Assimilation Policies and Outcomes:
Travellers' Experience
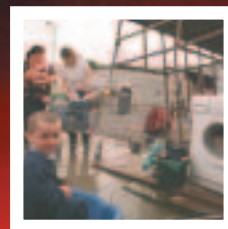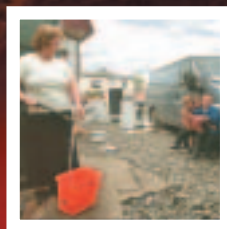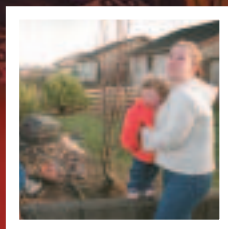
foreword

The Report illustrates the dichotomy between official policy and actual practice and illustrates the difficulties that Travellers encounter in trying to integrate into Irish society. It illustrates some of the strategies Travellers have used in managing their identity and attempting to improve conditions for themselves and their children in Ireland over the past 40 years. It becomes clear "that it is not Travellers' nomadism that fuels anti-Traveller racism; it is their group identity. They are ostracised whether they 'settle' or not."

Ronnie Fay, Director Pavee Point Travellers Centre, December 2005.

contents

Rationale, aims and objectives for this research project

Ethnic diversity is an enriching, problematic and increasingly important facet of modern societies. Although until recently Irish society presumed itself to be ethnically homogeneous, historical records show that Travellers have been present since at least the twelfth century.

They remain the most discriminated-against minority in this country. This small-scale research project was conceived as a contribution to identifying how the inclusion of Travellers can be positively promoted to the enrichment of both indigenous ethnic groups, Traveller and settled. Just as traditional inequitable and hostile relations between these populations presaged how immigrant minorities are presently treated, so too the development of positive inclusive programmes will contribute to developing an Irish society that welcomes diversity.

Social programmes targeting Travellers were initiated by the Report of the First Government Commission on Itinerancy, published in 1963. The Commission's terms of reference were:

to enquire into the problems arising from the presence... of itinerants and...to examine the...problems inherent in their way of life (CI Report, 1963, p 11).

Travellers have been the 'objects' of official policy since then. A key issue in shaping social policy and practice has been the way in which Travellers' identity is conceptualised: who the Travellers are and what their place is in Irish society, in the eyes of policy makers, service providers, and the majority population; and how Travellers themselves assert their identity. As will be demonstrated in this Project Report, although policy statements on Travellers and their needs became more nuanced, they remained strongly shaped by the assimilationist aims of that First Government Commission. In particular, Travellers' nomadism continues to be perceived as a problem rather than as a valued tradition and way of life.

Social initiatives in relation to Travellers (for instance, in education and/or training for employment) have clearly failed to eliminate or even to substantially weaken anti-Traveller prejudice among the majority settled population, and have failed to enable Travellers to achieve inclusion in Irish society. Indeed, Travellers remain the most marginalised group in that society, highly visible as a 'problem' precisely because they are invisible as an ethnic group. This exclusion is often mirrored in mainstream social programmes. In many of these programmes – intended to target the most marginalised – Travellers are omitted from policy and planning, and are virtually frozen out in practice. One strategy to address this has been the development of initiatives that target Travellers. Though these have a place, they are no substitute for a priori inclusive policy and provision for all.

There are lessons to be learned from this for current and future innovative social programmes. This research project aims to identify and tease out some of these lessons, and thus promote inclusive community development initiatives. Over the last forty years the intersection of perceptions and responses among the three parties to this process – settled people, officialdom, and Travellers – have had significant outcomes for all. This study focuses on the outcomes for the target group: the Travellers. It identifies how Travellers are conceptualised in official policy and public perceptions, how this has shaped social programmes, and how this has impacted on Travellers' management of their identity in their struggle to achieve equal status and decent opportunities for themselves and their children.

In this Project Report, examination of policy, perception, and Traveller experience (and of the outcomes of this intersection) is carried out in some detail. A thorough examination is necessary to highlight misconceptions and gaps in historical developments, so that future innovations can address their outcomes and avoid their mistakes. It is also important to identify both the substance of Travellers' ethnicity and incidents of racism against them, and the outcomes of overlooking or minimising this racism.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research project is to reveal how Travellers' identity management has been shaped by the dominant settled society's public perception and institutional policy and practice, with a view to identifying how issues relating to Travellers should be addressed through programmes supporting community development.

The objectives of the textual and field research were:

- To identify implementation of social policies targeting Travellers in two towns;

- To identify pattern of engagement by Travellers with these policies;

- To identify changes in lifestyle and quality of life that resulted;

- To identify how Travellers construct these phenomena, and in relation to that, any differentials between/within groups arising from
  - policy differences between the towns,
  - differences in age, gender, family membership,
  - other factors that might arise in the data, such as education, training and work experience and involvement in community development.
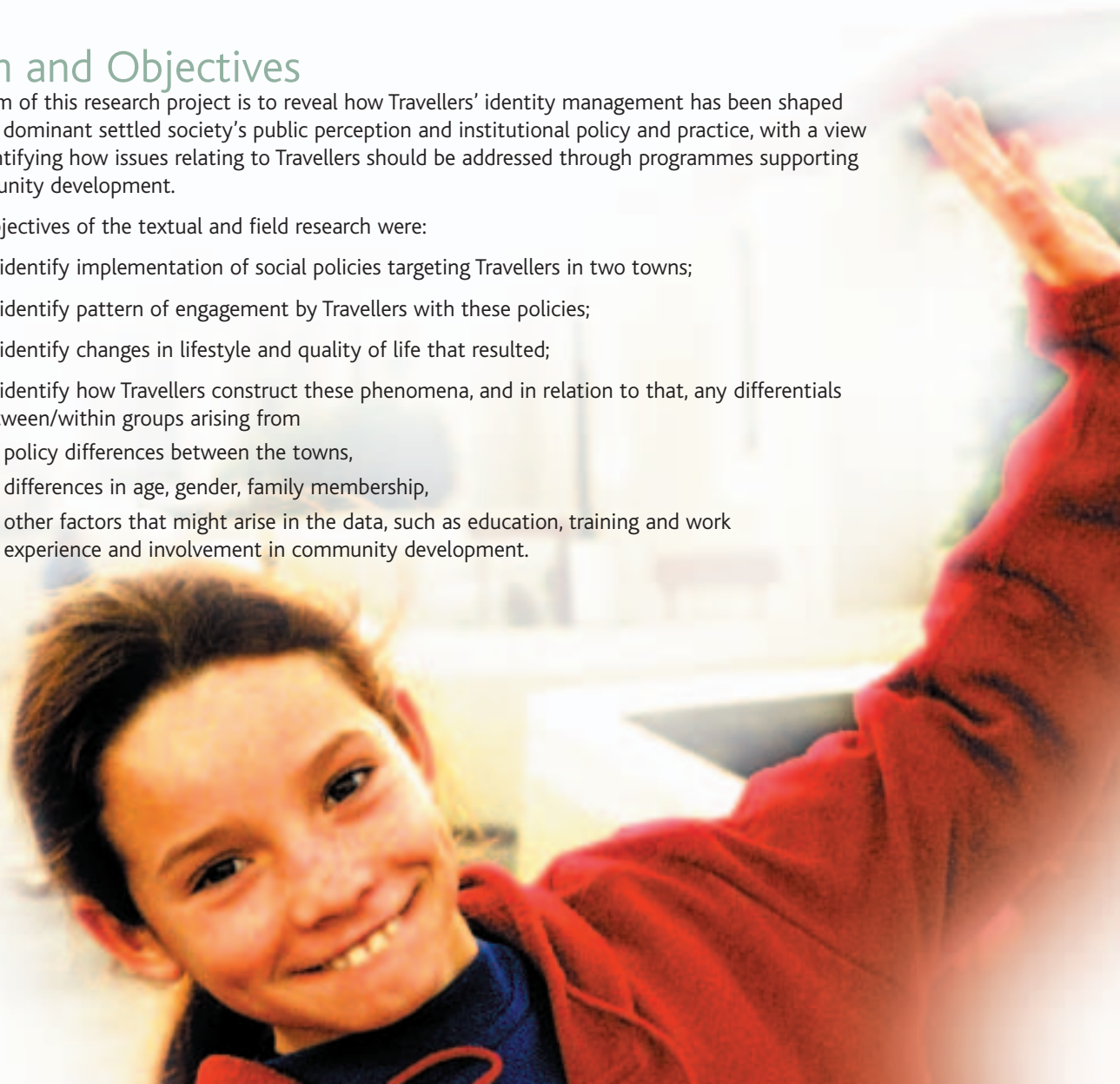
The Research Project

Data collection procedures in this small scale exploratory research project comprised:

■ study of official policy documents and media texts and interviews with service providers, and

■ fieldwork comprising taped interviews with groups of Travellers in two selected towns.

The key analytic tool was discourse analysis of interview transcripts and of text extracts.

Text Research and Interviews with Service Providers

A review of policy and provision, supported by detailed analysis of extracts, was conducted on the following policy documents (where readability requires it, reports will be referred to by date and the initials of the statutory committee that produced them, as given in brackets below:

GOVERNMENT TEXTS

Report of the Commission on Itinerancy (CI Report, 1963)

Report of the Travelling People Review Body, (RB Report, 1983)

Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community (TF Report, 1995)

First Progress Report of the Committee to Monitor and Co-ordinate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, December, 2000. (CMTF Report, 2000)

LOCAL AUTHORITY DOCUMENTS

As recommended by the 1995 Task Force Report, the Department of the Environment and Local Government produced a guideline document for Local Authorities titled Accommodation Options for Travellers, 2000. Text analysis in this Project Report will include discussion of the Traveller Accommodation Programme, 2000 – 2004 produced by each of the two counties in which the research towns were located.

PRESS COVERAGE

To preserve focus in what is a short study, analysis is limited to portrayals of Travellers in the print media, primarily the local papers. However, local press coverage reaches its readers within a broader context of portrayals of Travellers in regional and national press, so select examples from regional and national press coverage are included. To preserve participants' anonymity, the local and regional newspapers are given self-explanatory pseudonyms.

A search was undertaken of two local papers (the Atown Paper and Btown Paper) for the years 1960, 1963, 1983 and 1996. These papers were chosen for their high circulation in the regions in which the research project target towns were located. Extracts from one regional paper (the Provincial Paper), from national papers and from Dáil proceedings not included in newspaper reportage are drawn from Kenny (1997) and Helleiner (1999). News items about Travellers and coverage of issues relating to them were noted. This data was categorised according to topic and relatedness to official reports and Travellers' discourse.

As will be seen in the data analysis, key topics that preoccupied interview participants in their talk about relations with settled society and its institutions were: discrimination, accommodation, Traveller history and traditions, and education. Gender and gender relations, the other major topic, was discussed predominantly in relation to change within Travellers' own society. Therefore review of press coverage, policy development and social practice since 1960 focuses mainly on these issues.

INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Interviews with housing officials, formal and community-based education and development personnel (Traveller and settled), and gardaí were conducted face-to-face and by phone. Topics discussed were the key ones that arose in the group sessions with Travellers: Traveller identity, Traveller-settled relations, accommodation and discrimination. Service providers and Travellers portrayed the situation in their towns in very similar terms. Therefore, their discussions will not be presented or analysed separately; their observations will be noted as relevant in the detailed report of data analysis and findings.

Field Research: Registering Travellers' Experience

CHOICE OF FIELD LOCATIONS

As Travellers frequently attest at public meetings, local situations are highly diverse. This diversity is effectively obliterated if research is designed on the basis of a notion of a 'typical' town. 'Usefulness' is the appropriate yardstick (in preference to 'representativeness') for evaluating choice of locations and populations for the study of how people experience events; adding more people in additional locations can enhance the diversity of biographical detail but does not necessarily add insight into underlying forces shaping varied experiences (Potter and Wetherell, 1989). In this research project the commonality in concepts, attitudes, policies and practices underlying diverse experience is elicited through in-depth focus of two selected 'useful' towns. The towns were selected because there are key points of similarity and contrast between them in the history of local authority accommodation policy and provision for Travellers.

Atown has a small Traveller population of around sixty families in a total population of about 20,000. Local authority housing policy in this town has always aimed for dispersal of Travellers through the public housing estates. Long delays in allocating houses to Travellers had become the norm, but in the last decade the waiting period has been reduced to three years. Hitherto, many Traveller families bought out their council houses, but this process has been slowed by the new practice of selling council houses at market prices. People awaiting housing live on the halting site, and now five families per year are housed in the town. Local residents and house sellers effectively blocked off house purchase in the private sector from those Travellers who expressed interest.

Btown has a total population about 7,000, of whom 14% to 20% are Travellers. Until recent years, local authority practice was to allocate Travellers to houses in specific streets and housing estates – de facto group housing. Travellers on the housing waiting list live either with relatives or on the official halting site. The high percentage of Travellers in the population has developed since 1930, when there were a handful of Traveller families living in one road in the town. During the 1960s related families moved in from the surrounding rural areas and were housed on that road. Now only a handful of households come from the settled population. The adjacent local authority estate also became a predominantly Traveller estate. More recently, Traveller families are being placed in a second local authority estate, but they do not constitute as high a percentage of the total population there. As in Atown, some Travellers purchased houses in the private sector but met with overwhelming resistance from settled residents.

The accommodation policy statements governing these two towns will be discussed in Section 3.1 of this Project Report. Also in that section, in discussion of Travellers' experiences of accommodation policy in practice, it will be seen that variations in these policies seem to have been significant in relation to the development of Travellers' social self image and vision for the future.

Interview Population and Procedures

Participants were interviewed in groups in order to capitalise on the interactions this would generate, permit flexibility and enable more people to take part. Participation was entirely by choice: there was no on-site observation of people who might not want to be involved. Groups ranged from ten to fifteen participants. During interviews a few participants did not speak audibly, or perhaps at all, but no one was observably uninvolved. In both settings some people left early and others joined in at various stages. In Atown, two group interviews were conducted in the first round, and one in the second. In Btown, one group was interviewed in both stages. In all, about forty Travellers participated in the first round of interviews, and about thirty in the second. This thirty comprised a core cluster of the original interviewees, plus about ten new participants. Participant numbers were ample for collection of reliable 'useful' data, and the variety of Traveller experience was registered to the extent necessary for this analysis.

In both towns, reference was made to the practices and views of absent 'traditional' Travellers. In relation to gender issues, the pro-equality stance of all male participants was remarkable, given that Traveller society is only one example of the world-wide model of patriarchal society. But again, those present discussed other Travellers' practices that differed from their own. The anti-sexist discourse may have been due in part to the fact that the groups were mixed male and female, and the interviewer was female. So, data must be read bearing in mind the impact of this context (this will be discussed further in the main analysis).

Proof of the **validity** of procedures and findings in this study lies in:

- the high level of coherence between the interview data in both phases,
- the high level of explanatory power generated by analysis of the interview data and media and official texts as intersecting discourses, and
- overall coherence with findings with other research into issues affecting Travellers.

Interview Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

First-phase interviews were unstructured, with the exception of an opening question: 'what is it like to live in this town?' This open-ended question format was chosen to open up a broad range of possibilities in answering, and to allow the interviewee to direct the flow of the interview. Topics were taken up by the interviewer (M. Kenny) only when they had registered in interviewee talk. To avoid introducing interviewer bias it was decided not to ask questions directly focusing on participants' identity management, but to ascertain this indirectly by identifying how they managed their identities, as revealed in their accounts of their experience.

Tapes of these first phase interviews were transcribed, and an initial tentative analysis was done to identify themes arising. In consultation with the research managers, a feedback schema for semi-structured second phase interviews was drawn up. This schema consisted of an analytic summary of what participants had said about key themes, and the insights and issues that the researchers tentatively identified in their discussion. The interviewer presented this point by point to the groups, following the summary on each point with questions designed to encourage further analysis of the issue.
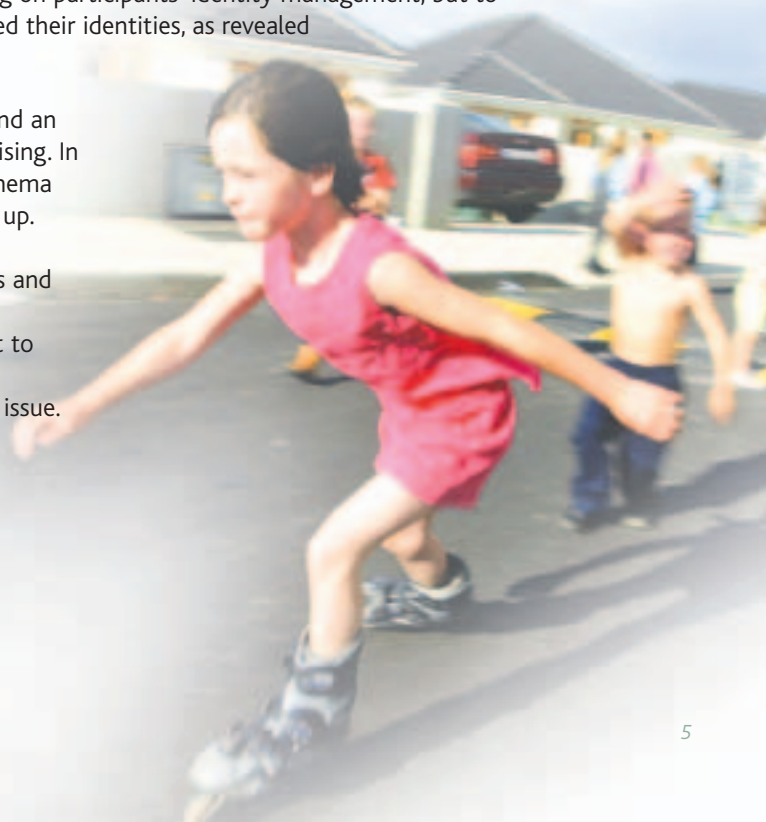
The following is an outline of the presentation of findings from the first phase, and of second-phase questions arising from these findings:

INTERVIEWER:

In the first interviews, participants in both towns discussed the same key issues: accommodation and social life in the town, education, the past, and (threaded through all these) discrimination. You also talked a lot about Traveller women's roles, and about marriage prospects for young people. You interpreted your experience in broadly similar terms, though with local variations.

SUMMARY OF FIRST-PHASE FINDINGS ON TALK ABOUT THE TOWN, ACCOMMODATION AND INTEGRATION:

You talked about your towns as nice places, with nice people. But there were contradictions:

- **Housing choice:** Everyone wanted to choose where to live, no one wanted to be crowded together. However, the authorities did not give you normal choices as to where to live; and residents blocked access to housing in both the public and private sector. Confinement in 'permitted' areas was causing problems.

- **Social exclusion:** you experienced being barred from pubs and other social venues, or being restricted to a few 'permitted' ones.

- **Second-phase question:** What explains this contradiction between nice place and bad experience?

SUMMARY OF FIRST-PHASE FINDINGS ON EDUCATION:

You have a broad view of the system, know your civil rights. You were all equally emphatic that you wanted integrated education for your children, and you reported that at this stage the schools in your town were offering this, but your young people still experience social exclusion in the town.

SECOND PHASE QUESTION:

Has further education and training played a role?

SUMMARY OF FIRST-PHASE FINDINGS ON SOCIALISING, MARRIAGE PATTERNS AND WOMEN'S ROLES:

Neither group agrees with traditional ways, though Atown participants had a strong preference for marrying outside of Traveller society, and those in Btown still mainly married within it. The role of women is changing, and women and men in both groups were very critical of male-dominated relations - something you attributed to more traditional, inward-looking Traveller groups you know. And these issues were discussed with little reference to the settled population.

SECOND PHASE QUESTION:

This seems to indicate that Travellers are actively managing change within their own society. What do you think?

SUMMARY OF FIRST-PHASE FINDINGS ON TRAVELLING:

Travel was talked about as just part of poverty and hardship. There was little or no talk about good times on the road. Some of you said discrimination completely explained your separateness and distinctive ways, that these would fade if you were accepted.

SECOND PHASE QUESTIONS:

If this was all there was to the way of life:

- What kept Travellers going? What motivated them to remain a separate group?

