 'Spätaussiedler' will only be possible if they have sufficient knowledge of German once the new immigration law comes into effect.⁶

Socio-cultural integration and ethnic identity

⁴ Increasingly, members of German minorities choose to remain in their country of origin. Due to new emphases in the 'Aid for German minorities in the resettlement regions' policy, family members of German minorities can see a perspective for the future in their current country of residence. Another important contributing factor is the stabilization of economic conditions, particularly in Russia. Many people no longer meet the application requirements of the German displaced persons law (Bundesvertriebenengesetz), and there is an increasing lack of knowledge of the German language. Others fail to emigrate because they cannot meet the more rigid conditions of departure from their country, and because of the language test which is now required. In addition to this, a large proportion of the German minorities have already left the resettlement areas. Another group has immigrated to the Russian Federation from the middle Asian states, due to the difficult living situation there for European ethnic minorities.

⁵ In Kazakhstan, for example, 65% of the German minority group were married to non-Germans (cf. the estimate made by the anthropologist Ruth Mandel, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11.12.2000). Are their children then Germans, Russians, Kazakhstanians or post-Soviets? The 'Aussiedler' force one to extend the term 'German' (cf. *ibid.*)

⁶ The new immigration law will reduce the number of family members not of German descent entering the country. Through this reduction it is expected that there will be greater acceptance of the immigration of 'Aussiedler'

Although the integration of 'Aussiedler' presupposes their material integration, there must be more to it than that. It might be helpful in this context to analyze the problem of integration from the point of view of socio-cultural integration and psychological adaptation.⁷

When looking into the determining factors of their integration, the following aspect should not be omitted: "Aussiedler", as compared to other groups of immigrants and migrants, are under particularly strong pressure to achieve assimilation. On the basis of their primary motivation for entry into the country, many (a) feel that they wish to live as Germans amongst Germans (cf. studies of Barbara Dietz/Peter Hilkes, here 1992, on the motivation structure of 'Aussiedler') and (b) feel the pressure of having to constantly prove in their daily lives that they really are Germans. The requirements which consequently arise for their auto-definition lead to a contradictory emotional and social process. They perceive themselves as being Germans, yet in Germany, the country that has taken them in, their experience is that they are treated as foreigners. Being excluded as 'foreign' Germans, they will permanently have to cope with the discrepancy which exists between their original self-definition and the way they are now treated by others.

Their affirmation of their Germanness is, of course, accompanied by the difficulty that they speak none or very little of the language, which presents an additional cause of their ambivalent orientation. The definition of being German, which is the reason for the legitimacy of their immigration to Germany, means at the same time that the linguistic-cultural traditions of their country of origin are disowned or underrated. The school system of the society in which they now live contributes to this in its lack of recognition of their linguistic competence in everyday school life. Speaking Russian is debased, and 'Aussiedler' children are often forbidden to speak Russian in the classroom.

by the German population, and that the integration of this group will become less problematical as is currently the case (according to Jochen Welt, 'Aussiedler' representative of the German government).

⁷ I will particularly concentrate on changes in the field of development and education with reference to the initial results of a research project which I started at the University of Augsburg on the integration of primary school children into the German school system. Reference will also be made to the results of the big 'FAFRA-project' which was started on my initiative and carried out at the University of Osnabrück between 1991 and 1997 (with financial support from the German Public Board of Research - DFG). One of the immigrant groups which was investigated was that of the 'Aussiedler' - in comparison to German families and immigrant families from Turkey.

The group of (German) peers, which plays a large role in the development of children and young people, often rejects them. Young 'Aussiedler' are frequently referred to as 'Russians', even if they are ethnic Germans and therefore have German citizenship. Thus they experience a stigma in Germany of the sort that they and the generations before them were forced to experience in their countries of origin, but from the opposite point of view. It is precisely in the case of the so-called 'post-Perestroika generation', who frequently have great difficulty in identifying with the Germanness of the older generation, that the interplay of ethnic identity and ethnic self-identification comes into effect: they proudly refer to themselves as 'Russians', a phenomenon that is known from the Afro-American hip-hop scene where the young people label themselves as 'niggers'.

Social mirroring, stereotypes and the important role of the family

One of the main characteristics of the integration process of 'Aussiedler' is the experience of negative processes of social mirroring and exclusion (cf. Herwartz-Emden/Westphal, 2002). As we will see below, children and young people are the ones who suffer most from this kind of exclusion. It should be considered that children and young people have to contend particularly strongly with feelings of inferiority which their German environment signals to them. The negative processes of social mirroring and processes of exclusion have their origin in social structures: they do not only take place in the nursery or at school but happen daily on the streets. At first, young people often do not speak sufficient German to be able to verbally defend themselves adequately in this sort of situation and so they have to find a different way to cope with the feeling of discrimination. They depend heavily on having a family situation which can stabilize their feelings of self-esteem.

The prevailing image of 'Aussiedler' in the Federal Republic of Germany is determined by stereotypes which classify this group into categories ranging from mainly traditional to retarded. This implies additional strain not only for the individual person, but for the family situation as a whole. The particular problems and distress which 'Aussiedler' have to face are, ultimately, not individual problems, but family ones. The mere fact that the emigration of 'Aussiedler' is a family matter shows how strongly this group is orientated by the family, which is a central point of reference for each

individual member. Traditionally, the family union is very strong, not least due to the minority role this group was forced to assume in the former Soviet Union. They not only had to suffer persecution and deportation, but were also rarely allowed to conserve German traditions and language outside the family. *The significance of the family becomes even stronger through the contradictory ways in which they now experience their German identity (see above).* Now more than ever, the daily effort of securing their identity as Germans in public contexts means that the family is a basis for coping with the individual's divergent experiences. The feeling of emotional and social uncertainty and uneasiness and the difficulties they develop in defining themselves can only be balanced out by frequent emotional interrelation within the family union. Just as in the case of working migrants, for "Aussiedler" the family does not only represent a kind of ethnic enclave but is also the central place for finding and securing their identity.

Cultural difference, adolescence and developmental tasks

There have been very few studies in Germany examining the question of how children and adolescents grow up under the conditions of the experience of cultural difference. The particular problems of age which are confounded by the experience of cultural difference need to be examined more closely. In the following I shall refer particularly to the phase of adolescence. Adolescents are still developing and have specific developmental tasks to cope with. Whereas younger children are still closely tied to the core relationships in the family, this situation starts to change for school-children, and for young people these relationships go through a considerable phase of "rebuilding". The normative target of adolescence is the development of ego identity or ego autonomy. Ego identity unfolds through the struggle with inner disposition, the cultural system of values and external conditions. Both values and norms and relationships such as those with their parents, which have been accepted without question up to this point, are fundamentally challenged and, as it were, reconstructed. The world construction of the young person faces its greatest challenge during adolescence. Needs and behavior patterns appear to become increasingly contradictory, and both attempts at autonomy and the need for intimacy can be observed on a daily basis. This age, when seen in the context of a person's whole life, is one of the stages in life during which people are most at risk, and is difficult enough for

young people who have neither experienced the breaks in their biography nor the changes in their social and emotional frame of reference that migration causes.

So what does this age mean for an individual who has to come to terms with cultural differences? Additionally, what are the gender-specific implications – what differences are there for girls and boys? The so-called developmental tasks defined by development psychologists appear to be gender neutral and ethnically not differentiated, but this is not the case. Havighurst (1953) formulated eight developmental tasks which he saw as learning tasks that were to be solved actively, as links in the tense relationship between individual needs and the demands of society. The tasks, such as preparation for profession, career and family, integration in the peer group, detachment from the parental home, the development of a new relationship to one's own body or, in general, the development of a sexual identity at a new level - to name the most important of them – are intended for a *neutral* individual. However, they are always placed against a background of specific conditions, depending on whether the individual adolescent is male or female, belongs to an ethnic minority or not, and so on. A perspective on developmental tasks that is specific to gender and ethnic background is relatively new and is being followed up by different academic fields.⁸

“Typical” differences between men and women can already be seen in German girls and boys when they are adolescents: there are differences in the ways that boys and girls are able to cope, and in the resources available to them (Hefferich, 2001, p. 335). On the one hand, girls have a much stronger ability to communicate than boys, whereas boys have more strategies for the acquisition of space and territorial control. On the other hand, girls are restricted by a lack of self-confidence and a tendency to put aside their own needs. There is a particular asymmetry in the fact that girls talk to other girls, and boys talk to girls, about their problems, but girls rarely trust boys with their problems – just as boys seldom talk to each other about such things.