- What were the good times about? What are you sorry to be losing?

- Where will Travellers be in 20 years' time?

Tapes from these second-phase sessions were transcribed. Participants' discussion of points and second stage questions is presented within the full analysis in this Project Report.

Analysis of interview talk was conducted by cross-referencing from general readings to detailed coding. In the group context, it was clear from the flow of affirmative murmurs and comments when any given speaker was expressing commonly held views; it was apparent also that anyone who differed in opinion had no difficulty challenging the point being made.

Coding enabled identification of key themes and topics, and connections between them. Every topic mentioned even in passing in the discussions was registered as a code. Care was taken to register 'deviant cases' - contradictions or points of divergence in participants' talk. The codes that emerged were then clustered under general headings, to reflect connections between topics (talk about socialising and about exclusion, or about place and networking, for instance, were consistently intertwined).

Apart from the orientation implicit in the fact that participants were informed of the purpose and focus of this study, interviews were semi-structured and topics were discussed only if participants raised them. Participants began talking about their immediate experience. This led to talk about the past, their childhood, and Traveller history. As time progressed, participants increasingly intersected their talk about their experience with comments on how service provision affected them.

Theoretical Framework and Project Report Outline

Key Concepts:
Culture and Ethnicity, Discrimination and Racism

The 1963 Report described Travellers as settled people dispossessed – by early invasions, the plantations, evictions, or as a result of the Famine. By 1983 the concept of Travellers as having a distinct nomadic identity was gaining ground. The 1983 and the 1995 Government Reports and the Task Force Monitoring Committee's Progress Report (CMTF, 2000) recognise Travellers as a distinct cultural group. However, they do not identify this cultural distinctiveness as 'ethnic', nor the discrimination against them as 'racist'. This issue of terminology is significant.

It is useful to review the definition of the terms 'ethnic group' and 'racism' and their applicability to Travellers. More specifically, it is necessary to review the overlap between these terms and the terms commonly used in Irish official texts: 'distinctive culture' and 'discrimination'.

Helleiner (1996), Kenny (1997), Fanning (2002), McVeigh and Binchy (1998) assert Travellers' ethnic status in arguments substantially the same as that of O'Connell (1992):

[Travellers] regard themselves and are regarded by others as distinct; they have a long shared history; they have values, customs, lifestyle and traditions associated with nomadism; they have a language (Gammon or Cant) and express their identity in a range of arts and crafts and work practices; they adhere to a popular form of religion in the Catholic tradition… [They] share a history of oppression and discrimination. (O'Connell, 1992, p.15)

The Review Body (1983), the Task Force (1995) and the Monitoring Committee (2000) define Travellers' 'distinct culture and identity' in similar terms, but do not label this distinctiveness as ethnicity. Traveller culture has also been accorded recognition in the Equal Status Act, 2000:

"Traveller community" means the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as a people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland. (2000, Section 2 (1), p.7)

This definition of Travellers is taken from the Northern Ireland Race relations order and formed part of their definition of 'racial origin'. As a point of information this definition now applies to the Employment Equality Act, 1998. It is interesting to note that there is also a 'ground of race' as well as the 'ground of Traveller' in the two Acts. Traveller organisations had sought the inclusion of Travellers within the 'ground of racism' in this legislation, which would have acknowledged Travellers' ethnic status. However, the fact that Travellers were not included in this ground does not imply that they are not a minority ethnic group, although this regrettably appears to be the official interpretation. The advantage to Travellers being named separately is that the inequality they experience must also be considered in the work on these issues.

'Racism' is the term that scholars use to denote discrimination against Travellers. Article 1.1 of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1965) defines racism as:

Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on … national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment of exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

The Government Reports on Travellers, and legislation directed at them, identify anti-Traveller attitudes and practices categorically as 'racism' but avoid this label, choosing instead to use the term 'discrimination'. The European Parliament Committee of Enquiry on Racism and Xenophobia (1991) found that in Ireland, *'the single most discriminated against ethnic group are the Travelling People'* (cited in the Task Force Report, 1995, p. 81).

Travellers' cultural identity has not been explicitly acknowledged as 'ethnic' in Irish Government policy and legislative texts. As a result, discrimination against Travellers is not labelled 'racism', but the recognition accorded to Traveller identity and to discrimination against them is effectively the same as that denoted by the 'ethnicity'/ 'racism' terminology.

Government Reports, from the **Review Body Report** of 1983 to the most recent **Progress Report of the Monitoring Committee to Monitor and Co-ordinate the implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force** (2000), reiterate criticisms of local and even national state agencies for the consistent failure of official policy and provision to make an effective impact on the situation of Travellers, particularly in the core area of accommodation. The concept of institutional racism has relevance. In **The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry** (1999) MacPherson discusses the concept at length, and applies it to the failings of a police authority that had anti-racism policies and training programmes in place. MacPherson notes the tendency to concentrate anti-racism evaluations on planning and preparation while neglecting assessment of the outcomes, and cites the Commission for Racial Equality:

Institutional racism has been defined as those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce racist inequalities in society. If racist consequences accrue ... the institution is racist whether or not the individuals maintaining these practices have racial intentions. (CRE p. 2 cited in MacPherson, 1999, 6.30)

It could be said that this is a debate about language, and that divergence in terminology is not indicative of divergences either in the practice and experience of exclusion, or in recognition of these. However, language has power: because officialdom stops short of clearly applying the terminology of ethnicity and racism to Travellers and issues affecting them, they remain in a sort of provisional niche where they can easily become minimised or forgotten. The substance and significance of their claims to recognition, as well as assertions of exclusion, must continually be re-argued.

Theory and Terminology in this Project Report:

The terms 'racism' and 'discrimination' are both used in the main body of the analysis in this Project Report, to register the terminology that informed both the official and media texts, and the Traveller participants' discussions. This was necessary to avoid importing ideological shifts into the text under examination, but it does pose problems in that it may obscure the challenge arising from analysis of data, to dominant understandings of Travellers' identity and exclusion. 'Ethnicity/ racism' terminology is used in the general analysis.

Terms used by Travellers are adopted for referring to the two populations - 'Travellers' and 'settled people'. 'Settled society/ population' are also used. The term 'community' (except where it occurs in quotations) is not used to denote settled or Traveller populations because, though the term applies to many subsets of both, it hardly applies to either population in entirety. Settled people often use it to mark an 'us and them' boundary, and Travellers rarely use it. The researchers felt that this decision, unlike that relating to the use of the word 'discrimination', did not lead to importing meanings into text or talk.

Project Report Outline

This was a small scale but complex research project. The integrated analysis is of data from transcripts of taped interviews, and of interrelations between this data and official and media texts. Therefore the experiential order of topics in the interviews is reversed, so that the analysis starts with policy and history, and moves to participants' current experience. This serves to highlight structural issues and patterns of causation.

In Section One, the history of Traveller-settled relations leading up to Government intervention is reviewed, and the terms of reference and structure of Government-established investigative bodies are identified.

Section Two is an analysis of interrelations between conceptualisation of Travellers and of Traveller-settled relations, in Official Reports and in Travellers' experience.

Section Three addresses policy and practice, and Travellers' experience in the specific areas of accommodation, education, training, and work.

Section Four presents the evaluative summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Presentation of data. Speakers and towns will be identified by pseudonyms (for example: Winnie, Btown; Martin, Atown,). As noted above, the local and regional newspapers are also given coded titles. A series of quotes is often presented together. The quotes are usually drawn from various parts of the interview transcripts. Where a series is from a conversational interaction, this is noted in the explanatory text.

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The following research texts were drawn on in developing the conceptual and methodological framework for this Project Report:

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1.1 Historical Developments

The current phase of official concern with the situation of Travellers began with the creation of the Government Commission on Itinerancy in 1960. Its Report was published in 1963. In 1980 the Review Body was established; its Report was published in 1983. In 1995 the Task Force reported, and a Task Force Monitoring Committee, which included representatives of Traveller interest groups as well as representatives of Government Departments, was set up to oversee the implementation of its recommendations.

It launched its First Progress Report in April 2001. Thus, formal commitment to change has been flagged. This section comprises a brief review of historic developments, an examination of press coverage leading up to the creation of the 1960 Government Commission, and an examination of the structure and aims of these Government bodies. The intersecting roles of press, public opinion and official policy since 1960 will be identified, in relation to the three Government Bodies' composition, consultative capacity and terms of reference.

1.1.1 Travellers in Irish history

The history of Travellers in Ireland has been almost absorbed into the history of the Irish peasantry, but some snippets of sub-text can be found. Travellers seem to have always been recognised as a distinctive group, even if scholars or keepers of public records did not find their existence significant enough to be properly studied. The scanty recorded version of Travellers' history forms a sub-text within the history of colonisation in Ireland, but it is predominantly written from settled society's viewpoint.

Historical records indicate that there were 'tynkeres' in Ireland since at least the twelfth century; the 'Acte for tynkers and pedlers', passed in 1551, was the first law prohibiting nomadic trading 'in these islands'. Popular perception, and Travellers' own lore (Mac Gréine, 1932), variously describe them as descendants of pre-historic metal-working tribes, land-owners evicted during the invasions and Cromwellian plantations, wandering bards and scholars whose social and economic niche was wiped out in that process, or peasants displaced around the time of the Famine. The Traveller and the often-migrant peasant were linked by need and by customs of hospitality, but Travellers were essentially unwanted in traditional rural Ireland. Widespread seasonal migrations and displacement of small tenant farmers and labourers meant that:

Travellers were identifiable ... as a distinct class with distinct economic activities and social relations – notably mobile family-based households linked through ties of kinship – yet they remained relatively invisible within the larger migratory population. (Fanning 2002, p.49).

Travellers played a social and economic role, carrying news and providing entertainment, as well as tinsmithing and trading in small goods, horses and donkeys. They provided valuable labour and were therefore economically necessary, although often unwelcome. This contradictory perception of them is evident in folklore (Mac Gréine, 1932). The land reforms of the 1880s produced a new rural class of landowners, but Travellers retained their distinct roles, though with increasing strains. With new developments in transport, communications and means of production in the twentieth century, Travellers' rural roles became increasingly irrelevant and – paralleling the general population – they moved increasingly into towns and cities. The aspirations of settled people rose, and their perceptions of Travellers became more consistently negative and hostile.

1.1.2 Travellers in independent Ireland: press coverage of public concerns

In the decades since Independence, local and national press and government discourse about Travellers reveals an increasingly excluded population, whose traditional economic roles and social relations with the settled population are being eroded. Press and policy texts are closely interconnected. Both purport to document and confirm or confront relations between settled society and Travellers and the mutual perceptions that underlie these. In this review of policy and practice since 1960, the three strands – press reportage, policy texts, and the social practice they both document and help to construct – will be treated together.

Local press coverage in the last forty years carried little in the way of current affairs analysis, and, as will be seen, its coverage of Traveller affairs was more so coverage of settled people's perceptions of Travellers, and their wish to see them controlled. Reportage was often in the form of almost cryptic factual accounts of court cases. Virtually all coverage identified in the search falls under three headings: government intervention, accommodation and crime.

Helleiner (1999) argues that modern hostility was developed and promoted by property and business interests, via the local and national press and official debates. From the folkloristic harbinger of bad luck in a traditional society, Travellers became a threat to business interests such as tourism. Thus at a meeting of the City Urban District Council, a member protesting the incursion of Travellers into the city asked:

how is it that in Btown all the gypsies were done away with and put out of the town? (Provincial Paper, 9.9.22, p.5).

These concerns of stakeholders in local business and government domains filtered up to the national level: in 1939, J Dillon from Monaghan rose to

address a matter [not] raised before…itinerancy…the [cause of] acute difficulty in rural Ireland (Dáil, Dillon, 16.3.39: 2107-08).

The growing body of legislation (1939, 1943, 1948) and census taking by the gardaí (1944, 1952, 1956) indicates:

that Travellers were the targets of anti-Traveller discourse but more concretely that they were experiencing surveillance, control and harassment that was actively supported by local and national politicians well before the settlement programme. (Helleiner, p.90).

Contradictory views of Travellers were still heard even among stake holders, although this was rare: one TD lamented how Travellers' economic activities represented the degeneration from when *'they were quite useful citizens – tinsmiths and metal workers'* (Dáil, O'Donnell., 19.4.1944: 1030). More positively, in 1950 the Minister for Justice defended Travellers as

persons whose people have been on the road for centuries...[and who] have a prescriptive right to be on the road (Dáil, Mac Eoin, 22.11.1950: 1067).

The local and national press devoted a lot of attention to Travellers in the years immediately prior to the publication of the First Commission Report in 1963.

The following editorial in *The Btown Paper*, 6.6.1957 is highly critical of Travellers, many of whom 'can afford the most modern transport'. The editorial continues:

Some perform some services to the urban and rural community...collecting scrap metal... A small number fill the gap as agricultural labourers. The vast majority live on the fringe of the law through begging and such means, to the general annoyance of the people... petty thieving...Perhaps these people live according to their own code. We have their defenders who stretch the bounds of charity to the extreme limits with a lot of sentimental nonsense about the historic origins of the tinkers. Sentiment must be ruled out when these people become a public nuisance...It is time there was a ban on tinker encampments on the main highways...their wandering animals and general impedimenta add to the hazards of traffic...Unless some action is taken by the civil and legal authorities then the charity and the patience of the people in the urban and rural communities will come to a sudden and undesirable end.

A week later, this paper reports on a meeting in B County Council, under the headline: 'Tinker problem in [county]. At the meeting a member of the gardaí lamented the passing of Sergeant X, who 'took the law into his own hands, he was judge and jury, and drove the tinkers out'. The mayor said 'the tinkers have rights too'.

The Government Commission attracted local interest. The Provincial Paper (6.8.1960) asserted that '[the Commission's] aim is to help and not to curb. Its terms of reference recognise the dignity [of itinerants]'. The Atown Paper, 19.9.1960, summarised a County Council discussion on 'the problem of itinerants'. That term, and the Councillors' suggestions to resolve this 'problem' foreshadow the 1963 Report. Mr Y is reported as saying that 'a number of itinerants would always remain knights of the road'; Mr W 'disagreed with the opinion of some that the itinerants had plenty'; and Councillor X said 'the itinerants were born into tough conditions and the fittest survive and they need very little medical attention.' These Councillors' comments add up to a variant of a romantic model of Travellers - aristocratic, rich, and tough; 'whistling gypsy rovers'.

In general, coverage was hostile and revealed very little public or media awareness of Travellers' experience of appalling deprivation (CI Report, 1963). The focus of concern was on controlling them, for the sake of the comfort and progress of the dominant population. As will be seen in the examination of press coverage of incidents involving Travellers, this focus continued and remains to the fore.

1.1.3 The Media: Travellers' Experience and Evaluation

To close this section, an exchange that occurred in the Atown group interview will serve to sum up the essence of what can be said about media coverage of Travellers:

> **Martin**   I put a lot of blame on the media.
>
> **MK**   Why do the media print that [negative stories about Travellers]?
>
> **Michael**   To sell the papers! To keep the Traveller down maybe.
>
> **MK**   Why, does bad news sell more papers?
>
> *Several overlapping responses*
>   Yeah!/ Everyone likes bad news!/ Of course!
>
> **Michael**   A good few racists would enjoy writing negative stories about Travellers. When there is a negative story about Travellers, they'll put it worse than what it is. When a Traveller does something good, don't worry that won't be in the papers
>
> **MK**   Does that happen in the local papers?
>
> *Overlapping responses*
>   Oh it would/ any paper/lots of papers/any, any paper/national papers too.
>
> **Patrick**   All Travellers are the same, and that's the way.

1.2 Government Intervention

Three major Reports have been produced since 1960: **The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy** (CI, 1963), the **Report of the Travelling People Review Body** (RB, 1983), and the **Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community** (TF, 1995). The most recent official text is the **First Progress Report of the Committee to Monitor and Co-ordinate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community,** December 2000 (CMTF Report, 2000). This Report is significant in relation to this research project, as a document of current, often progressive official intent and often regressive practice. This section concludes with a review of the terms of reference of each of the bodies, and an examination of interests represented in each.

1.2.1 Aims of Policy Texts

A progression can be identified in the aims of the three Reports, paralleling developments in recognition of Travellers' identity status. There is a growing recognition of the complexity of accommodation needs as they intersect with nomadism. There is also a shift in focus in relation to addressing settled hostility, from calling on charitable good will (CI Report, 1963), to acknowledgement of individual civil rights (RB Report, 1983), to recognition of Travellers' distinct cultural identity and ensuring their statutory entitlements (TF Report, 1995, CMTF Report, 2000).

The 1963 Commission on Itinerancy states its aims (CI Report, p.11):

1. To enquire into the problem arising from the presence in the country of itinerants in considerable numbers;

3. ...to provide a better way of life for itinerants...; to promote their absorption into the general community

The Review Body, in its 'terms of reference', reversed the order of priority in the 1963 Report's statement of aims, and variety in accommodation is more positively endorsed. Additionally, settled people's attitudes are overtly recognised in the Review Body's aims (p.15):

To provide...a house for all...who desire [it]...serviced sites...to allow [those who wish, to travel] with such dignity and comfort as it allows.

To reduce...hostility to travellers...by identifying the causes...and dealing with them and by a programme of public education

The 1995 Task Force 'terms of reference' (p.10) include:

2. To make recommendations...to ensure that appropriate and co-ordinated planning is undertaken at national and local level in the areas of Housing, Health, Education, Employment, Cultural and anti-discrimination...

6. To analyse nomadism in modern Irish society and to explore ways whereby mutual understanding and respect can be developed between the Travelling community and the settled community.

The substantive provisions of this Report are effectively within the framework of ethnicity theory, and informed by principles of anti-discrimination, equal access and affirmative action. Its main accommodation recommendations, as will be seen in the next section, were substantially informed by a perception of the nomadic tradition as valid; and it asserted Travellers' right as citizens to live where they chose. However, in Aim 2 above the use of the word 'housing' rather than 'accommodation' indicates bias in favour of settled-society accommodation assumptions. This bias is evident in contradictions in emphasis and priorities in the main body of the Report, culminating in a dissenting Addendum (Task Force Report, 1995, p.302) which re-echoes the terms of the 1963 Commission Report.

In its introduction, the Progress Report (2000) highlights the rhetoric-reality gap, at least in part a product of the gap between effective old concepts and unaccepted new ones:

Life as a Traveller - the Reality

Five years after the publication of the Task Force Report, there is a lack of real improvement on the ground. This and the daily reality of discrimination makes it very difficult for a large section of the Traveller community to have faith in the promises contained within [its] recommendations...[the lack of progress] raises very serious questions both at home and abroad of our society and why we have been unable to make significant improvements in the quality of life for the Traveller community. (CMTF Report 2000, p.8)

It goes on to identify key obstacles: lack of data to enable planning and monitoring, and the '*difficulty of translating policy into action*' in relation to local authority accommodation practice. It notes a key conceptual difficulty informing these blocks to local action:

A considerable amount of work remains to be done to ensure that the importance of recognising the distinct culture and identity of the Traveller community, as being central to the recommendations of the Report of the Task Force, is fully understood...

The distinct culture and identity of the Traveller community is a central issue to Travellers and should receive proper recognition. It is not fully understood and accepted by all officials and elected representatives at local level who are responsible for the implementation of many of the Task Force recommendations. (CMTF Report 2000, pp.8, 11)

In sum, the progression from one Government Report to the next reflects pressure for minority rights, and the response has been one of rather uncomfortable augmentation of the original, relatively simple interpretations and 'solutions'. The result is that now the range of interpretations of Traveller issues and of responses to them has become broader, and incorporates more contradictions and divergences over the years. As will be seen in this study, these fractures are reflected in press coverage.