In addition to this well-known difference between the sexes, more recent research has produced a result that helps us understand far deeper male and female devel-

⁸ Excellent with regard to female adolescence: Carol Hagemann-White, 1996 and 1997 and C. Helfferich, 2000 and 2001.

opmental paths: men and women act under fundamentally different conditions in their life, and their biography is formed in a variety of “cultural” places. For one of the developmental tasks, the development of orientation for their working life, it has been proved that – native-born German – girls are confronted with completely different challenges from boys with regard to the development of orientation for their working life. At this age girls recognize the fundamental contradiction in their biography, i.e. that their lives are oriented towards a profession or apprenticeship on the one hand and a life with children and family on the other. This so-called “question of reconciliation” dominates discussions with native-born German (groups of) girls from the age of twelve at the latest⁹. Nowadays women neither want to miss out on having a career nor on having a family, and girls have to work out a concept for coping with this situation very early on. Society does not present them with an ideal solution to this problem – in Germany the question of childcare has been pushed into the private sector and does not constitute a responsibility of the government, as is the case in France or other European countries. In this respect the experiences of the girls’ own mothers and the solution models in the family of origin, but also the orientations and behavioral models of the fathers, are the central pattern for the development of their own model.

Furthermore, it has been proved that for – native-born German – boys in the same age group, orientation towards the family or a concept of fatherhood, and with it the idea that they themselves might start a family one day, are well and truly removed from the male socialization and are seen as a stark contrast to the development of masculinity (Böhnisch/Winter, 1993). Tasks requiring one to be considerate and caring are regarded as *not* masculine in the catalogue of current gender stereotypes: boys or young men with a baby in their arms or in a pram are something that German male adolescents can seldom imagine. Being a “real” man demands being cool, independent and tough – and by no means expressing emotions or developing a caring personality. Fatherhood is not part of the concept of “masculinity” – a construct that is portrayed differently in other cultural contexts.¹⁰ A child or adolescent from a family from the former Soviet Union or Turkey have completely different – and less

⁹ For an intercultural comparison of the question of reconciliation see: Gümen/Herwartz-Emden/Westphal, 1994

¹⁰ For a study on the intercultural comparison of concepts of fatherhood, see Westphal, Manuela: Fatherhood and Upbringing. In: Herwartz-Emden (ed.), Migrant Families ..., 2000

polarized – gender typifications passed on to them than those born in Germany. Masculinity and femininity are not depicted in the same sense as bipolar categories of instrumentality and expressiveness, but instead, for example in the case of Turkish migrants, one can find marked proportions of androgyny in both sexes, as well as the fact that men show higher levels of expressiveness and the women show a desirable amount of instrumentalist characteristics (Herwartz-Emden/Westphal, 1999). Men showing caring qualities are regarded less derogatorily, and, in comparison to Germans, fathers play a larger role in taking care of their children, including young children (Herwartz-Emden 1995 and Neumann, 1998).

This means that children and adolescents with an immigrant background have to come to terms with experiences of cultural difference in the development of their sexual identity or in their gender-specific self-typification. Gender-specific paths of development are too greatly shaped by culture, are not to be seen as independent from the development of an ethnic identity. Gender identity, like ethnic identity, is a dimension of the concept of self, which is bound up in the experience of cultural difference.

Hardly any research has been carried out on the question of how adolescence and the experience of cultural difference interact.¹¹ It can, however, be assumed that the experiences that are conditioned by cultural difference accumulate in the gender-specific developmental tasks mentioned above and specifically shape these to a great extent. A developmental task such as integration into the peer group for girls and boys from immigrant groups does not happen independently of discrimination, due to their being different, their foreign appearance, skin colour, clothes, body language or language usage: it is part of everyday life. Male and female adolescents have to deal with this discrimination in connection with the required gender-specific direction of the developmental tasks described above. Girls often react to experiences of discrimination with a loss of self-esteem, whereas boys look for ways to react that are on a more external level, including aggression and violent forms of behavior.

¹¹ Apart from a few exceptions, cf. e.g. for “Aussiedler”: Herwartz-Emden/Westphal, 2000.