1.2.2 Representation and Consultation

Different Government Departments have been chosen to oversee the preparation and monitoring of the key Reports. Although every committee was interdepartmental in composition and in its areas of focus, the changes in 'location' are perhaps indicative of shifts in conceptual and policy priorities. The 1963 Commission was set up under the aegis of the Department of Social Welfare - reflecting a primary perception of Travellers as destitute. The 1983 Review Body was under the aegis of the Department of Health - indicative of a primary concern with accommodation as associated with personal/family health and welfare. The 1995 Task Force and the current Task Force Monitoring Committee are under the aegis of the then Department of Equality and Law Reform – suggesting a commitment to issues of equality and diversity in all the areas of concern. However, as will be seen, there are internal contradictions in priorities and perceptions in these Reports.

Representation and consultation have been issues in all committees, and again the developments over time are significant.

The First Commission comprised ten members, representing the law, agriculture, the Churches, local government and health officials, and the Department of Education. Travellers were not represented in its ranks, nor were they formally consulted:

The Commission met one Traveller group, and decided not to do it again because the group tended 'to leave most of the discussion to be conducted by their spokesman'
(CI Report, 1963, p. 30).

The Commission decided instead to call unannounced on family units, thus effectively privatising consultation with Travellers. The delegation was an indicator that at least some Travellers were anxious to be actively involved in their own affairs; the Provincial Paper (15.4.1961) also reports the protests of a Lawrence Ward, a Traveller who was ready to lead a movement against confining Travellers to any 'reservation' or 'concentration camp'. However, there is no commentary on the contradiction between official practice and desire of these Travellers to be involved.

In 1980, the Review Body's twenty-three members included, in addition to the above interests, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, tenants' associations, the Departments of Labour and the Environment, social workers, and three Traveller and seven settled representatives of the National Council for Travelling People.

On the Task Force there were eighteen members and a team of eight substitutes. Three members and four substitutes were Travellers, representatives of Pavee Point, the Irish Traveller Movement, and the National Federation of Irish Travellers. One settled member and two substitutes also represented these organisations, and one represented the National Association of Traveller Training Centres. The other twelve members and four substitutes represented relevant Government Departments and social services, and the Roman Catholic church. Similar Traveller representation levels are maintained in the current Monitoring Committee.

2.1 Conceptualising Travellers

As study of specific provisions and public attitudes will demonstrate, how Travellers are conceptualised is the core issue in relation to policy development and community relations. Therefore, the aim of this first section is to identify developments in the conceptions of Travellers in official texts and press reportage, and how these relate to how Travellers talk about themselves.

2.1.1 Policy Texts:
Who are the Travellers?
Identity, History and Culture

The 1963 Commission briefly remarked on Travellers' group identity, name and origins. They were not an ethnic group; to avoid the pejorative label 'tinker', the Commission adopted 'itinerant', a term with roots in criminal law, commonly used in public debate. The term 'travelling' is used interchangeably with the criminal terms 'persistently wandering' or 'vagrant', and this movement was depicted as both enforced by, and compounding, poverty. Their origins were attributed to evictions and famine in the last few centuries. This reflects modernising settled society's hostility to Travellers and their traditions. The notion that Travellers became nomadic as a result of past hardship served only to validate a 'resettlement' program. In fact, the Commission appeared to wholeheartedly believe that Travellers would like to settle if given the chance, and made only a minimal attempt to propose forms of accommodation that would allow Travellers to maintain their nomadic ways.

By 1983, a theoretical shift in official construction of Traveller identity had occurred. After the publication of the 1963 Report, public discussion was marked by an uneasy relationship between terminologies of deviance and disadvantage in relation to Travellers (see media analysis). However, Fanning (2002) argues that the failure of assimilation policies led to some acceptance of Travellers' group identity. The 1983 Review Body Report states that:

The Review Body [defines travellers as a group] identified both by themselves and by other(s)…as people with their own distinctive lifestyle, traditionally of a nomadic nature but not now habitual wanderers. They have needs, wants and values that are different in some ways from those of the settled community…They call themselves "travellers" or "travelling people" and prefer to be known as such. (RB, pp. 5-6)

As the 1980s progressed, talk of civil rights and group identity developed further. The 1995 Task Force Report set its framework for discussing issues relating to Travellers by providing a sociological definition of Travellers' group status. 'Visible manifestations' of Traveller culture are identified in this Report, such as nomadism, extended family structure, and economic organisation (pp.74-80). Recognition of identity is asserted as a human right, 'vital to everybody and equal to physical needs and wants' (p.77). The principle of respect for nomadism is reiterated in every section. The Task Force did not use the terms 'ethnicity' and 'racism' except where they appear in quotations. Although the same realities are denoted in discussions of Travellers' cultural distinctiveness and anti-Traveller discrimination, this significantly affects the power of the Task Force Report (see discussion of terminology in the Introduction to this Project Report).

Social life *within* Traveller society was not addressed in any of the Reports, though the Task Force registers the significance of Travellers' musical and linguistic heritage. It notes that:

The recognition of Travellers' culture and identity has an importance for Travellers and their status in Irish society. Identity and belonging is vital to everybody and is equal to physical wants and needs… (TF Report, 1995, p. 77)

As data from the interviews with Travellers will indicate, this is an issue that has been ignored, or at least problematically addressed, in official policy and practice. Such oversight and inappropriate responses amount to anti-Traveller racism. The monitoring Committee (CMTF Report, 2000) advocates monitoring the use of the *Equal Status Act 2000 and the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989* to ensure their strength as protectors of Travellers' human rights (CMTF Report, p.12). It specifically mentions the need to monitor media treatment of Traveller issues.

Another area which received scant attention in the earlier Reports was gender. This has proven to be one of the key sites of potential change in Traveller society. In 1963, the Commission noted that *'women itinerants'* preferred fields to road verges for camping, for *'the additional safety provided for their children'* (CI Report, 1963, p.52). It also found that the women were healthier than the men, *'possibly because they, with the children, are collectors of food and…better and more regularly fed'* (p.46). It treated begging, a core economic contribution managed by women, merely as a criminal problem (pp.90-92). It noted the prevalence of arranged, close-kin marriages, and marriage at a very young age among Travellers (pp.88-90), but did not discuss the significant implications this issue has for women's health and life options, particularly when combined with cultural options for large families. The role of women was not discussed any further until the 1995 Task Force Report, which noted that

Traveller women have played particular and significant leadership roles within their own community, and representing their own community. (TF Report, 1995, p.282)

The Task Force Report recognises that women require culturally appropriate supports in relation to child care and to domestic violence. Traveller women also have particular positions in relation to nomadism and accommodation because of their specific roles in reproduction and home management: their concerns for family members' well-being can be expected to strongly inform their articulation of accommodation preferences (Crickley, 1992). Although the Task Force did not tease out the implications of these points for social policy and provision (Helleiner, 1998), it did facilitate developments: the Monitoring Committee (CMTF, 2000) notes the work of the National Traveller Women's Forum, and the growing awareness of the need to address Traveller-specific aspects of issues such as violence against women and childcare support. As will be seen in the discussions with Traveller participants in this research project, many Travellers are making substantial changes to their practices in relation to gender roles and marriage.
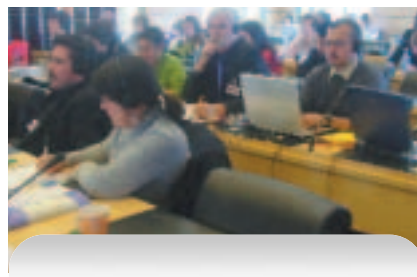
2.1.2 Travellers' Historic Experience and Cultural Knowledge

This section is a review of interview discussion of key topics that arose in relation to how participants saw themselves, their past and their future as Travellers. It opens with a review of their remembrance of their history, but it is important to note that this topic was only elaborated on after repeated queries in the second-stage interviews. The significance of this will be discussed in the evaluative summary.

2.1.2.1 THE PAST

Participants did not readily talk about the past as positive. In the first round of interviews, elements of the old life such as travel and camping were referred to as markers of a former persecution, ignorance and poverty that they were glad to be finished with, as the following interchange between two participants in the Atown group illustrates:

> **Michael** Some guard came and kicked over the fire, the tent and that. They wouldn't get away with it now. Bring them to court. You can't just force their way in.
>
> **Mary** I don't think the Travellers had the knowledge or the understanding then. The guards had the authority and that was it. They were the upper, Travellers the lower, the Travellers wouldn't answer back, it was always 'sir' [various assenting voices: mmm/ yes], 'sir' all the time. Or 'yes guard' - give them a title, 'guard' or 'sir'.

In the second round, when pressed as to how Travellers in the past had survived, and what had kept them together as a people, reminiscences began to flow. Despite evidence of hardship, the articulation of these memories demonstrated a quiet pride in survival:

> **Kathleen, Btown:**
>
> I often wonder how did the mother survive? You could be asking the wrong people here, us that's a generation settled, I'm forty three, I've probably been settled forty years, we wouldn't know it... I remember going begging with her, though I was ashamed, young and ashamed but, my mother was asking and she did get it.
>
> **Maggie, Btown:**
>
> Stick one end of the wattle in the ground, bend them over. You'd hear them saying such a one was offered a house and wouldn't take it, in our times all we had was the wattle and we had to bend it over, sometimes you hadn't the strength to bend it over ha! You'd be that sick or that cold haha!

The next two speakers were from a family group who felt that other Travellers saw them as having almost become settled people. Yet theirs were the most vivid remembrances of treasured moments. Perhaps they had achieved enough economic and personal freedom to value the past. Alternatively, perhaps being considered 'settled' had resulted in an acutely fragile sense of identity, so that they embraced these memories as a means of privately reinforcing their Traveller identity. Participants in the Atown group began to reminisce, as the following exchange indicates:

> **Mary**   When we went to X [in a caravan recently], when we'd light the fires, the smell of sticks, it made me think what it must have been like years ago. We're in houses now, but we still go out and light a fire. Lovely. The dark evenings years ago, it must have been lovely. The comfort and companionship, getting along in five to ten families, everyone pulling together, sharing what they got. The older people must miss that.
>
> **Nellie**   Other Travellers would laugh at us for having those ideas, for enjoying it. Enjoying frying in open.
>
> **Winnie**   But it is nice.
>
> **Michael**   I have good memories of eight years of going to the markets. Staying wherever you were going. Remember hill in X? [stories follow about escapades and accidents].

Vestiges of past traditions were still evident: the interviewees lit fires outside occasionally, and went camping for holidays. Although they felt that 'other Travellers would laugh' in scorn, the memories were good:

> **Michael, Atown:**
> The comfort, describing what you did today, swapping tips. Singing songs..The longing is always there, good thoughts about it. I remember the road on the way to Y, there was a wagon and I was behind it, no shoes and avoiding the bubbles in the tar. I was only three or four years old that time. The thoughts of those good times, that's one of them, walking behind the wagon on a sunny day with the dog loose.

Finding 'comfort' with one's own was a recurring theme in the discussions in both groups, as will be seen in interview discussions of discrimination.

Others remembered fireside story sessions and having musical abilities that some settled musicians valued, and expressed disappointment that these forms of entertainment were dwindling in the modern age:

> **Kathleen, Btown:**
> I remember gathering together, talking about old times, telling ghost stories, being afraid of the ghost stories. It's all dead now among Travellers, now it's all the same – the pub, TV. Exactly same as for the settled people.
>
> **Maggie, Btown:**
> Delia Murphy got a lot of songs from Travellers not far from here. X used to go round the fairs, got a few bob for singing. Pity it wasn't recorded. Anyone that could sing, sang their own songs and got a few bob. And they sold the penny sheets. They did that around here.
>
> **Michael, Atown:**
> Now my children are into Boyzone and that … The people here like Country and Western.

These quotes hint at some of the negative implications of assimilation policy and modern life in general. Exposed to the practices and pressure of settled society, the distinctive traditions of Traveller life dissipate. However there was some evidence of traditions being preserved and passed on:

> **Maggie, Btown:**
>
> *Gammon dying? No way! I'm passing it on to my niece, I'd talk Gammon and she'd understand what I say.*

When the interviewer picked up on a comment that Travellers' health was better in the old days, the reply was:

> **Winnie, Btown:**
>
> *It doesn't sound like it but it was healthier, no one was sick, or not as much. An awful lot of young Travellers are dying now, then you wouldn't hear of it. Heart disease - then it wasn't known.*

This statement is not entirely factually correct. Heart disease, accidental road deaths and drug use are probably on the increase among Travellers as among the general population. However, Traveller children's health in the past was seriously affected by campsite living conditions: Traveller infant mortality rates in 1960 were seven times the national average, their child mortality rates were also well above the national average, and their Traveller life expectancy was thirty years (CI Report, 1963). Winnie's statement is more about a quality of life, reflecting a sense that Travellers have lost something healthy with the demise of old ways, the passing of life on the road.

Many Travellers (and some settled service providers) asserted that in 'the old days' relations between Traveller and settled people were much better than today:

> **Patrick, Atown:**
>
> *In the past there were an awful lot of similarities between Travellers and settled. Even the basic few wants, they depended on each other. Travellers brought news, they had a night out. But changes are happening, the old traditions are gone.*

> **Mary, Btown:**
>
> *When we were children we didn't have a problem [with settled neighbours]. They knew our parents, we got on well, we knew one another, we liked one another. They weren't putting you down or anything. They'd talk their problems with you, women together.*

It should be noted that the scenario these speakers painted was one of common poverty in the traditional rural small-holding or town tenement setting. Helleiner's and Fanning's analysis suggest that more reciprocal relations did exist at these levels, but at the same time the Travellers' identity was never forgotten, and they were ultimately undesirable in the settled community. From the settled perspective, inter-community relations were helped by Travellers' mobility, forced or voluntary, because it removed conflicts that arose. As one service provider described it to the interviewer in this project, caravans arriving in town would be welcomed for their novelty and colour, but after a while irritation with begging and disorder set in and the guards would send them off.

However, good relations with settled neighbours were accompanied by inferiorisation, ignorance of Traveller rights and denial of their status as human beings. Travellers were not granted the same opportunities or treatment as settled people, as noted in the first quotations in this section, and in comments such as:

> *Martin, Btown:*
>
> *Our parents didn't know how to read and write, they couldn't push us, but now it's different. I'll make sure my kids will learn.*
>
> *Patrick, Atown:*
>
> *The years have changed people. Travellers now are not like in the '60s. They've got more schooling, a bit of understanding. We don't travel around as much. Tinsmithing was the way they got a living. They couldn't get a job, they had no education.*

The interviews reveal a complex state of affairs: life, and the relationship between Travellers and settled people, was both better and worse in the past. Relations with authorities were extremely oppressive, but as noted, it is likely that relationships between the often-migrant peasants and the Travellers were cordial in traditional 'poor areas' of town and country. Changing relationships are also a result of changing cultural practices. Neither Traveller nor settled culture is static, and shifting priorities and beliefs impact Traveller-settled relations. Formerly cordial relationships began to change as early as the 1920s, as will be seen in the next section.

2.1.2.2 IDENTITY, NETWORKING AND PLACE

Though travel as such was generally agreed to be slipping into the past, the extended family network ('a comfort zone') remains strong:

> *Paddy, Btown:*
>
> *For me it's the family, the extended family, respecting the traditions, singing, looking out for each other, history, crafts. But I don't know what it'd be like to live on the side of the road, that doesn't appeal to me at all...But there's more to being a Traveller. More than where you live or how you speak or how you dress, it's something in there, something in the back of my mind, I can't explain it.*
>
> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *I think it's a common identity, a comfort zone as well, people are comfortable within a certain situation. In England, if you're Irish — it's the same thing.*

Participants displayed strong allegiance to family networks, and considered this to be much more significant than allegiance to place.

> **Maggie, Btown:**
>
> *I was born in Btown, so I'm a Btown Traveller! ...It isn't so much the town I'd be bothered about, it's just where my family are. If you think about it nearly everyone in Btown is related.*

Statistically, Travellers do not constitute 'nearly everyone in Btown', but for this speaker they were the population that mattered. As the next speaker indicates, these linkages have an economic base:

> **Bridgie, Atown:**
>
> *Our connections would be basically the whole Traveller community regardless of where. That'd be more important than Atown. Because that's how you make a living – it's who you know and your own family.*

Racism profoundly informs relations with the local population, and inevitably intensifies internal links, as the next exchange among Atown participants reveals:

> **Michael:** *You see an article in a newspaper, you're able to read it [voices chorusing agreement: yeah/yeah]. If there's anything bad about Travellers, they'll report it. But anything good, they won't do it.*
>
> **Mary:** *And they'll always hype it up a bit worse than what it was.*
>
> **John:** *I was allocated a house two weeks ago, I was due to sign but I couldn't get to sign because the people in the area went against me. I'm living about eighty yards away from them, there's a three foot wall separating us, we've always got on, I could go into the shop and it was how are you, all that. These are the people going against me...They won't let me in because a Traveller family in that house fourteen years ago caused trouble...We have a good relationship with these people...A great relationship while we're behind the wall. The higher the wall the better the relationship! Two foot high, we've a bad relationship. If it was forty foot... If the wall is gone, you have a problem. They have nothing against me, they have it against other families. But I'm being put down for it, they're gone away.*
>
> **Thomas:** *Because in the end of the day you go home to your own little space.*
>
> **Various voices overlapping:**
> */exactly/ yeah/ go away from them/*

John's experience highlights the major obstacles that Travellers face in contemporary Irish society. Despite friendly relations with his settled neighbours, they actively attempt to block his move into a house. Instead of seeing John as an individual, the settled residents lump him into the category of 'Traveller' and project onto him the prejudiced characterisations that accompany this label. John is penalised on the basis of his identity. The cornerstone of assimilation policy, which is the placement of Travellers into homes within settled areas, is impossible to implement when such discriminatory exclusion is practiced. This opposition forces Travellers into Traveller-only spaces, and does not facilitate integration.

2.1.2.3 MARRIAGE AND GENDER ROLES

A key site of change in Travellers' internal social lives is management of gender roles and relationships. For some participants, this had implications for where they wished to locate themselves in wider society. Interviewees in both towns spoke in very similar terms about gender roles, but they diverged somewhat in their discussion of preferred marriage partners. All argued strongly against arranged marriages, while attesting that some Traveller families in their town still followed this tradition. However one group's preference was for seeing their children 'marry out' to settled partners, while in the other, this was not expected nor particularly sought. All were in accord on one basic issue: the need for freedom of choice. It is likely that a detailed survey of marriage practices would reveal similar diversity in both towns.

Tradition and modernity are in clear contrast in this exchange among Atown participants:

> *Mary:* *My parents were more open. We were let pick our own…They didn't want us reared up as they were reared up, don't talk to boys, don't go here, don't go there, let girls do the cooking, the cleaning. They weren't like that, they tried to give us our freedom.*
>
> *Nora:* *That's not the attitude with all Travellers. We were never tied down, we were let go to discos. We had to be home at a certain time, but we could wear make up, mini skirts – back in the 60's!*
>
> *Mary:* *I don't think most of the young Travellers would be allowed to do like ours.*
>
> *Kathleen:* *They look down on our kids, 'oh you're very common'.*

In discussing who they would like to see their daughter marry, this group linked the capacity to respect women with being a member of settled society, or at least being a 'settled' Traveller:

> *Mary:* *[my daughter would] have more of a life married to a settled person.*
>
> *Michael:* *It depends on what stage the Traveller is at. If he's been settled as well all his life.*
>
> *Mary:* *He'd want to have the same attitude as her, let her go out.*
>
> *Michael:* *Not 'she's my woman etc', have the tea ready when I come in haha!*

Implicit in Michael's first statement above is the idea that 'settling' means more than just an accommodation preference and/or improvement in living conditions: it also denotes progress in values and practices. This attitude constitutes a denigration of Traveller life and culture. These respondents believe that marriage to a Traveller male will reduce the quality of life that a Traveller woman will experience. Here, the Traveller male is characterised as controlling and misogynistic.

Speakers were critical of what they saw as traditional gender relations among some Travellers and they felt that their own people rejected them for not maintaining these:

> *Michael:* *The women sitting here, the men over there. That's stupid. Even our own relations do that and my wife doesn't like it.*
>
> *Kathleen:* *They must think we're real fools, the husbands and wives always stuck together.*

Unsurprisingly, as with all populations, division within the Traveller population is evident. However, Travellers who are critical of Traveller customs can face condemnation from other Travellers for 'abandoning' traditional ways.

Travellers are also confronted with the critical gaze of settled people and the assumptions informing this gaze:

> **Martin:** *My father-in-law wasn't happy when we got married because I was Traveller. He asked K did she know what she was getting into, we'd different ways of going on. It took me years to prove to the man that I was going to work, get a home and look after K. I don't think he even knew himself what he was talking about.*

K's father had little confidence in Martin because of his Traveller identity. He thought that the cultural differences between settled people and Travellers were too great for the marriage to succeed. It took Martin several years to challenge his father-in-law's irrational views and prove that his ethnic identity did not preclude him from supporting his wife, financially and emotionally.

Btown participants were closer to traditional practices or perhaps still placed more value on them:

> **Maggie:** *I think they're old fashioned enough to talk up for themselves now, to say if they wanted to marry the boy or girl, they know what they're doing. You wouldn't want to push them where they don't want to go either. But mind you a lot of marriages worked out well when they were matched years ago didn't they?*
>
> **Bridie:** *In the last few years there's a lot of Travellers breaking up, where fifteen years ago you wouldn't have heard tell of it at all. But when they start living, mixing, the whole lot, a lot of them change their outlook, change a lot of things.*

Change has come through 'living, mixing' with settled people which, as the talk in the interviews reveals, is precipitated by mixed housing, schools, exposure to the media, and to a lesser extent contact in social and work venues. Caught between two worlds, the Travellers in this sample tended to view settled practices as superior to Traveller practices. One possible reason for this is the constant disparagement that Traveller culture experiences in the mainstream world. Traveller culture receives little public validation outside of Traveller circles, and it can be difficult to take pride in a culture that receives relentless criticism. The internalisation of negative attitudes is a common outcome of the experience of racism.

The desire for acceptance from the settled residents in town may be another reason for a renouncement of Traveller ways. Some may feel that an open rejection of practices typically associated with Travellers may ease their relations with the settled population, and consequently improve their quality of life within the town.

Finally, exposure to new ideas often causes one to re-evaluate one's cultural traditions. Further education and training programmes, particularly those for women, were cited by participants as a key source of ideas for change (see Section 3.2). Engagement with such programmes has encouraged young Travellers to look for more freedom:

> **Margaret, Atown:**
> *Within the Traveller community the girls are supervised. They're only allowed visit a friend. To be allowed up town, doesn't happen. The young ones see that as a constraint.*

It is not only 'the young ones' who expect more: in general, women's expectations have changed:

> **Winnie, Btown:**
> *Women years ago took what they got. If they got a hiding, you're gone from your family and that's it. Now they stand up for themselves, if they do get a beating they go to the guards and it's sorted out. They're not as low down as they used to be, they've more esteem now for themselves.*

As will be seen in the next Section, participants found that in women's development groups they became aware of the empowering value of community-based and informal education. The discussion of 'absent' female Travellers suggests a great need for further opportunities in this regard.

When discussing how young people should choose partners, participants in both towns talked with energy about how they wanted to see male-female relations among Travellers become more egalitarian than they believed they had been in the past, or than they believed their traditional Traveller acquaintances wanted. Residents of both towns strongly rejected the traditional practice of match-making. However, as noted in the Introduction to this Project Report, the groups were mixed male and female. Though much of the participants' talk has an energy and particularity that reflects lived experience, statements of principle may owe as much to the common human wish to be heard voicing approved positions as it may to the speaker's actual situation.

There were significant differences between the groups. Participants in Atown tended to link their desire for egalitarian male-female relations to what they construed as a difference between Traveller and settled practice; they hoped young people would find settled partners. Participants in Btown seemed to be realigning cultural practices in a very 'autonomous' way: they discussed the changes as desirable for themselves and their people, without reference to how this might help acceptance by settled society, and they hoped their children would find egalitarian relationships with Traveller partners. This divergence may be due to differences in the history of accommodation location: Atown's history is of mixed housing, Btown's is of separate housing. For Atown residents, marrying outside of the Traveller group may be seen as a way to further cement their status as 'settled' and gain complete acceptance into settled society. Such acceptance is likely more important for Atown residents, considering that they live in closer proximity to settled people than do the residents of Btown. The fact that Btown residents live in areas that are predominantly populated by Travellers makes it easier to resist exposure to settled ways, and maintain pride in Traveller culture. Issues for community development initiatives, arising from Travellers' and settled society's conceptualisation of Travellers' ethnic identity will be discussed in the next Section.

2.2 Conceptualising Travellers and Settled Society

Racism is the unifying theme running through data analysed in this section. In the survey of policy texts below, it will emerge that all Government Reports identify settled hostility to Travellers as the chief stumbling block to achieving their respective aims.

Examination of press coverage will show that Travellers are predominantly featured as petty criminals, in reports of court proceedings or of incidents involving disturbances of the peace. A much smaller portion of the reportage was devoted to Travellers as people in distress, and very little to Travellers as citizens.

Participants in this research project were acutely aware of racism against them, but used the more generalised term 'discrimination'. Travellers have had to manage their everyday lives under settled society's hostile gaze, and have been forced to develop strategies and alter their life plans to cope with this.

2.2.1 Policy Texts: Settled Society and Travellers

The 1963 Commission Report noted that Travellers

...are not antagonistic to the settled population although they tend to...keep to themselves, possibly from experience ...of the low regard in which they are held (p. 84).

It was strongly critical of settled people' attitudes (pp. 102-105). To sum up:

itinerants are despised as inferior and are regarded as the dregs of society...[Their] plight ... has not troubled the public conscience to any degree.

Even if they move into houses, many are *'still, often scornfully, known as "tinkers", even in succeeding generations'* (p.103).

However, though the attitudes of the dominant population are criticised, their concerns shape discussion of more effective sanctions for *'persistent wandering'* (pp. 56-57), begging, criminal offences and trespass (ibid., pp. 90-101). The balance of moral worth is with the majority, and the victim is to blame:

The attitude of most of the settled population is largely conditioned by the behaviour pattern which by experience or hearsay has come to be regarded as the norm for itinerants... (ibid., p. 103)

The normal kindly feelings of the people...will once again predominate when the immediate pressure of the itinerants' wrongdoing has been relieved or at least, substantially reduced. (ibid., pp. 102, 104)

This Report, echoing concerns prevalent in press reportage of the time, devoted a chapter to the issue of Travellers and crime - mainly petty crime and illegal activities incidental to their *'way of life'* (such as trespass and failure to control wandering animals). In the 1983 Report, coverage of the issue of Traveller involvement in crime was substantially reduced, and reduced further in the 1995 Task Force Report and the Monitoring Committee (CMTF, 2000). In these Reports the link between exclusion and crime was reiterated.

The 1963 Commission was a priori committed to a policy of settlement and absorption. However, though the Report echoes themes and terms current in press and local authority debates (discussed above), its policies were more than a response to local conflicts about Travellers. They were part of a larger national political project, defined in the First Programme for Economic Expansion (Helleiner, 1995). The Commission states that

...for both social and economic reasons it is clearly undesirable that a section of the population should be isolated... a closed separate community... which will become increasingly inferior to the national population and from which it will become increasingly difficult to escape (CI Report, 1963, p. 104).

The Commission's social concerns are ambiguously intertwined with economic issues: either the Travellers will find it difficult to escape from inferiority, or the national population will find it difficult to escape the burden; and so progress is impeded.

The 1983 Review Body Report progresses to identifying and refuting stereotyping of Travellers which it identifies in the 1963 Report. However, primary emphasis in relation to reducing settled-Traveller hostility is placed on informing and persuading settled people, in terms that emphasise their own interests, to drop their negative attitudes and accept Travellers' right to accommodation. The Report advocates to promoting inter-group communication to allay fears, and enabling Travellers to learn their civil rights.

The 1995 Task Force Report identifies negative factors influencing Traveller-settled relations: lack of contact, social exclusion, inadequate appropriate accommodation (fixed and mobile), and 'incidents of inappropriate behaviour' (p. 62). It identifies as the a priori basis for 'any strategy for reconciliation' that statutory authorities provide:

...sufficient resources to uphold the rights of Travellers as citizens ... good living conditions and a permanent base which gives Travellers the opportunity to avail of ...statutory services. (TF Report, 1995, p. 64)

It argues the need to ensure positive intercultural contact, and to resolve conflict with the settled community (the term 'Settled' is capitalised and placed in inverted commas throughout). In a section on discrimination, the 1995 Report also addresses settled personal and institutional prejudice. It calls for application of principles laid down in international documents, such as the Report of the European Parliament Committee of Enquiry on Racism and Xenophobia (1991), which found that in Ireland, *'the single most discriminated against ethnic group are the Travelling People'* (cited by the Task Force, 1995, p. 81). The Monitoring Committee (CMTF, 2000) outlines the body of anti-discrimination legislation passed since 1995, and notes that though law on its own will not end racism, it is useful and must be monitored for its effectiveness. It also notes the development of the Pavee Point mediation service (as will be seen below, mediation services were used by Traveller and local authority stakeholders in Btown).

2.2.2 Access to Social Venues

In all the Reports, it was found that Travellers did not have normal access to public social activities such as sports and entertainment. The 1963 Commission found that:

[Itinerants'] life is barren of those forms of relaxation such as...outdoor sports...No indoor pastime... save the cinema is available to them. Boisterous gatherings with excessive consumption of alcoholic drink constitute one of the few pastimes available to them and it is not surprising that so many of these gatherings end in conflict. In the last century...many of the poorer sections of the settled population found themselves in a similar situation... most itinerants are neither sufficiently conscious of nor sufficiently dissatisfied with their present way of life and its standards to do anything about it. (CI Report, 1963, p. 87)

However, it is important to note that this commentary refers to Travellers' participation in public sporting and recreational activities; as demonstrated in the discussion of 'old times' in the previous section, Travellers did have a tradition of group entertainment, which, as noted in the 1995 Report, should be researched and developed.

The 1983 Review Body Report noted the impact on Travellers' self-esteem of such exclusion from social venues such as public houses, hotels, restaurants and cinemas (p.102). It recommended development of youth and community services which would foster involvement in sports, recreation and social activities (p.70). The 1995 Task Force Report asserts Travellers' right of access to 'sport and other recreational activities, cultural initiatives and the arts' (p.299). The Monitoring Committee welcomes the strategy of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, to target 'disadvantaged communities', but states its belief that:

...the particular needs of Travellers can only be effectively addressed when they are specifically reflected in the strategy and it should not be assumed that Travellers' needs will be addressed by simply locating them under the disadvantage category.
(CMTF Report, 2000, p.83)

This Report argues that Travellers, in entertainment and recreation as in other domains, must be specifically targeted to ensure that they are not excluded even by oversight, and to ensure that their locational inclusion is not assimilation by oversight, which results in de facto exclusion.

2.2.3 Travellers in the Press

Travellers appear in press coverage predominantly as criminals, but occasionally they feature also as needy, deprived, and tragic figures, and as objects of official intervention programmes. More recently, some coverage of Travellers as civic actors can be found.

Throughout the period from 1963 to the mid 1990s, coverage of events involving Travellers in the two local papers was rare and erratic. It also was predominantly devoted to Traveller involvement in petty crime, and the terms 'tinker', 'itinerant' and 'Traveller' were prevalent. In *The Btown Paper,* 23.3.1963, a report headed *'X had a private squabble in public house'* states that three *'members of this family appear in court'*. Variants of the *'family' phrase - 'famed clan', 'tinker clan',* etc., - were common in such reports in this paper at the time. Hostile coverage continued through the years. A headline in *The Btown Paper,* 28.5.1983 reads: *'Armada of Itinerant traders coming'*. However, particularly after the publication of the 1995 Task Force Report, identification of individuals as Traveller almost ceased, though surnames and addresses would suffice as identifiers for a local readership. Negative coverage continues. Even in this context, naming group identity can be in Travellers' favour. *'Community disgusted by scenes of violence'* is one headline in *The Btown Paper,* 8.6.1996, and near it is another, *'Traveller [Representative] condemns incident'*. The second item indicates that Travellers shared the 'community' disgust - but it is unclear if they were included in, or considered separate from, the Btown community.

On local news stands, the major papers may well have filled the gap in relation to coverage of Traveller issues, as pressure to comply with Government policy intensified hostility. This was reflected in correspondence and reportage, even in 'serious' national daily papers:

They must be taught to live like everyone else, how to wash and dress their children, how to shop, cook and budget. This is the only way they can have sufficient outward respect to be accepted in a residential area...No one wants them for neighbours, but surely it is easier to change a few thousand itinerants to comply than to change the three million.
(Letter to the Irish Times, 17.2.1970)

A...member of X Urban District Council suggested at a meeting of the Council that itinerants should be sterilised and sent to the Aran Islands. 'I don't give a sugar for making this statement, for they are outcasts...There are too many do-gooders in this room keeping them around the town'. (Irish Times, 13.12.1971)

National papers have the resources to engage in substantial current affairs coverage and analysis, both hostile and sympathetic to Travellers, of a kind not possible for the local press. In the search through the two local papers for this study, nothing as virulent was found as the headline *'Time to get tough on tinker terror "culture"'* (Synon, Sunday Independent, 28.1.1996). The headline and the date indicate that press coverage relating to Travellers still substantially focuses on their putative involvement in crime. They are portrayed mainly as a disturbance or threat to settled order and safety. Such a portrayal is immeasurably damaging to Traveller-settled relations, as it shapes the general settled public's perceptions of Travellers and reinforces existing stereotypes. The terms of reference of both sets of texts - policy documents and press coverage - reflect the interests of stakeholders in a modernising Irish society and demonstrate a bid to demonise Traveller culture in an attempt to delegitimatise it (Helleiner, 1998, Fanning, 2002).

In *The Btown Paper,* 23.2.1963, two items typify portrayal of Travellers as tragic and deprived. In the first, half the front page is given over to an account of the deaths of two children in a caravan fire. Deepest sympathy is expressed to the family. Further into the paper, a report on an eviction being contested in court names, but does not discuss, the conditions in which families had to camp. The headline reads: *'"Travel from place to place like dogs" says camp dweller'*. The plaintiff said he had been waiting 20 years for a house. No judicial or journalistic commentary on why he had not been housed was offered, but the report was unusual in that it focused on the defendant's situation as a dilemma, not as a case of disturbance of public order.

Local media coverage still focuses mainly on (usually negative) event reportage, though group identifications are often omitted now. However, in a small town or parish, readers can identify (or presume to identify) Traveller involvement from the person's name and address. Civic reportage becomes all the more important in this arena, to counterbalance the build-up of negative stereotyping. Some examples of civic reportage were found. *The Btown Paper* (27.4.1996) reported on the training centre for Travellers in Btown; the headline presents them as active members of society, and that in itself provides the criticism of dominant negative attitudes: *'Travellers answer sceptics with trade skills'*. A recent issue (6.2000) provides an element of complexity. One is a report of an incident involving gardaí controlling a person with a 'typical' Traveller name and address. On two other pages, far more prominent reportage is given to positive achievements: Travellers being awarded their Junior Certificates and identified as *'role models'* by the Minister for Education, and the opening of a Traveller Training Centre.

The relationship between policy texts and media coverage of issues and events involving Travellers is significant but complex. In the 1960s, local and national press reportage and local and national government debates used the same terms and labels to discuss Travellers and the issues related to them. Since then, terminology used in official texts increasingly demonstrates respect for diversity, but as new terminology and concepts were officially endorsed, internal contradictions marked official texts, reflecting the persistence of old absorptionist views within the body politic. Nonetheless the divergence between the dominant terms and priorities of each Report and those of its successor is much wider than is identifiable in general press coverage (leaving aside the writings of social commentators) over these decades. This study found that the portrayal of Travellers in the media predominantly serves to validate 'old-school' official policies that address Travellers as if they were simply deviant, needy people; the focus of such policies validate the coverage. This reflects a problematic widening gap between official policy (or sectors of it) and sectors of public opinion.

2.2.4
Travellers' Experience: Self, Others, and the System

When talking about their traditions, and about the comfort of life among themselves, speakers displayed love for and pride in their group identity. This term 'comfort', will recur below, in participants' talk about how Travellers find refuge from hostility within their group. However, when talking about how they responded to settled hostility in socially mixed arenas, a different story emerged: identity became problematic. The interviews revealed that anti-Traveller racism is so ingrained in settled consciousness that it persists despite the attempts of Travellers to comply with assimilation policy. While government policy advocates integration, this is strongly resisted by the settled population.

2.2.4.1 DISCRIMINATION AND IDENTITY

If travel as such were the 'problem', racism should end when it ends, but participants indicated that this was not the case:

Michael, Atown:
> *Funny thing about it is the majority in the town never travelled in their lives. Even some of their parents didn't travel. But there's still discrimination there the whole time.*

Patrick, Btown:
> *Some of them are going around saying 'we're no longer Travellers, we shouldn't be called Travellers, we've come off the road, our children aren't Travellers'. I say to them 'you say you're not a Traveller, but the people in this town don't say that, you carry that round with you the rest of your life'.*

Living in houses has led some Travellers to reject their Traveller identity, and perhaps, as the second quote indicates, even consider themselves 'settled'. However their settled neighbours do not necessarily share this perception, and often continue to regard them as Travellers. Although accommodation policy was very different in the two towns (Atown dispersed Travellers through local authority estates, Btown accommodated them in clustered housing), exclusion and its impact on some Travellers was the same. Both speakers succinctly identify the core issue: it is not Travellers' nomadism that fuels anti-Traveller racism; it is their group identity. They are ostracized whether they travel or 'settle'. In Atown, where participants had done so much that ostensibly should have made them 'acceptable' to the settled population, they were also shunned. Accepting housing as a form of accommodation has forced Travellers to adjust their traditions and customs, and, as a result, their identity. It is not uncommon for Travellers to end up in a sort of identity 'limbo' – not recognised as settled by the settled population, they may also be rejected by other Travellers for 'selling out'. Racism prevents Travellers from persisting with their nomadic traditions, and it prevents them from dropping them.

In the next extract, the speaker recalls being upset as a child when she was called 'tinker'. She had no defence in terms of knowledge of, or pride in, her group identity:

> **Maggie, Btown:**
>
> I asked Mammy was I a Traveller. I didn't know what a Traveller was, I was eight or nine, I was called a tinker. I didn't know what it was, I asked her was I, she told me I was. I cried my eyes out!

Despite not knowing the meaning of the label, this child recognised the pejorative connotations attached to being a 'tinker'. Despite this initial upsetting introduction, the above speaker emerged in the interview situation as very proud of her Traveller identity. However, the next speaker is somewhere between hiding and shedding his:

> **Arthur, Atown:**
>
> The Company I work in - I couldn't stand up and say I'm a Traveller and proud of it. If I did, people still have their ideas and prejudice and though the law protects your job, you'd be dealing with that every day. It's not worth it, I've chosen my life, to move away, settle, get education, get a job and move on from there...I don't consider myself to be a Traveller, I've been settled since I was born. I know who my mother is, where my grandparents came from, I know my family, it's a good family. But once you go out of that circle it's completely different.

While Arthur does not deny his Traveller roots, he does not consider himself to be a Traveller, and prefers not to openly reveal his heritage. The fact that he has built a successful career has seemingly hindered rather than helped his chances of being publicly proud to be a Traveller. He does not seem to believe that it is possible to achieve professional success while identifying as a Traveller.

As the next exchange indicates, such ambivalence can spring from efforts to please or join the dominant society:

> **Patrick, Btown:**
>
> There's enough people here to keep it viable for Travellers to exist. It's not like Y Street in Xtown where there's lots of second or third generation Travellers saying they're no longer Travellers. They've assimilated or tried to, now they're not one thing or the other. They're a very confused group. They've lost their identity.
>
> **To which Martin retorted:**
>
> They gave it up to be accepted, they didn't lose it, 'twas their choice!