Social skills such as the general ability to judge situations, to behave appropriately and to form and build relationships are all abilities that are acquired during the process of socialization. In this process girls and boys are confronted with the dominant image of masculinity and femininity prevalent in the society around them. This image is presented to them every day as the superior gender image, as the norm. The adolescents themselves may have partly grown up here or possibly have lived here since birth, but their emotional background can be anchored in a completely different world of ideas, a world marked by very particular images and structures. One of the fundamental structures that mark the relationship of the sexes is the relationship of men and women in public and private spheres, and the associated question of what form the division of work should take. This is the background against which the following questions are negotiated: Who will take on which tasks? Who will do what? How is one to behave? Which rules are there for which encounters? and so on. In Turkey, one of the societies from which many of the adolescents with an immigration background living in Germany originate, the separation of the sexes, “segregation”, dominates the relationship of women and men to each other. This means that the physical separation of the sexes is a central factor in the way the two sexes deal with each other and of the resulting social structures. Both in the former Soviet Union and in the post-Soviet societies the relationship between the sexes is marked by the Socialist ideal that it is natural for women to work, by the image of the “working mother”. Women were regarded as a resource of production and reproduction. Although this does not mean that reproductive duties were equally shared between men and women, both men and women took it for granted that women would have a profession and would practise it. The image of a dependent existence as a housewife, as is the case for many women from “Aussiedler” families in Germany (they themselves are often forced to live this kind of life due to a lack of job opportunities and non-existent state childcare) is hardly something that people with this kind of background would consider worth striving for.

These gender-based orientations, roles and images of the sexes, as well as ways of dealing with sexuality, are central topics in the situation of migration and the struggle between cultural difference and cultural identity. On the level of gender image this results in considerable confrontation, as it is something that demands of children and young people in particular that they make great efforts towards acculturation.

Conclusion

The facts mentioned above make it clear that developmental tasks are *not* the same for all children and adolescents. They vary according to gender and are marked by cultural background, but above all depend on the social position of the young individual: the relationships between dominance and power are a central factor for the adolescent, and their meaning needs to be researched further. It has become obvious that there are groups that are not only at a disadvantage because of having more limited resources to solve the tasks mentioned above, but who are also given “additional tasks” that they have to solve only because of their origins or external appearance (Hagemann-White, 1997, p. 70). Negative “social mirroring” leads to the question of how the self-esteem of children from ethnic minorities is influenced by racist exclusion, prejudice and other hostile behavior – are these internalized, denied, rejected? Even if the parents make a great deal of effort to show a child positive “mirroring”, this is not enough to compensate for the effects of the distorting mirror that is held up to his face every day (Suárez-Orosco, 2000, p. 214).¹² The ability to deal with everyday racism in an equally everyday and undramatic way, to anticipate humiliation, contempt and threats and see this as normal behavior, without letting their own self-image be deeply marked or deformed by it is the prominent task for many young people.

It is often the case that young men who are not well integrated are driven to situations of conflict, which become visible or are acted out on the level of cultural difference, but have deeper causes.¹³ If they are confronted with exclusions in the public sphere, not only is their general sense of self-esteem threatened, but their own gender image is directly effected, their image of their masculinity is devalued. This sense of derogation results from exclusion from public places, e.g. a disco, insults on the underground, disparagement from teachers and so on.

¹² There is a valuable approach to migration research concerning the question of experience of differences contained in literature from the USA. Suárez-Orosco (2000) uses the term “social mirroring” for this.

¹³ See Scherr, 1998, who works on the theory that the fundamental cause of conflicts in the migrant society is not cultural differences or a lack of understanding, but structures and practices of unequal treatment, discrimination and exclusion on a variety of levels, cf. *ibid.*, p. 51

All this *does not have to* mean that adolescents get into conflict situations which can be put down to their cultural origin or the origin of their family. Adolescents with experience of difference have the potential to develop beyond different cultural contexts, to personally integrate the most varied images of the sexes and, based on this, to act strategically and as appropriate to these contexts. If they are able to have a scholastic and professional career and they are given support corresponding to their abilities and opportunities¹⁴ and are integrated in social contexts that are relevant to them, cultural difference is *not* an obstacle to integration, well-being or a development of the ego identity appropriate to their age.

¹⁴ The current situation in the school system and in the education sector as a whole is not favourable for children and adolescents with an immigrant background. They can generally be described as disadvantaged, both on the level of language skills and on the general level of the quality of school-leaving qualifications that they achieve (see Herwartz-Emden, 2003 Education Report...).