Martin denies Patrick's assertion that Travellers have pushed their sense of social self-identity beyond what they can articulate, and that they are 'confused' or have 'lost' it. Instead, he believes that the Xtown Travellers have consciously given up their identity in favour of a 'settled' identity. Assimilation policy has detrimental effects on Travellers as they are forced to choose to which community they will belong, while facing ostracisation from each. As Patrick acknowledges, the attempt to assimilate resulted in the Travellers of Xtown becoming, to a certain extent, identity-less – having renounced their Traveller identity, they are still not recognised as settled people. He believes that the larger number of Travellers in Btown makes it easier to maintain a strong sense of Traveller identity. The issue of choice will be discussed later (see Section Four).

2.2.4.2 SOCIALISING: EXCLUSION, RESTRICTION AND CONFLICT

Exclusion in both towns was felt perhaps most acutely in relation to Travellers' desire to use public social venues. Four responses to this are identifiable in interview talk – passing, tackling the system, group solidarity, and self-levelling.

PASSING

Keeping one's head down and trying to 'pass' is a weak line of defence, involving attempts to conduct daily affairs as inconspicuously as possible, without drawing attention to one's Traveller identity:

> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *Being a Traveller up the town you've to prove yourself. In the pub you have to be quiet, 'yes please' and that but the settled person can just call for their order...I have to be twice as polite as the other fellow.*
>
> *Patrick, Btown:*
>
> *You know when they're talking to you they don't want to talk to you. No matter how hard you try, and we have tried our best. We go up the town, we make no trouble, we dress well when we go out...*

Simply being identified as a Traveller means that one is likely to be stereotyped by settled people. Travellers are forced to stringently mind their behaviour and adjust their personalities in order to avoid negative reactions.

Some feel that it is easier to conceal their Traveller identity completely in order to achieve entry to venues dominated by settled people:

> *Patrick, Btown:*
>
> *I would [hide my identity], some places round this town you'd have to...I don't like it if they ask me what's my second name...When I go to discos I always give my second name wrong*
>
> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *Ah it does make you feel insecure. Why do you have to deny who you are?*
> *You resent it sometimes that you have to do that.*

Exclusion motivates the desire to leave Traveller identity behind in favour of a more hassle-free settled identity:

> *Willie, Btown:*
>
> *If you could go into any pub you chose, you could leave if there was trouble. If a settled person breaks up the pub, they won't put the others out like they do with the Travellers.*
>
> *Mary, Atown:*
>
> *Maybe that's why [we don't want our children to stay Travellers], we want what's best for ours, we know how we get treated up town sometimes...I know it's not right but it's the only way.*

Mary's wish for her children to gain access to the settled world stems from her belief that to be settled provides one with many more opportunities, and a lifestyle that is not tainted by discrimination and discouragement. Although she is unhappy with the prospect of her children giving up their Traveller identity, she sees no other way to spare them the distress that she has suffered as a Traveller among a prejudiced majority.

TACKLING THE SYSTEM

Some participants did confront settled people's exclusionary practices. Michael fought and won, but he highlights how difficult this struggle is for Travellers:

> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *I pursued the hotel that refused me, I won my case. But why should I have to do all that, go on the radio, write to ministers, be in the papers, why must I push to get these things when others get them like that? Why is the Traveller struggling the whole time?*

GROUP SOLIDARITY

The 'comfort' of the group becomes central to facing exclusion:

> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *We all have the same problem - I can understand the problem if she goes up and is refused and she can understand if I'm refused. The comfort you get from family is a lot.*
>
> *Martin, Btown:*
>
> *I mingle in a good deal in various places but I don't feel comfortable till I'm with my own people. I'm fairly friendly with a lot but I'd still rather be with my own people.*

Faced with discrimination and an often hostile reception, Travellers retreat into their own social networks, further compounding their segregation within society.

SELF-LEVELLING AND GROUP RESTRICTION

Exclusion exacerbates anti-social behaviour, creating a vicious cycle whereby the prejudices of settled people are justified by the actions of some Travellers:

> *Patrick, Btown:*
>
> *In fairness, some Travellers from outside, going round the shops, they do damage. It's time we stopped codding ourselves, everything isn't OK with Travellers. No use saying this doesn't happen.*
>
> *Michael, Atown:*
>
> *Some of them don't get a chance to prove themselves in a pub, they're thrown out straight away so they go for the cans down the lane or in the caravan, they have no choice. But they expect us to do the same, they query why are we being served when they're not. But I won't be loud, some of them can't carry themselves.*

Division is evident within the Traveller group. Those that receive some acceptance from the settled faction (even if this is as minor as being served in a pub) are judged by their Traveller peers. They face issues of belonging: not fully tolerated by the settled residents, they also face rejection from other Travellers, who feel that they must fully commit to the Traveller identity in order to be recognised as a member of the group. Travellers who are in between these two worlds criticise those Travellers who do not adhere to what they consider settled, or 'proper', codes of conduct.

Settled society pushes Travellers, at least psychologically, into a small space (this applied to both groups, whether they were housed together or not); but for those who want to diversify their lifestyle, this solidarity can translate into stressful group controls:

> *Arthur, Atown:*
>
> *If it was left to a lot of [traditional Travellers] the Traveller life would be forced on you whether you wanted it or not. In some families you must stick within those limits, if you try and go outside there's something wrong with you. They don't want you to break away from it. If you do they look at you different.*

As will be seen (refer to Section Three), racism and settlement combine to intensify internal conflicts where the normal means of escape through moving on are blocked off. Travelling serves an important social function. When confronted with problems in a particular location, a common Traveller response is to 'shift', or take to the road, leaving trouble behind. This adaptive feature of Traveller life is lost when families reside in homes. As regards the settled population's hostility and exclusionary practices, the evaluations of service providers strongly endorsed those of Traveller participants. One service provider noted that Travellers 'have compromised themselves to death' in their efforts to comply with settled society's priorities and demands. The above extracts from participants' talk validate this assessment. This level of compromise comes at a severe cost to Travellers' sense of belonging: trying to please settled society, they risk alienating the Traveller populace.

The issues highlighted in this section are the persistent racism of the dominant society towards Travellers, the resulting negative impact on Travellers' social self-concept and the need for Travellers to develop skills to identify and confront racism in settled society and its institutions. These issues have clear implications for the ethical priorities of community programmes that are intended to promote social inclusion and equality for all. This will be discussed in Section 4.

The aim of Government policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment, and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice

3.1 Accommodation

Issues of identity and racism intersected perhaps most powerfully in the area of accommodation. The significance of this issue is highlighted by the fact that it was a key topic of interest for the press. The Traveller participants in this project seemed confident that the days of travel are virtually over, and expressed desire for the comfort of stable accommodation. However, 'fixity' altered their relationship with settled people and with their own group, and had particular effects on their management of conflict.
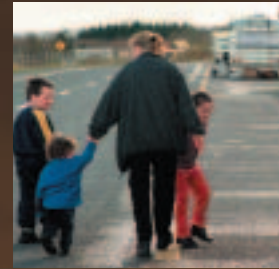
3.1.1 Accommodation Policy

The interpretation of the 1963 Commission, based on discussions held with voluntary workers and Travellers, was that the vast majority of Travellers wanted to 'settle'. Official campsites, to hold about four families each, were recommended for those who would keep travelling in the long or short term:

It is fully recognised that local residents will probably object to ...halts and for this reason local authorities may be reluctant to provide them. It must, however, be realised that there is no charitable or humane alternative to providing at least a place where the itinerant can halt his caravan. The Commission is satisfied that when [the objectors] fully consider the plight of itinerant families and the inhumanity of ...just moving them on, they will appreciate the necessity for these halts. It is also hoped that the provision ... [will help persuade them] to settle permanently (CI Report, 1963, p.57).

This combination of authoritative moral correction and calls to Christian compassion informs the overall Commission Report.

The Commission strongly advised against the clustering of Traveller households, even in twos or threes, in the housing allocation process. Travellers *'should be free from any feeling that they are being placed in a reservation'* (p.62). Throughout the 1963 Report, the Commissioners adopt a pro-absorption, pro-settlement position, but they also confront local authority and public prejudice by challenging evictions and forced movement. However, their opposition to these practices is not in the interest of the Traveller. Instead, they criticise such actions where they occur as a means of 'getting rid' of the Traveller. A preferable course of action, according to the Commission, would be to solve the *'problems arising from the itinerant way of life'* (p.p.53, 54).

The Review Body Report noted the assessment of 1963 that *'an overwhelming majority [of Travellers] were in favour of settling',* and stated that *'nothing that has happened since 1963 has lessened the correctness of this perception'* (RB Report, 1983, p.37). It advocated a variety of accommodation provision: halting sites, group housing, and standard housing. However the basic thrust in its accommodation proposals was towards controlling, if not ending, Travellers' mobility. A particularly clear indication of this occurs in a statement concerning the accommodation of young people:

Young people marrying from houses should be dealt with as settled people even if they have to live in trailers for some time. (RB Report, 1983, p.45, emphasis in the original)

This statement highlights a prevailing attitude among these policy-makers: that the mere shift of a Traveller from a trailer to a house constitutes them as 'settled'. This simple-minded view advocates that identity is based solely on accommodation preference. Nomadism was seen as the defining feature of Traveller identity; in essence, the Commission believed that a propensity for nomadism was what made a person a Traveller. Their consequent strategy was to eradicate Traveller identity by putting an end to nomadism.

The 1995 Task Force Report contains substantial evidence that traditional absorptionist terms continued at the official level. The 1995 report supported nomadism as a valid tradition. However, four (Local Authority) Task Force members wrote a dissenting Addendum, challenging the significance attached to nomadism in the report. It points out the disadvantages of the nomadic lifestyle, the need for Travellers to settle in order to secure employment, the cost to the exchequer of catering for *'this way of life'*, and *'the increased conflict with the settled community which arises mainly from the consequences of the nomadic lifestyle'* (TF Report, 1995, p.302). This echoes almost verbatim the statement of aims of the 1963 Commission: it set out to *'enquire into the problem arising from the presence in the country of itinerants'* (CI Report, 1963, p.11). Somewhat positively, while in 1963 this was the first objective of the Commission, in the Task Force Report this construction has retreated to the shadow lands of a 'Dissenting Addendum'.

There was no discussion in any Report as to whether Travellers' desire to live in group schemes was fuelled by settled people's hostility to Travellers. In group sites, Travellers can support each other in enduring racism. At the same time, such sites cordon off Travellers, spatially segregating them from the rest of the community. When a housing authority adopts a policy of recognising the importance of the extended family in Traveller culture, there is a two-way outcome. Housing on this basis can be seen as facilitating both settled exclusion of Travellers and Travellers' self-exclusion from a key public social space - residential areas.

3.1.2 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998, and Local Plans

Difficulties in attaining local compliance with Government recommendations, in the absence of statutory power, led to the passing of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. This Act provides a comprehensive legislative framework for local authority provision in relation to Traveller accommodation needs. It establishes procedures to ensure consultation with all concerned, and accountability in relation to implementation of the provisions of the Act, by both accommodation providers and by occupants.

In its guideline document relating to the Act, titled *Accommodation Options for Travellers, 2000,* the Department of the Environment and Local Government states that:

The aim of Government policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment, and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice. (p.1)

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998, obliges each of the major local authorities to adopt and implement by 31 March, 2000, a five year plan for the provision of accommodation for Travellers in their functional areas. The accommodation to be provided [comprises] standard local authority housing, group housing schemes, permanent residential caravan parks and transient halting sites. (p.3)

Two points must be made regarding the last extract above. Firstly, this guideline document does not provide a framework statement as to why Travellers have distinct accommodation needs; secondly, there are no checks in place to ensure that the accommodation programmes, whatever their degree of appropriateness, are implemented by the Local Authorities. It incorporates the 1995 Task Force recommendations regarding accommodation, but without the broader context provided in that Report regarding the distinctiveness of Traveller culture. The absence of this rationale suggests that the Task Force recommendations have been registered in name but not in spirit; Travellers have not yet been recognised as a distinct cultural group in Irish society. Highlighting the potential weakness of policies and plans that are not grounded in such a vision, the Task Force quotes Frederico Mayer, then Director-General of UNESCO:

All thinking and all action concerning Gypsies and Travellers must be based on an essential parameter: culture, its existence, its dynamics, its past and future. When this parameter is ignored, be it through oversight, lack of reflection, or deliberately, policies run aground and actions do not produce the desired effects. (TF Report, 1995, p.77)

In the two local authorities concerned in this study, the consultation process has been undertaken and housing policy documents have been produced, as required under the Act. Traveller representatives were included in the consultative committees. Allowing for variations in presentation, and variations due to existing policy and practice, these documents provide similar frameworks for development in their respective towns.

This statutory endorsement of the local consultative process involving elected local politicians, local authority officers, and Travellers is intended to ensure that provision will be what is appropriate to and desired by potential occupants, and that this provision will be accepted by the wider community. This remains to be seen. Statutory powers to control challenges such as 'unauthorised temporary dwellings' and 'anti-social behaviour' have been strengthened, and as some participants reported in this study, Travellers and settled local authority residents are receiving estate management and conflict resolution training.

However, participants' evaluations point to two difficulties in relation to the planning and implementation process.

- The first relates to settled people's racist hostility to Travellers as a crucial factor in generating conflict and threatening successful uptake of any accommodation provision. Provision to address this is not included in the Act or the ensuing documents. Difficulties to date, as evidenced in press reportage and in participants' accounts of settled residents' hostility to having Traveller neighbours, indicate that the task is formidable.

- The second is the impact of historic racist denigration of Traveller culture on Travellers. This will be discussed fully in Section 4.1; here it suffices to say that participants in this project displayed a strongly held sense of group allegiance, but articulation of cultural heritage was weak. The implications of this for the consultation process are perhaps particularly acute in relation to policy on accommodation.

Policy in regard to transient campsites in these documents illustrates the significance of the cultural argument regarding the impact of racism, noted above. One common feature in the two county plans is the closure of space for roadside encampments. Nomadism for some Travellers has become synonymous with exclusion, poverty and the past; for others, it is still a preferred way of life. For the settled population, nomadism is a key indicator of an unwanted cultural presence, it is something to be controlled, attenuated and, where possible, eliminated. Policy dictates that there will be long-stay caravan parks for 'households' awaiting housing or intending to live in caravans permanently. Mobile households must camp in short-term transient sites, of which there will be one in each county. This de facto ensures that most mobile families on the central site will be at a distance from their relatives.

The plan as adopted may be justified by pointing to Traveller representation in the consultative committees; however it is fundamentally anti-nomadic. Travellers are requested to advise on provision for their own futures, often without having been given opportunities to explore and articulate their ethnic identity. Travellers who advise on accommodation policy need to have critiqued their tradition and experience of nomadism. To be involved in planning without this is tantamount to receiving a mandate without the resources to use it.

Finally, the Monitoring Committee (CMTF, 2000) notes that local authority compliance with the terms of the Housing Act (Travellers), or at least its effective delivery on foot of policy statements, remains poor. However, this Committee's criticisms of Local Authorities relate totally to their failure to implement terms of the Act and ensuing Government policy; it does not critique the cultural appropriateness of these. The CMTF Report also notes the Department of the Environment and Local Government's rejection of the 1995 Task Force recommendation that an independent Traveller Accommodation Agency be created, to ensure delivery by local authorities – on the grounds that such an agency would have no power, and 'no role in these situations'. This begs the question as to why the Agency would be so powerlessly established, and in turn this points to a lack of will, from the highest level. Nomadism, a core value in Traveller culture, is not protected although these plans are ostensibly designed as culturally sensitive bases for provision.

3.1.3 Accommodating Travellers: Press Versions

The Editor of The Btown Paper, March, 1963, under the heading 'Settling the tinkers', comments:

Since it was established in 1960 this Commission has been the topic of many comments - few of them constructive or complimentary - from local authorities. But [its] recommendations as to how [itinerants] are to be absorbed...are worthy of close study. Taking some 6,000 people off the roads and resettling them even at the lowest level in the community ... cannot be done overnight... it can only be done with great charity and patience. Co. X is in the unhappy position of having the biggest number of itinerants in the whole country.

The 1963 Commission Report set down government policy, but implementation of a settlement programme was left to local jurisdictions, where local interests continued to block effective action. As a result settlement was pursued piecemeal, and class differences entered the frame. Settled applicants for public housing in newer estates were often in conflict with their local authorities over housing allocations to Travellers, and their arguments echo the terms of what Helleiner calls 'elite' anti-Traveller discourse. She argues that thus, promotion of this discourse served to deflect the attention of marginalised sectors of the settled population from the failures of politicians to deliver modernisation and progress to all:

Not one Corporation member ever voiced an opinion against the housing of itinerants in large numbers in certain local authority housing estate. No! Because the people of that area are poor and they had to shut their mouths and take what they got...but now in the case of [a middle-class suburb], of course, this cannot be let happen...
(Letter to the editor, Provincial Paper, 6.4.1973)

Though there was no discussion of the 1983 Review Body Report in the two local papers, *The Btown Paper* (3.9.1983) reported on local authority discussion of an outcome of this Report: '*Five year plan for Itinerant hard stands*'. In this discussion, some Travellers were reported as '*having loads of money*'. A report on a housing conflict in the same issue, under the headline '*[Town] erupts over plan to house Travellers*', portrays how integration policy can be paradoxically invoked to rationalise segregation: '*We feel that to get these families integrated with the community a special housing development is needed*'. Assimilation policy is championed when it removes families from caravans, but it does not go as far as to advance the complete acceptance of Travellers into all facets of settled life. Abandoning the caravan is seen as a positive step forward by policy-makers, but this alone is not sufficient to diffuse anti-Traveller prejudice. When integrated housing policy is left dependent on local settled people's good will, there is space for such inversions.

Press reportage shows, however, that at local council level the quota system remains popular, but under the cover of new terminology. A report in *The Btown Paper* (15.6.1996) carries the following headline: '*Equality study to examine Btown Travellers integration policy would right poor decisions, says Councillor*'. The text deviates from the policy frame suggested in the headline: the Councillor argued that '*at the moment the policy seems to be one of just accommodating Travellers in large numbers without any regard for ratios and this will imbalance society*'. The cause of the historical development of Travellers' accommodation '*in large numbers*' - settled hostility - is not addressed, and the rationale for talk of 'balance' is not clarified.

3.1.2 Travellers' Experience: Nomadism, Exclusion and Accommodation

Participants discussed accommodation in relation to nomadism and to settlement. Experience of both were profoundly shaped by what was permitted by settled society's ideology and structures.

3.1.2.1 TRAVEL AND TODAY

Nomadism and accommodation intersect around two concepts, named by a speaker as the reasons why he liked travelling:

> *Michael, Atown:*
> *Freedom, freedom and space.*

However, times have changed and travel is effectively over:

> *Michael, Atown:*
> *The road is a thing everybody will miss. But you can't do it now, it's so busy and dangerous. Years ago there were no cars, you could stay on a 6-7 ft verge, now you can't. It's not enjoyable to live on the side of the dual carriage way.*
>
> *Patrick, Btown:*
> *See years ago, first we had our tents, hadn't we? Ah they had to be gone by now. Then we had our wagons hadn't we? Choices around now! Then the next step we had our trailers. Then with the years they're going to start fading off aren't they? Generations there - tents to wagon, to trailer, to house. Travelling is dying as a way of living.*

Past and present cannot be separated in evaluating why travel as a way of life might be over. Paradoxically, maintenance of the traditional Travellers' extended family network was facilitated for this speaker by not sustaining a nomadic lifestyle:

> *Maggie, Btown:*
> *I'd like [travelling] as a newly wed thing but if I had children, no, and then as they got older you could end up one getting married off here, one married off there, and you'd never see them again.*

The desire for decent living conditions - seen as traditionally a woman's concern - also serve to reinforce the trend towards settlement:

> **Ann Marie, Atown:**
> A lot of them are settled, they've got jobs, children in school, nice homes or whatever and they don't want to give that up. Why should they have to move?

> **Martin, Btown:**
> It goes back to men again if you're going out travelling, who's going to get the hardship? The women! Washing clothes, no washing machine. Trekking off to go to the toilet! Back to the same old thing, like thirty, forty years ago. Putting themselves back years. I wouldn't do that, I wouldn't advise my children to do it either.

> **Martin goes on to say that living in a trailer exposes one to settled people's judgements:**
> In twenty years there'll be very few travelling, it's not a nice lifestyle. I'd never live in a trailer, what good is it to me? No bins for a start. You're spotted by every country person, making comments to themselves about you because you're living in a caravan, no respect no matter where you go in Btown in a trailer...

Martin's self-consciousness is a result of his perception that living in a caravan causes settled people to immediately devalue one as a person. He is not comfortable with identifying so visibly as a Traveller, fearing the repercussions that this may have.

3.1.2.2 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

Housing officials in both towns noted - as do Government Reports - that residents' associations and general settled opposition generate major blocks to achieving what most Travellers desire: housing allocation as for any local authority applicant, dispersed through the town and, as far as possible, in areas of choice. This conflict shaped housing policy differently in the two towns.

In Atown the local authority has a long-established pro-dispersal housing allocation policy, and participants who had been housed for a long time did not talk about being restricted in their choice of accommodation location. However, hostility did arise when a Traveller tried to move out of a group housing scheme and into a local authority neighbourhood, as noted earlier. As one speaker said:

> **John:** We have a good relationship with these people... A great relationship while we're behind the wall. The higher the wall the better the relationship! Two foot high, we've a bad relationship. If it was forty foot...If the wall is gone, you have a problem.

In Btown, certain areas had become Traveller areas. One outcome of this was increased distance between Traveller and settled:

> **Maggie:** When I grew up in X Road we used to mix more with the settled people, there were less Travellers. Travellers were there but they weren't living in the houses. My children are growing up in Y estate, they've never hung around with settled children like I did. It gives you a different outlook on life, hanging round with settled people, you can see both sides of the barrel.

> **David:** When they first built Y estate there was a lot of settled people in it, now there isn't four in it. They're moving out, they don't want to be with the Travellers.

> **Arthur:** There's still a policy of a Traveller getting a Traveller's house, a settled person getting a settled person's house. But a settled person can get a Traveller house, not the other way round.

In a situation riddled by racism, 'choice' is not easily perceived:

> *Missy:*   *Some Traveller families want to be housed in those areas...But it's not good policy,*
> *it's creating a ghetto.*
>
> *Martin:*   *The Council don't give a damn they just put you in your own corner, you've to stay there.*
>
> *Missy:*   *No I don't think the Council is anti-Traveller. A lot of [Travellers] want to.*
>
> *Martin:*   *They have no choice, there's only three options. They have no choice!*
>
> *Missy:*   *That's what a lot of them want. You wanted that estate, you wanted it!*
>
> *Martin:*   *I had no choice!*

Martin poignantly highlights the restrictions that Travellers face in relation to accommodation. He could have applied for a house in a mixed estate, or could have opted to buy a house, but his knowledge and experience of the local authority's confining housing practice and of settled residents' hostility to Traveller neighbours made these unattractive options. The 'options' provided by the Council are more of an illusion than a reality: Travellers are forced to accept housing in segregated estates because of the overwhelming prejudice of the wider population. Either Martin did not trust the choices as real, or he could not risk the cost of breaking the mould: he opted for safety. He had no real choice. Data that warrants both the lack of trust and the need for safety was amply provided in the interviews.

3.1.2.3 HOME OWNERSHIP

In both towns, participants experienced settled efforts to keep them out or squeeze them out of home ownership. Travellers' purchase of houses in private developments is effectively blocked, as are local authority or direct Traveller rental of accommodation from settled landlords. If a Traveller succeeds in securing a home, neighbours often make life intolerable:

> *Winnie, Atown:*
>
> *Regardless of whether you're here for generations, if they hear the name is buying*
> *a house beside them they go...regardless of if you're paying top price.*

The next speaker bought a house in a private development but had to leave. She experienced blatant prejudice from her settled neighbour, and perceived her neighbour's sense of class distinction as false:

> **Ann Marie, Atown:**
>
> When you move into an estate you don't feel comfortable, there's people looking down their noses at you. Next door to us there was a young couple, children about seven years old or so, and I'd hear the mother next door 'you don't play with them, they're tinkers they're knackers'. But she originally came from a council estate herself.

The same false distinctions came from a Traveller who was trying to 'rise' socially by concealing her identity:

> **Missy, Btown:**
>
> She thought the neighbours out there wouldn't know she was a Traveller. She tried to hide her whole identity, you know. She didn't want another Traveller family moving in, so she put up a petition. X hadn't this trouble, she built her own house out the country. Only in the town this thing happened.

Attempting to hide her identity has led this woman to turn against other Travellers. The fact that she lived in town, surrounded by settled residents, indicates that she likely believed that if she did adopt the common sentiment of the townspeople – an objection to Traveller neighbours – her true identity would not be discovered. Her desire to gain acceptance from settled society may have been so great that it caused her to reject Traveller culture. Another possibility is that she has internalised racist opinions Travellers, and views them with the prejudice of dominant society.

3.1.2.4 FIXITY AND CONFLICT

Participants in both locations wanted an element of distance from each other within their towns. This is in keeping with traditional practices relating to conflict management, and to personal and familial space requirements often violated by housing policy:

> **Bridie, Btown:**
>
> I often hear the [old people] saying ' if I could go back on the side of the road I'd never come into the town'! Too much mixing, too much arguing, too much Travellers in one town. That time you might have three or four tents together, that was it. And you moved on... Now you're looking at them seven days of the week, twenty four hours of the day. Back our way, there's that many Travellers they'd nearly know what you had for breakfast, it's that close, people in and out all the time, kids in and out, it's too close.

Participants also argued that Travellers need to reflect on their own practices, now that they live in close proximity in fixed accommodation. The next speaker was critical of the traditional Traveller practice of moving to escape discord, and espoused an idealised view of civility between settled people as a model for Travellers, while dismissing the experience of discrimination as a justification for conflictual behaviour:

> **Patrick, Btown:**
>
> They just got up and moved. But settled people live in one area and get on, there's no reason why Travellers can't do the same. Sometimes being treated like dirt isn't a good excuse for fighting among ourselves.

Travellers are growing into an awareness that as their cultural practices change, this change demands new conflict management processes:

> **Missy, Btown:**
> It's being discussed openly, people are airing their views in front of the Council, in front of settled people on [the estate management] course as well. Because these are issues that affect Traveller and settled people. You shouldn't have to move out of the area where you were brought up, it's your life, there has to be another solution.

However, from arguing that Travellers can and must rise above the effects of discrimination, Missy moves on to blame conflict on Travellers' social practices, and to identify this conflict as an initial rather than a contributory cause of settled hostility and systemic injustice:

A lot of issues about troubles between Traveller families are being discussed openly for the first time. Mediation is being done between two families, the gardaí, the town people. There are tensions between settled people and Travellers but there are also very high tensions between Traveller families. It doesn't bring a good light on Travellers if we can't get on and we're constantly arguing. What will settled people think: how can we treat them respectfully if they can't respect each other? It needs to be addressed in every town. It's very difficult to address, it takes lot of work and courage.

Missy has internalised the racist perceptions of the dominant population. She is critical of Traveller relations and how these in turn affect Traveller-settled relations. She places blame squarely on the Travellers, with no culpability attributed to the settled population. Her concern with what 'settled people think' is indicative of the influence that settled people wield over some Travellers. This quote is also reminiscent of earlier quotes that describe a code of conduct to which participants felt they must adhere in order not to attract unwanted attention from settled society. Wary of feeding negative stereotypes, Travellers often attempt to conceal certain types of behaviour that settled people may engage in freely, such as arguing. The judgements of the dominant populations are adopted in the desire to open communications and win acceptance. This anxiety also emerged in discussion of the impact of internal disputes on Traveller-settled relations in Atown:

> **Michael:** Why can [the authorities] not listen? I went up and said to them that family is not getting on with that. They just tell you mind your own business and get out. So then the difficulties start. Then the guards is called and then the Travellers have a bad name. But why didn't they act sooner? Why congregate them? But having said that there is families like it that way. Depends on your attitude.

The basic aim of official policy on accommodation was to absorb Travellers into standard lifestyles and accommodation provision; essentially, to end nomadism. The above data suggests that travel was ending anyway, but accommodation policy promoted a specific absorptionist mode of managing this change. Settled hostility, the very force that fuelled the adoption of absorptionist or integrationist housing policy, blocks its implementation. Assimilation policy cannot be successful when Travellers continue to face such blatant discrimination and exclusion from Ireland's social sphere.

Official policy texts on accommodation and participants' discussion of their experience offer substantial indicators of what must be addressed in community programmes whose aim is social inclusion and respect for diversity. On the one hand, participants' accounts highlight the bias in official texts and the hostility in media coverage, thus revealing the urgency of the need to confront settled racism. On the other, this intersection shows the need for Travellers to critique the structural basis of their experience of racist exclusion, to identify how it has alienated them substantially from the riches of their own traditions, and to support them in confronting this ongoing racism. Discussion of key issues in relation to accommodation will be resumed in Section 4.

3.2 Education, Training and Work

In 1960, when the first Government Commission was established, Travellers were almost totally absent from all levels of statutory education provision. This was identified as a key factor in their economic deprivation (CI Report, 1963). Participants in this project concurred in this evaluation. This section will first review developments since 1963 in policy and practice in the allied fields of education, training and work, and then will discuss participants' evaluations of this provision and of their experience.

3.2.1 Official Policy on Education and Training

The 1963 Commission advocated special primary and vocational school classes where numbers warranted it, and evening classes elsewhere. The curriculum will:

promote hygiene as a practice as well as a subject; ...[include] reading, writing and arithmetic...regular manual training...pupils...will be able to read newspapers and magazines...write letters...[Thus] promoting their absorption into the settled community ...[and into] ordinary classes;...policy...can only be successful...for those who had been induced to leave the wandering life. (CI Report, 1963, pp. 67-69)

The 1983 Review Body Report listed educational objectives which expand on the underlying model of Travellers as deprived or 'inadequate':

a. to compensate...for their deprived social status...;

b. to help them to discover and attain their own educational aspirations;

c. to give them freedom to make a real choice about their future way of life...;

d. to allay their fears of the settled community and to help to build their self-confidence
    (RB Report, 1983, p. 3)

In the 1995 Task Force Report there is a shift in focus away from the child to the provision on offer. Discussion of education is based on principles of equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and cultural diversity. The report advocates integrated, intercultural education. Other issues impacting attainment were identified as attendance, parental involvement and nomadism. The report notes the difficulties in promoting second level schooling, and calls for adequate opportunities for community-based adult education and training, and cultural development. Community-based groups should provide space to explore what school offers, and parental responsibilities in relation to it (with particular attention to promoting take-up at second level). The Monitoring Committee identifies four key issues in this domain as *'attendance, parental involvement, Traveller nomadism, and intercultural education'* (CMTF Report, 2000, p. 52). It deplores the failure of the Department of Education and Science to establish a Traveller Education Service to promote and monitor effective delivery of appropriate services for Travellers, as recommended by the Task Force. The Committee notes in particular that:

...very little progress has been made on the integration of intercultural education into the education system as a whole. The Committee considers that more progress would be made in this area if better co-ordination existed within the Department of Education and Science...

Intercultural education is a key area of importance to Travellers and it impacts on all pupils, teachers and other players...[It] should impinge on the whole school, the whole curriculum. (CMTF Report, 2000, pp.52, 54)

The insistence that effective delivery and inclusion of Travellers requires a re-framing of the whole system rather than inclusion of additional curricular and procedural elements applies to all levels of education provision, including the newly developing domain of adult and further education. As will be seen below, this has particular relevance to Travellers, because 'second chance' education provision is in fact the first chance for many Travellers. The Monitoring Committee notes that the Department of Education and Science recognises

...the importance of adult education in promoting social inclusion, competitiveness and employment, and in addressing inter-generational poverty. (CMTF Report, p.62)

But, to ensure inclusive provision and effective outcomes for Traveller 'learners' the Committee stresses the need for

...adequate childcare services and appropriate curriculum, materials and courses, incorporation of interculturalism and anti-racism into the training of adult educators, resourcing of Traveller organisations to deliver adult education programmes...(CMTF Report, p.63)

This has particular relevance for community-based education and development provision. The Report notes in particular the success of programmes for Traveller women being developed by the National Traveller Women's Forum. Again, the issue is one of providing both targeted and inclusive programmes, and ensuring that both are informed by respect for diversity, and explicit inclusion of treatment of issues relating to Travellers.

3.2.2 Travellers' Experience: Education and Progress?

Participants talked about education in both restrictive and expansive terms. Overt aims in sending children to school – to acquire basic skills of literacy and numeracy - were restrictive, and speakers said that this limited agenda should be a thing of the past. Increased exposure to the education system has meant that many Travellers now see a broader value in education; parents are beginning to engage with school programmes. Adult education and training opportunities in particular have opened up a broader scenario for change.

3.2.2.1 LIFE AND LEARNING IN SCHOOL

Speakers' remarks about their school experience closely parallel the findings in the Reports.

Martin, Btown:

> *Our parents didn't know how to read and write and they couldn't push us, but now it's different. I'll make sure my kids will work in school.*

The next speaker identifies both the cause and the effect of Traveller children's removal from school at age twelve:

Francie, Atown:

> *Everyone left around twelve years old, learned to read and write a bit and that's it. There was no future, no place for Travellers.*

Sending children off to school per se did not open doors. Now, many Traveller parents seek involvement as agents in their children's education:

Missy, Btown:

> *Travellers are going to parent-teacher meetings, want to know what's going on in the school system*

This growing parental involvement is indicative of the change that has occurred. However, there is a long way to go. Service providers observed a low, though slowly improving, level of continuation to second-level schooling. Travellers who took part in the discussions had either gone through secondary school or were determined that their children would take the risk of going on, though they knew Travellers who opted for the safety of limited involvement:

Martin, Btown:

> *Lots of Travellers don't go on. They learn to read, say that's enough, go to FÁS. It's not enough. Now you need a lot of qualifications or else you'll be stuck in a place like this.*

Arthur, Atown:

> *[If you're going to college] they'd laugh at you, you should be married, you're seventeen. I did Leaving Certificate, I was one of the first to do it. They laughed at me - big hairy boy going to school!*

Missy, Btown:

> *A lot thought that when I went to college, she's gone. But I'm back. I got massive support from my parents. Without my parents I wouldn't have been able to do it. My father picked up a lot of slack. I was shocked when they said I could go to Collegetown, do the course. That was a big thing for their generation. I didn't ask, I was afraid to. But they were much more open than even my brothers.*

These Travellers faced ostracisation from other Travellers for seemingly stepping out of the boundaries of 'conventional' Traveller practice. Full participation in the education system, beyond basic instruction, is perceived by some as a violation of the Traveller social order, and too much of a concession to settled life. Another reason for balking at school attendance may lie in the fear of ostracisation from settled people. Service providers indicated that even where Travellers were mixing in the classrooms, they clustered together on the playgrounds. For the following speaker, friendships in a bounded school environment did not carry over into the wider social world:

> **Martin, Btown:**
> Some lads I went to school with, they won't talk to you, mix with you. You grew up with these lads. But as soon as you finish school and head down that town, they don't want to even know you.

However, the next speaker suggests that segregation in school may have been due more to familiarity with neighbours who were also one's cousins than the experience of racism:

> **Maggie, Btown:**
> A lot of Travellers choose to sit with Travellers. The teacher did her best all year to get the four of us to separate, but she couldn't. She tried because when we'd go to second level we mightn't be in the one class together.

The tendency of Traveller children to remain together inside and outside the classroom may be easily explained by the predominance of close familial networks, or the natural penchant of children to sit with friends. However, it would be irresponsible to discount the possibility that this self-imposed segregation may be a consequence of racism. In some cases, it is likely that Traveller children felt safer sticking close to other Traveller children, due to unfamiliarity with settled children, or experiences of discrimination.

3.2.2.2 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Speakers identified broader, expansive aims in seeking education. Many said that skills acquired through formal education had developed Travellers' capacity to stand up for themselves. However, they were not referring to apolitical personal and interpersonal development as promoted in the primary schools curriculum, but to socio-political skills acquired in further education and training. This is significant in terms of where investment should be targeted in relation to Traveller education. As noted in discussion of participants' reflections on marriage and on the role and status of women in Traveller society, training and development programmes for women have been highly significant:

> **Missy, Btown:**
> The courses women are doing are affecting their husbands and all. Women being opened to new ideas. It's going to change, if they can support their young person, if you, the child, feels confident in who you are and the family is good. If you are proud of who you are, know who you are, you can go on to school, college, you're not going to forget where you came from.

All the participants without exception were strongly committed to integrated schooling for their children, but participants who were enrolled in adult education were in all-Traveller programmes. When asked why separate provision for adults was acceptable, Btown participants linked it to discrimination and its outcomes:

> **Patrick, Btown:**
> There are a lot of special needs among Travellers still, they wouldn't feel comfortable [in a mixed project]. I would like to see [these] projects integrated in time, but not yet.
>
> **Missy, Btown:**
> We make them feel welcome. [Settled people] don't give us enough of a chance.

Travellers feel they will not get their entitled places in mixed training courses:

Winnie, Btown:
The problem I'd have with that, in mixed groups Travellers mightn't get their full quota.
In mixed groups you'd probably have two or three Travellers here, two or three there –
you're probably talking about a handful, that's the most Travellers that'd be involved
in Btown. Whereas in St X's you've 30 Travellers, 34 in Youthreach…You've got to look
at the advantages and disadvantages. With things as they are at least Travellers are getting
the good out of it, if it was a mixed group you might be only talking about seven, eight,
nine Travellers taken into the whole thing across the town.

As noted in the introduction to this Project Report, participants argued upwards from particular experience to general observations. While the argumentation is powerful in its own right, it could be more so if it was contextualised by identification of the collective structural factors that shape such experience, and Travellers need opportunities to develop the skills to do this. It seems that no Travellers were involved in mainstream community development initiatives in Atown or Btown. This raises questions as to the adequacy of guidelines regarding how such programmes are structured, in terms of both policy and operations. As noted in earlier sections of this Project Report, given the commitment of such programmes to social inclusion, it is imperative that they address the needs of Travellers, and issues relating to anti-Traveller racism in the majority settled society.

3.2.3 Official Policy and Traveller Economy

The 1963 Commission found that Travellers had very limited occupational opportunity, and also claimed that they lacked ambition. Scrap collecting was important; tinsmithing, as a redundant skill, was dying out. Seasonal labour – crop picking, for instance – was attractive because

…the itinerant was enabled to employ his whole family…and work his own hours. Itinerants apparently prefer this…to working regular hours for wages. (CI Report, 1963, p.72)

The Commission recommended steps to promote '[itinerants] adaptation to the employment patterns of settled life' both to promote economic independence and because 'integration "on the job" as well as in the residential sphere' is required to promote absorption (p.75). It treated begging simply as a social/legal problem (p. 92), to be prohibited and replaced by legitimate economic activity. It argued that the need to register at one place in order to claim unemployment assistance was useful in promoting settlement (p.76).

The 1983 Review Body found that Travellers were engaging in the same economic activities, as suiting their mobility, but its predominant assessment was that Travellers were 'untrained, unskilled and unemployed'. Its proposals also focused on training Travellers for employment. Like the 1963 Commission Report, it noted difficulties Travellers encounter in gaining employment and being accepted in the work place, and it recommends supporting licensed trading.

The 1995 Task Force identified the range of Travellers' economic activities and their distinctive manner of engaging in them. It proposed developing the Traveller economy because it:

…could play a significant role in enabling increased numbers of [Travellers] towards financial independence. (TF Report, 1995, p.244)

The Monitoring Committee (CMTF Report, 2000) noted the continuing centrality of trading and recycling work as areas of entrepreneurial activity for Travellers, and noted the need to further develop these. It notes, however, that despite the dramatic fall in general unemployment figures, Travellers' participation rates in the labour market remain low. The Committee attributes this to the cumulative effect of discrimination in the education, training and the work environment. It must be noted that while the centrality of discrimination in Travellers' unemployment rates is unquestionable, Travellers' preference for self-employment also has cultural roots and might remain a dominant preference for many Travellers, even in an open labour market.

3.2.4 Travellers' Experience: Employment and Self Employment

As all the Reports noted, economic activity and community networking were traditionally closely intertwined for Travellers, and their preferred mode of operation was self-employment:

Paddy, Atown:

Our connections would be basically the whole Traveller community regardless of where. That'd be more important than Atown. Cos that's how you make a living, it's who you know and your own family, regardless of what part of the country you're in, you'll always turn a few shillings if you've something to sell. If I was driving into Yville and I saw caravans and I'd know it was Travellers I could go over and ask them did they want to buy something. If you see a Traveller you think is that one from the X family, and so on.

Michael, Atown:

I couldn't work nine to six, maybe at this stage of my life but not earlier on. I'd go mad. It's not the working style of the Traveller. It's great to get out and about and do odds and ends, sell, cadge people haha! That's what it is, it's a challenge. A lot of settled people stuck into it would die of hunger.

This was the preferred way of earning a living for most participants. And for those who opted to take "standard" jobs, change has been mainly negative. Unemployment levels are high, and for the few who did get jobs, workplace relations seem to impact severely on their confidence in their social self identity:

Arthur, Atown:

The firm I work in, I couldn't stand up and say I'm a Traveller and proud of it. If I did, people still have their ideas and prejudice and though the law protects your job, you'd be dealing with that every day.

The next speaker understood that remaining silent about her identity was the necessary price for maintaining amiable relations in the workplace, and she did not object to this concession:

Winnie, Btown:

I worked in supermarket seven years before I got married, I was the only Traveller there and I never had a problem, never humiliated, they never said who I was. They knew, but never at any time said it. I never had a problem.

There have been major changes for Travellers in the area of education and work. Virtually all Travellers now go through primary school; an increasing number are going on to second level. The need for traditional economic activities is passing, and though new opportunities for self-employed work are growing they are still limited. However, the project participants experienced problems in the workplace, in relation to finding work and in relation to management of their identity in the work place. This has implications for the development of innovative programmes that are culturally suited to Travellers, and for the development of sound pro-diversity, anti-racist policy and practice in all community programmes and work places.

4.1
Evaluative Summary

In this final section of the Report the points made in the analysis of the interview data are brought together and further developed.

In terms of the field work involved, this was a small-scale research project designed to register the experiences of two groups of Travellers, in two selected towns. This was done through a two-phase group interview process: in the second phase of taped interviews, participants critiqued and fed into the analysis of data collected in the first phase. The scope of the project was enlarged by contextualisation of these data: analysis was performed as to how the issues that arose in these interviews are addressed in national and local policy and media texts. This enables a wider application of insights arising from the field research. This wider focus is warranted by the indicators of the validity of the research process:

- the high level of coherence between the interview data in both phases,

- the high level of explanatory power generated by analysis of the interview data and media and official texts as intersecting discourses, and

- overall coherence of findings with other research into issues affecting Travellers.

The first part of this evaluative summary is a brief overview of key points in the analysis of policy and media texts. A note is included on representations of Travellers in materials well known in Ireland due to their inclusion in traditional schools curricula. This is done to suggest the interconnections between images and concepts in discourse at all levels.

In the main section, the findings from interview data are clustered to highlight the impact of assimilation policy on Traveller participants' accounts of their own cultural practices, on their lives in the wider social context of their local area, and on their management of their identity. As noted above, these insights resonate powerfully with the analysis of policy texts and with other research in this area. These insights therefore form a sound basis for recommendations for community development initiatives and support projects, detailed in the Conclusions and Recommendations.

4.1.1 Discussion of Travellers in Public Texts

4.1.1.1 OFFICIAL TEXTS

In local and national government debates and policy documents, Travellers were initially conceived of as the 'itinerant' problem'; at best they were a much wronged sector of Irish society. Gradually, talk of Travellers' rights as citizens, and later their distinct identity, gained ground. The term 'discrimination' gained recognition as denoting settled society's anti-Traveller attitudes and practice, but Travellers' ethnic status has yet to be officially endorsed, though activists' public assertions of it are reflected in occasional indirect references in the Task Force Report, 1995, and the Monitoring Committee's Report, 2000. However, rather than replacing old concepts, the new concepts were layered on top of them. O'Connell (1992) identified five 'models of Travellers'. He argues that Travellers can be portrayed as deviant, deprived, romantic, 'normal', or as an ethnic group. This research project has found that various mixes of these models co-exist in media and official texts, with the qualification that those texts that recognise Travellers' distinct cultural identity stop short of identifying Travellers as ethnic group. With this layering, space opens up for internal contradictions.

Two concepts from recent work on racism are useful here. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (MacPherson, 1999) cites definitions of institutional racism from several sources, one of the simplest taken from the Commission for Racial Equality. Institutional racism is present in:

…organisational structures, policies, processes and practices which result in ethnic minorities being treated unfairly and less equally, often without intention or knowledge (CRE, para. 3, cited in MacPherson, 6.30)

In its document The Persistence and Mutation of Racism, the International Commission on Human Rights Policy (2000) lists forms of denial of racism; 'minimising the facts' is one form of denial.

These concepts give food for thought in relation to social policy on Traveller issues, and specifically in the key area of accommodation. When the significance of Travellers' traditions are minimised, there is space for inappropriate responses such as the anti-nomadic thrust in local accommodation policies developed in response to the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. Having failed to provide culturally appropriate services, officialdom can cite

…poverty and social disadvantage as evidence to confirm and justify the racial prejudices and discriminatory practices of the dominant group. (ICHRP, p.12)

Despite changes in language in the decades since 1963, the thrust of Government and local accommodation policy and practice remains substantially anti-nomadic and assimilationist. Texts that do not explicitly engage with new concepts can present old models, often dressed in new terminologies, and (probably unwittingly) institutional racism is identifiable by the outcomes.

Besides being culturally unacceptable, such policy is flawed because it does not include strong policy and strategies targeting settled society's racism towards Travellers. The Task Force and Monitoring Committee argue that government-driven Traveller accommodation policy is particularly required because local service providers undervalue Travellers' ethnic identity and the significance of their nomadic heritage. As has been seen, at present no level of policy development or provision is innocent of this charge.

4.1.1.2 IMAGES OF TRAVELLERS IN THE NEWSPAPERS

In press reportage the strength of old concepts is perhaps particularly evident. Anti-racist principles in journalistic practice preclude certain types of terminology, disproportionate focus, and omission. Review of press coverage in this study indicates weak commitment to these principles in relation to Travellers. Up until 1960, coverage was unabashedly hostile; the official intervention in 1963, and later in the 1980s and 1990s, prompted more divergent portrayals of Traveller-related issues. For newspaper readers, coverage of issues and events relating to Travellers in the local press is accompanied by national coverage in the 'serious' papers and in the tabloids. In the major papers critical social commentary addressing Traveller issues often supplements reportage, but the reportage of the events can convey contradictory negative stereotypes of Travellers. In the newspapers examined in this study, right through these decades Travellers were predominantly portrayed as sources or causes of fear, anger, disturbance or pity in the settled population, and the events reported were predominantly related to crime or disturbances of settled order.

Coverage relating to Travellers is virtually absent from certain sections of national and local newspapers. Major tragic events are reported, but this coverage can inspire pity in the 'superior' readership without challenging racism. Travellers scarcely feature in routine coverage of personal and social events such as births, marriages and deaths. More importantly, they are almost completely absent from coverage of civic events in which members of communities are seen publicly achieving, relaxing, or contributing to the common good in 'ordinary' ways – coverage, for instance, of school graduations, business successes, local and national sporting events, town festivals, competitions, fundraising activities, and so on. In this study a few instances of positive coverage of such events involving Travellers were found, but such coverage is rare.

Commonly used terms of references and commonly trotted-out attitudes and judgements are both fuelled by and help to (re)produce racism (Van Dijk, 2001). It is beyond the scope of this study to identify the relative impact of analysis against 'hot' news in shaping public attitudes, but the question must be raised as to how juxtaposing critical social commentary with negative reporting of incidents involving Travellers can fudge perceptions as to which coverage carries actual persuasive power. Anti-racist principles must inform not just the analytical columns but also the choice of items reported and way in which they are reported. Besides avoiding negative bias, media coverage must promote cultural affirmation and celebration of diversity in Irish society – but in doing so it must avoid news of just the pitiable and the exotic, and include coverage of Travellers as normal members of society doing ordinary things.

IMAGES OF TRAVELLERS IN POPULAR LITERATURE

Although it was not a topic of this study, a note on literature is relevant in this very brief discussion of transmission of images of Travellers. Travellers feature in well- known literary texts selected for use in National Schools curricula in recent decades. Every settled child encounters portrayals of Travellers, though they are rarely discussed as such. For instance, the ballad 'The Whistling Gypsy Rover' portrays nomadic Traveller/Gypsies (mainly men) as romantically undomesticated, while romantic dreams of settlement are attributed to Traveller women in Padraic Colum's poem 'The Old Woman of the Roads'. Nature's bleakness, not settled people's prejudice, is what makes 'the roads' lonely and cold, in contrast with glowing settled domestic snugness. It is interesting that this is the poem that was commonly taught, rather than Colum's 'The Beggar's Child', in which he depicts the Traveller mother's urge to travel to get away 'from the net of the crooked town/where they grudge us the light of day'. Curricula are not neutral, and how settled people are taught about Travellers is a significant factor in the reproduction of prejudice.

4.1.2 Policy and Experience

Participants' discussions of their experience show how official policy and dominant popular perceptions have impacted internal Traveller relations, their evaluation of their own traditions, Traveller-settled relations, and their desires for the future. All these are made difficult because the ethnic status of Travellers and the racism of settled society have been underestimated. In the analysis of interview talk, connections and contradictions within and between participants' discussions about various topics were identified. These reveal how the participants were developing and living out their social self identity. This commentary summarises the key points in the discussions, and highlights the issues informing them.

The interview topics included talk about Travellers' internal social management on the one hand; and on the other, their talk about Travellers in wider social contexts. Talk of travel fell into both categories. The three were intertwined, but the power dominance of the majority society gave particular weight to issues arising in and from the Traveller-settled intersection. Talk about internal social management emerged specifically in discussion of changes in women's roles, in changing practice in relation to choice of marriage partners, and in talk about life in the past. The wider social context emerged distinctly in discussion of accommodation, education, employment, and access to social life in the town.

4.1.2.1 LIFE IN THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

Participants had a strongly held sense of group solidarity, but a weakly articulated sense of their Traveller identity. They knew they belonged together and they valued this highly, but they talked very little about what sustained the inner life of this closely connected people. Their talk was infused with a deep love of their Traveller network, but when they spoke about why they valued this solidarity it was almost entirely in terms of facing hostility from the wider society. They also talked about the past mainly in terms of hardships endured. Positive content emerged only after repeated questions from the interviewer, and even then the accounts of positive factors were focused mainly on the past. Participants recalled, often vividly and with emotion, memories of campfire gatherings, songs, and the experience of travel: these memories were celebrations of both community bonds and community practices. However these memories were recounted only after repeated questioning about the positive, and only nominal mention was given to cultural practices in relation to Travellers' oral and musical traditions. The skewing of social self-concept towards the negative can be understood as an outcome of racism: *'in general, racial discrimination impoverishes and socially deprives people who suffer it'* (ICHRP, 2000, p.12). This issue will be returned to later in this section.

Male and female speakers alike were highly critical of traditional patriarchal practices among Travellers in relation to women's roles and their freedom to socialise (though, as noted in the introduction to this Project Report, the gender mix in the interview sessions may have helped to prompt these highly uniform, politically correct arguments). Traditional families who continued to control young people (especially girls), and who maintained match-making practices were viewed with caution, although the loss of the stability of old ways was regretted. Observations by service providers, as well as references to 'other Travellers' in the group interviews, indicate that the tradition of arranged marriages is being maintained actively in some Traveller families in both towns, while others never followed this practice. Participants in Atown were from a group that did not arrange marriages and preferred to see their members marry out of Traveller society, while those in Btown predominantly preferred to marry Travellers. The data suggests that this is a difference specific to the people involved, and that variation in overall practice within each town is greater than the difference between the towns.

In the talk about internal affairs, travel/nomadism featured as a valued tradition even if it was no longer practical, but in the context of social restrictions it was dismissed as a badge of poverty. Participants asserted Travellers' right to travel, and many of them spoke with great sadness of the loss of this option for themselves. Several asserted that Travellers were 'healthier' in the outdoor life on the road. However, all the participants lived in houses and some of their comments implied that 'settling' was not alone for the sake of 'comfort' and acceptance by the majority – they also saw it as 'progress'. Interestingly, this is a reflection of the way settlement has been presented in policy and media texts since 1960, and may subsequently be viewed as a successful transmission of this representation. Changes have occurred in relation to the

intersecting factors of accommodation and nomadism, and speakers' ambivalence about this core cultural practice is linked to structural exclusion. However, though the pain of losing old ways was clear, participants did not engage in a structural analysis of its roots. The expectations of settled society have led Travellers to critique those aspects of their identity that settled society views as problematic. There is clearly a need to engage Travellers in substantial exploration of the positive in their ethnic heritage, and in critical analysis of the threats to their right to cultural self-determination.

Finally, official texts as well as research on Travellers mention the centrality of religion in their culture, so a note on this topic is relevant here. Apart from casual references to Sunday Mass, participants in this study did not refer to their religion even in relation to the question (repeatedly put to both groups in the phase two interview sessions) as to what had enabled generations of Travellers to survive their historic poverty and oppression. If religion was growing irrelevant to any sector in their community, this would presumably be as remarkable to Travellers as it is to the majority Irish society. Perhaps faith was an unquestioned and private matter for participants, or an area in which they did not experience marked exclusion or differentiation, making it a 'non-issue' that thereby did not need to be discussed in the interview setting.

4.1.2.2 LIFE IN THE TOWN

The interviews opened with a question: what is it like to live in this town? The initial responses were general, positive statements about the town and its people. Talk about the town centred strongly around interpersonal relations with the settled population. But although most of the interview participants had been born in their town, they spoke as if Travellers per se were 'outsiders' to the settled people's town. Their talk also differed from conventional 'blow-in' remarks: the opening comments in these interviews led to discussion of difficulties in gaining normal access to institutional provision and opportunities. The level of similarity in participants' accounts of exclusion in both towns suggests that the impact of local variations in housing policy was far outweighed by the impact of common experience of settled hostility; and settled hostility was seemingly not substantially affected by the two local authorities' differing practices regarding Traveller accommodation.

From participants' descriptions it emerged that 'nice' local authorities played a key role in the psychological and physical Traveller isolation from settled society, by fostering over-concentration of Travellers in fixed small estates. One outcome was that a Traveller's option for a house in such an estate could be understood as both coercion and choice. In both towns, participants encountered efforts by some settled people to keep them out or to squeeze them out of home ownership. Settled landlords balked at taking Traveller tenants, whether the rental was carried out by local authorities for Travellers, or directly by Travellers themselves. Travellers' purchase of houses in private developments was effectively blocked, or living in such areas was made intolerable. Continuing 'life on the road' has become an impossibility, in part due to traffic and other social, economic and environmental changes, but mainly due to the anti-nomadic thrust of the dominant culture and social institutions. Faced with the prospect of settled hostility if they move into a mainstream local authority or private purchase housing development, the Traveller 'chooses' to apply for a house in the safe 'Traveller' estate. Participants portrayed choices facing Travellers in this time of change as ranged on a continuum that sounds paradoxical to the settled person's ear – from safe and established mobility, to uncertain and unknown fixity.

There have also been major changes for Travellers in the area of education and work. Virtually all Travellers now go through primary school; an increasing number are going on to second level. The participants in this study were in favour of Travellers pursuing education to the full. However, most of them had dropped out early; the educational gap between themselves and their settled peers was a vividly depicted factor in this. The few who had gone through to third level had taken very divergent routes – one speaker, for instance, saw immersion in settled society as the only option, while another opted for working out a path in employment and life that explicitly included Traveller identity.

The need for traditional economic activities is passing, and though new self-employment opportunities are emerging, options for Travellers with partial formal education are limited. The participants experienced problems in relation to finding work and in relation to the management of their identity in the work place. One participant had built a successful career; this seemingly hindered rather than helped his chances of being publicly proud to be a citizen Traveller.

In relation to both education and work, such choices should not have to be made in the terms in which the participants described them. Again, there is a need to provide space and support for Travellers to engage with the issues involved. Above all there is a need to confront the conditions that generate these dilemmas.

4.1.2.3 TRADITION, INTERGROUP RELATIONS, RACISM AND IDENTITY

Prior to the 1960s the worlds of Travellers and settled people were more separate. Traveller-settled hostility occurred in informal, relatively private domains – on settled people's doorsteps, in passing encounters. The Traveller could escape, move down the street, out of town, or back into her/ his own world. Now, the law and accommodation policies, and Travellers' desire to access normal services and social spaces, combine to fix them far more inescapably under the settled gaze. The housed family has to endure the twenty-four hour gaze of hostile neighbours, with whose children the Traveller child goes to school. Travellers do build up some good relationships in these situations. However, when some of them are put out of the shop or pub, they experience this in front of their neighbours. They are not virtually unknown to the audience, and there is no separate space to which they can retreat. Several participants noted that Travellers are increasingly aware that as their cultural practices and their accommodation locations change, they require new conflict management processes both within their communities and between themselves and settled people. However, this analysis sometimes tended towards accepting that the Travellers shoulder the responsibility for all conflict. One service provider took a different perspective, noting that Travellers 'have compromised themselves to death' in their efforts to comply with settled society's norms and demands.

The old adage 'good fences make good neighbours' applies to the impact of accommodation policies on Travellers' internal social interactions. 'Freedom and space' were the nomadic Traveller's fences, gave them their means of coping with internal conflict as well as with Traveller-settled conflict. Participants' discussion of where they were housed suggests strongly that Travellers who choose group housing do so for two often intersecting reasons: protection from racism, and love of family. Participants living in clustered housing felt forced into it by the hostility of settled society and its institutions. They loved their extended families but, not surprisingly, they did not want to be in each other's (cramped) space without remission. Authorities have invoked the Traveller value of the extended family to validate grouping housing allocations in local authority estates, but the Travellers' cultural practice of extended family clusters living in close proximity was traditionally twinned with the practice of separating and coming together within the nomadic framework. Living in fixed close quarters often threatens the maintenance of good internal relationships for a people accustomed to freedom and space, and to moving in times of tension.

Common-sense observation as well as research tells us that people are becoming more culturally 'hybrid' in this age of rapid social change, global mobility, and telecommunications. Clearly Travellers have many other identities besides their ethnic one, and depending on context they may operate primarily as a family member, woman, town resident, student, employee, etc. However, it is easy to use multiple identity and 'hybridity' arguments to validate underestimates of Travellers' ethnic identity. Dominant society wants Travellers neither to remember the positive understandings of their culture, nor to forget the negative understandings of it. Individualistic escape routes are at least implicitly offered through educational curricula that offer life chances to Travellers who acquire settled society's cultural capital, rejecting or ignoring what some education providers, and some Travellers themselves, see as undesirable group heritage. This is anti-educational and racist: data in this study shows how a need to keep one's ethnic identity 'secret' or to 'forget' it is problematic in terms of developing the full potential of the individual or the group. All Travellers are entitled to explore their traditions and develop pride in their cultural identity and heritage.

The IHCR (2000) lists responses of victims of racism. The identifications match the pitfalls facing Travellers, identified in the interview data studied here (below, each response listed by the IHCR is exemplified by phrases from the interviews. Examples are italicised and in brackets):

- Internalising the values of the dominant system *('we're no longer Travellers')*;
- Isolating themselves within their own enclaves *('I don't feel comfortable till I'm with my own people')*;
- Retreating into internal authoritarianism *('girls are supervised...see it as a constraint')*;
- Self-limitation *('[If you're going to college] they'd laugh at you')*;
- Adopting stereotypical behaviour expected by the prejudiced majority *('family feuds')*;
- 'Escaping' to pursue individual acceptance and success *('I've chosen my life, to move away')*

As the bracketed quotations indicate, elements of these responses were present in the interview data. However, life choices are also more complex than such a listing suggests. Some participants in this study had decided to 'emigrate', so to speak, from the Traveller way of life, and live as settled people. This choice is as valid as any other form of emigration if it is made in freedom. It would be wrong to identify all cultural transfers as 'escape' in an entirely negative sense. However, in the hostile context in which Travellers make such decisions, this freedom is far from assured. Participants frequently reiterated that a person's self esteem was depressed by experience of racism, and their choice to settle owed a lot to the desire to escape this. However, some speakers incorporated negative perceptions of their own ethnic group in their rationale for their cultural emigration. This suggests that there has been an erosion of their self-confidence. Neither the emigration strategy nor its rationale address this – more likely they exacerbate it. In the last analysis, the participants who made this choice found their way blocked or at least made difficult by the same racist forces that inspired them to try to 'cross over'. Weak official policy and strong public hostility combine to prevent those Travellers who attempt to do what the dominant society claim they want Travellers to do - settle down and leave the Traveller way of life. Racism is self-defeating; it ensures the continuation of a way of life it condemns.

Participants' accounts of their experiences are a powerful measure of racism in settled society and its institutions, as expressed in media texts and official policy and practice. It is not surprising that Travellers self-limit, given that they realise the risks they incur by advancing too far into the terrain of hostile dominant institutions. The space within which Travellers can manage their social/group self-image, build it in a separate domain and base it on a separate set of interactions has shrunk. Travellers developed their cultural heritage of music, story, and nomadism itself in a context of negation, exclusion and impoverishment that they wanted to escape. The value they place on this heritage shrinks as they internalise dominant practices and aspirations in the critical context of a very uneasily hybrid but globalising Irish society. These issues have implications for education, particularly in the adult and community-based domain.

4.1.3 Summary of Evaluations

It must be reiterated that Travellers are not the source of the problems. Participants in this study were acutely aware of racism against them, although they used the more generalised term 'discrimination'. They had to manage their everyday lives under settled society's hostile gaze, and have had to alter their life plans and develop strategies to cope with this. Their accounts highlight the core issue: it is not Travellers' nomadism, but their group identity, that triggers anti-Traveller racism. Whether they settle or travel, Travellers are not wanted. Racism prevents Travellers from continuing with their nomadic traditions, and it prevents them from dropping them. To address the issues involved, principled commitment to action is required in relation to Travellers' community development, but primarily in relation to confronting the source of the problem: the racism of dominant society and its institutions.

Topics in the interviews fell into two main blocks: those relating to Travellers' internal social management, and those related to Traveller-settled relations. On the one hand, discussion of issues of internal significance were predominantly positive and pro-active, while discussion of issues involving Traveller-settled relations was infused with uncertainty and with a lack of trust in settled people's goodwill. On the other hand, talk about traditions that are devalued by the dominant group was predominantly talk of endurance and survival, rather than of innately positive elements of those traditions. This merged with ambivalence in relation to the perceived improvements offered by settled life, improvements that Travellers often were not allowed to access. Not surprisingly, participants' accounts revealed also that they experienced another outcome of racism: they mistrusted and were alienated from the institutions of the dominant society (ICHRP, p. 14).

In relation to their internal community life, participants' accounts showed them as positively managing their identity in the area of gender, but the data suggests that they had difficulty engaging specifically as Travellers in the other areas discussed: accommodation, interaction with settled people, mainstream employment, and access to public venues. All these areas are linked by the fact that they are sites of interpersonal and institutional anti-nomadic racism. This limits the range of choices open to Travellers, and their freedom to exploit even those choices. This was particularly clear in relation to accommodation, an area of life that is most profoundly linked with nomadism and the nomadic heritage.

In the interviews, the participants discussed personal and social exclusion, such as being barred from pubs or shunned by school mates. In their reflections they drew on their own experience and that of family and friends, as well as on their store of accounts of the old days, but they did not relate this to collective institutional exclusion. Some participants had acted on their experience by taking stands against local exclusionary practices, and by winning appointment to positions from which to do this, but none were involved in collective analysis and action in local community development projects. Participants' use of terminology also suggest gaps in opportunities for analytical reflection on their relations with settled society and its institutions.

Settled society constantly and negatively reminds Travellers of their social identity, and for this reason Travellers are often faced with a double jeopardy: to try to cloak or deny that identity, or to retreat into defensive forms of it. Therefore, it is imperative that Travellers' ethnic identity be fostered positively, in order for them to be flexible and proud as they engage with their ethnic traditions and perhaps move towards more hybrid identities. It cannot be overemphasised that the essential context for such positive celebration of Traveller identity is the elimination of anti-Traveller racism in the majority society and its institutions.

In short, participants' evaluations highlight two issues relevant to community development initiatives and support programmes. In the discussions analysed in this report, these were revealed particularly in relation to accommodation, but they apply to all integrated provision.

- The first is the need to address settled people's racism towards Travellers. This racism is a crucial factor in fomenting conflict and in threatening successful uptake of any mainstreaming programme. Participants' discussion of their experience in their towns, schools, social venues and work situations, all point to pervasive racism; these discussions also highlighted the fact that absorptionist policies and provision have not succeeded in eroding it. Difficulties to date, as evidenced in press reportage and in participants' accounts of settled residents' hostility to having Traveller neighbours, indicate that the task of addressing this is formidable.

- The second is the need to address the impact of historic denigration of their culture on Travellers themselves. Participants in this project displayed a strongly held sense of group allegiance, but their articulation of their cultural heritage was weak; analysis of their discussion revealed that this fracture and ambivalence are closely related to Travellers' historic experience of anti-nomadic racism.

The racism of the dominant society, the negative impact of it on Travellers' social self-concept, and their need to develop skills to identify and confront racism in settled society and its institutions are issues that have clear implications for the ethical priorities of community development initiatives to promote social inclusion and equality for all. These findings also have implications for the development of innovative programmes that are culturally suited to Travellers, and for the development of sound pro-diversity, anti-racist policy and practice in all community programmes and work places.

4.2 Conclusions

4.2.1 Key Issues

1. The major power differential between Travellers and the majority settled society and its institutions has not been adequately or correctly identified and addressed.

2. Language is significant: how Travellers are identified in policy texts has had a powerful impact on how they are treated in practice, on how settled society sees them, and on how they see themselves.

3. Key tools in maintaining this differential have been: denial or non-recognition of Travellers' ethnic status; and the problematising of Travellers in official policy and in media coverage. Non-use of ethnicity and racism terms in official texts has left Travellers' case for formal recognition weak and in need of constant re-assertion.

4. Nomadism is a core value in Travellers' culture, but ongoing practice of it is not essential to their sense of ethnic identity, nor to settled society's maintenance of anti-Traveller racism.

5. Principles of anti-racism and respect for cultural diversity are nominally recognised in current official and media texts, but they are often breached or forgotten in social provision design and practice, in accommodation, education, training and work opportunities. Forty-year-old 'problem' concepts of Travellers persist; provision follows – as when sites ostensibly offered to facilitate nomadism are located as so to restrict it, or when housing for Travellers who want to live with their extended families is so designed that it strains family relations.

6. It is paradoxical but true that assimilationist accommodation policy and practice are core elements in the maintenance of Travellers' exclusion.

7. The outcome of trying to live immersed in this exclusionary complex of official and popular attitudes and practice is that many Travellers internalise the oppression: they have been effectively disconnected from their own traditions, or are pressured strongly towards negative readings of them.

8. Education is seen by Travellers as their door to progress and respect. Yet they do not have access to opportunities for analysing their experience, for uncovering the often implicit or euphemistically stated structural factors and policies that shape it.

The data studied in this report on assimilationist policies and their outcomes powerfully endorse the need to include Travellers and to address issues affecting them in community development initiatives. In mainstream community and in specialised Traveller initiatives, national and local community development projects need to challenge inappropriate policies and social practices, and challenge and support Travellers in relation to their responses to them. Given the impact of a long history of attempted elimination by exclusion or assimilation, Travellers require an anti-racist programme that clearly registers their specific experience of inequality and promotes effective challenge of it, and intercultural programmes that strongly affirm their traditions as part of the diverse fabric of Irish society and life. Given their history of racist practice, settled people require programmes that promote respect for equality and celebration of diversity, and these programmes must specifically include treatment of issues relating to Travellers.

The Monitoring Committee (CMTF, 2000) repeatedly notes that social programmes must be culturally appropriate. They must be informed by principles of interculturalism and anti-racism; and they must specifically address Traveller culture and racism against them in programmes and pedagogy for all groups in society, at all ages and in all types of provision. It notes that:

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs [now the Department of Social and Family Affairs] supports some 91 community development project many of which would identify and target Travellers in their community for support. Eight of these are specialist community development projects working with the Traveller community... Pavee Point Traveller Centre is provided with funding as a specialist support agency ...[whose] aims are addressed through...

1. impacting on area based projects, Traveller projects and the overall programme,

2. providing information service and

3. work on policy.

While many geographically based community development resource centres...give a high priority to working with Travellers, the inclusion of specialist Traveller projects...ensures that Traveller issues and concerns are highlighted...It also ensures resources for development initiatives that come from within the Traveller community itself. (CMTF Report, 2000, p.30)

Community development initiatives do not operate in a neutral environment, particularly in relation to a population such as Travellers who have such deep and persistent experience of exclusion and its mirror image, assimilation. Such initiatives need to be driven by critical policy that recognises the above factors, and responds to them in culturally appropriate ways. This commitment to intercultural anti-racist policy and practice must inform both mainstream and Traveller-targeted programmes, and as noted above, Pavee Point is resourced to act as a specialist support agency, to promote appropriate inclusion of Travellers in the current Community Development Support Programme. The findings of this research project highlight the need for such ethnically sensitive programmes.

4.2.2 A Key Question for Community Development: Who are the Travellers?

The core finding of this project is that the problematised concepts of Travellers' identity and the assimilationist constructs that informed plans for them in the 1963 Commission Report are still active, often under the guise of 'diversity' language. These constructs have had immense negative effect in the lives of Travellers for two reasons. Firstly, they have served to validate popular perceptions and official policies (hence the persistence of the constructs in media and policy texts), and the outcome of this has been persistent denigration of Travellers' identity and traditions, and the persistent provision of inappropriate services. Secondly, these constructs, popular attitudes, and official practice all intersect to seriously restrict and distort Travellers' self-perception of themselves as an ethnic group with a history to be proud of, a valid place in Irish society, and a future that promises dignity and freedom.

This has implications for both mainstream and Traveller-targeted community development projects. It is imperative that all (particularly settled people) involved in planning, implementing and monitoring these programmes become alerted to the persistence of these constructs which can have the visibility of normality. It must be accepted a priori that Travellers are an ethnic group within Irish society, and that their nomadic traditions are a valuable element of that ethnicity. This conceptual issue is of crucial importance, and warrants expenditure of substantial resources on addressing it. Practicalities of how culturally inclusive community development initiatives should operate cannot be addressed until this conceptual basis is solidly incorporated in Community Development Support Programme philosophy, ethos and vision. This imperative applies to all social programmes in a diverse society that includes Travellers, so it must be addressed from the highest level. Recommendations in the next section address this core issue.

4.3 Recommendations

Two quotations cited in the main analysis in this Project Report warrant repetition here:

All thinking and all action concerning Gypsies and Travellers must be based on an essential parameter: culture, its existence, its dynamics, its past and future. When this parameter is ignored, be it through oversight, lack of reflection, or deliberately, policies run aground and actions do not produce the desired effects.
(Frederico Mayer, then Director-general of UNESCO, cited in the Task Force Report, 1995, p. 77)

The particular needs of Travellers can only be effectively addressed when they are specifically reflected in strategy; it should not be assumed that Travellers' needs will be addressed by simply locating them under the disadvantage category. (CMTF Report, 2000, p. 83)

Minimising or overlooking Travellers' ethnic identity in social policy is a form of 'racism by denial' (ICHRP, 2000). This research project has highlighted how old deficit concepts of Travellers persist in Government policy and practice, and how this has enabled maintenance of oversight at service delivery levels, with often disastrous consequences for Travellers' lives and confidence in their ethnic identity. Therefore the recommendations arising from this project relate to how Travellers are conceptualised, and to the need to explicitly include them and issues relating to them in all community programmes. This 'conceptual audit' must begin at the highest level.

4.3.1 Recommendations for the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Family Support Agency

The following recommendations are all about concepts of Traveller identity, and the racism that it attracts. It is crucial to recognise that, as this research project has identified, concepts and language are powerful tools for either the maintenance of the exclusionary status quo, or for the initiation of a society and social provision that welcomes diversity. Weeding out deeply ingrained, habitual old concepts and language and replacing them with new ones are not easy tasks; they require substantial investment of resources in training, text auditing, and monitoring of policy and practice.

1. Travellers' identity as an indigenous minority ethnic group must be recognised, and asserted in all policy documents addressing social or community issues.

2. If it is not to be a nominal formula, this recognition requires challenging long-established settled society's assumptions about the significance and substance of Travellers' ethnicity.

3. Habitual exclusionary and minimising concepts of Travellers' identity must be identified in policy and practice, removed and replaced by positive concepts and practices at all levels.

4. Substantial resources must be committed to exploring the cultural traditions of Travellers, in order to inform policy, and in order to develop rich social and educational programmes that promote anti-racism and respect for diversity among settled people, and that promote Travellers' entitlement to explore their own cultural heritage.

5. The power imbalance that privileges settled society and its norms at the expense of Travellers and their norms must be recognised, and the equal inclusion of Travellers must be an essential pre-requisite in all community policies and programmes.

6. The reality and substance of anti-Traveller racism in settled society and its institutions must be recognised, and policies and strategies to confront it must be developed.

7. Traveller organisations must be involved in this process of transforming how Travellers and racism against them are conceptualised and addressed.

Implementation of the above requires in-depth training for all involved in developing policy, planning and delivery of social provision, to promote awareness of racism in themselves as settled people, to develop skills in recognising racism and anti-ethnicity in text and practice, and to promote positive respect and provision for ethnic diversity. They apply at all levels, but can only be substantially engaged with at service delivery levels, if these levels are powerfully challenged, guided and informed by central Government.

The remaining recommendations have greater application within specific programmes but they also have relevance for all levels.

4.3.2 Recommendations for Social Programmes, with Specific Reference to Local Community Development Projects, the Community Development Support Programmes and Family Resource Centres

In the following recommendations, CDPs denote community development projects funded under the Community Development Support Programme and FRCs denote Family Resource Centres, funded by the Family Support Agency. However, these recommendations apply equally to all development projects whether or not they are located and funded within this frame.

1. Recommendations for procedure at Departmental level also apply at local project level. All community development initiatives; Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Department of Social and Family Affairs and Family Resource Centres must ensure that they are resourced to prepare management, staff, and programmes in line with the principles, so that they develop well thought out programmes that address Travellers and issues relating to them in the community.

2. In assessing the needs of local populations, particular attention must be paid to the current position of Travellers in the area, and to strategies for their inclusion in programmes, from their planning to their completion.

3. In relation to both mainstream and targeted CDPs and FRCs, principles of anti-racism and interculturalism that specifically include Travellers must be written into equal opportunities policies and codes of practice.

4. Travellers, their ethnic identity and racism against them, must be explicitly addressed in all community programmes, both mainstream and Traveller-targeted. As noted in Part of the Community: Including Travellers in the Community Development Projects (Pavee Point, 1997):

   it is important that CDPs do not ghettoise Travellers by saying that 'the Travellers are the responsibility of [Traveller-targeted organisations], we don't need to do anything. We can't encroach on their territory…(p.3)

   a code of practice that seeks to change the nature of the relationship between the Traveller community and the Community Development Projects will inevitably require the projects to change. (p.13)

5. To reflect these two points, all projects must develop policies and codes of practice that specifically include Travellers. This should be a condition of their funding.

6. To meet these challenges and effectively support local CDPs and FRCs, the Community Development Support Programme and Family Support Agency must draw on committed, innovative thinkers. Traveller organisations must be involved, as key resources in relation to informing these developments.

4.3.3 Recommendations for Traveller-Targeted Programmes

7. Travellers, whether or not they intend to continue as within their traditions, must explore their ethnic identity and heritage. They can then make life choices, animated by a positive and informed sense of their heritage, rather than dominated by a defensive sense of that identity as bound up with poverty and hardship.

8. Travellers are also entitled to develop skills of social analysis so that they can identify, confront and hopefully overcome the racism they encounter.

9. Local Travellers and national and local Traveller organisations must be involved in decision-making, planning and delivery of programmes, to ensure that programmes are truly inclusive and affirmative of Travellers.

10. More Traveller-targeted community development initiatives are required. These must be informed by anti-racism principles policies and codes of practice which expressly reflect Traveller experience in their vision, policies, plans and practice.

11. All community development initiatives must be committed to supporting Travellers in lobbying for an end to racist practice and the provision of ethnically appropriate social provision.

4.3.4 Recommendations Regarding the Media

The findings of his research project point strongly to one area which all agencies and programmes committed to promoting equality must address: media coverage of Travellers and of 'news' relating to them. Given the power of the media in maintaining old concepts, lobbying this social institution to promote positive inclusion of Travellers is essential.

8. Media contributions to the maintenance of unacceptable perceptions of Travellers must be challenged by all involved in social provision.

9. Statutory bodies must strongly promote media initiatives in relation to positive coverage of news about Travellers in Irish society.

10. Statutory and voluntary agencies must disseminate material for positive coverage of Travellers by the media, and follow through to ensure its publication.

4.3.5 Further Research Requirements

There are gaps in the information base, strategies and skills required for planning, delivering and measuring the outcomes of inclusive, anti-racist programmes envisaged above. As noted above in the quotation from Pavee Point (1997, p.13), real inclusion of Travellers will require that the Community Development Support Programme and other community initiatives will change. Research is required to identify appropriate changes. The following are indicators of possible research directions:

1. Development of proofing tools, specifically targeting Travellers' requirements for equality.

2. Identification and development of culturally appropriate programmes specifically for Travellers, and of intercultural programmes that would satisfactorily address the needs and release potential of settled and Traveller.

3. Development of appropriate tools for measuring and monitoring effectiveness and ongoing implementation. This would include:

   a. Identification of what constitutes relevant data, to enable planning effective provision; and development of methods for gathering it.

   b. Identification of 'appropriate performance outcomes', to monitor the effectiveness of Travellers' access to provision.

4.4 Concluding Comments

Community and Family Development Initiatives must aim to be inclusive and to promote political, socio-economic and personal self determination. It is particularly important to reflect on the conceptual framework for policy and practice in relation to Travellers, and to ensure that that framework is translated into appropriate inclusive and affirmative strategies. This is so because Travellers' cultural base is profoundly differentiated from that of the majority society, by nomadism. To address Travellers' experience is to address the experience of a silenced minority:

For too long Travellers have been unaware of the theories that have been constructed about them... More Travellers are rejecting the sub-culture of poverty theory ... we see ourselves as an ethnic group. This enables us to put into words and to have concepts which explain our experiences and what has been happening to us. (Collins, M., 1994, 'The Sub-Culture of Poverty - A Response to McCarthy', in M. McCann, S. Ó Síocháin, and J. Ruane (eds), Irish Travellers: Culture and Ethnicity, Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University. Pp. 130-132)

Finally, it must be reiterated that the settled population and its institutions must be the key targets of change in this domain. Travellers will know that they are heard when they find proof that they have been listened to by all - when social life and formal provision for all sectors of Irish society are informed by principles of anti-racism and interculturalism.

For too long Travellers have been unaware of the theories that have been constructed about them… This enables us to put into words and to have concepts which explain our experiences and what has been happening to us.

> "Travellers had to manage their everyday lives under settled society's hostile gaze, and have had to alter their life plans and develop strategies to cope with this. Their accounts highlight the core issue: it is not Travellers' nomadism, but their group identity, that triggers anti-Traveller racism. Whether they settle or travel, Travellers are not wanted. Racism prevents Travellers from continuing with their nomadic traditions, and it prevents them from dropping them. To address the issues involved, principled commitment to action is required in relation to Travellers' community development, but primarily in relation to confronting the source of the problem: the racism of dominant society and its institutions."

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