

*Chapter Twelve:  
Mobilising Spatial Risks: Reflections on  
Researching Venezuelan and Australian  
Fairground People's Educational  
Experiences*

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**Abstract**

One approach to conducting educational research is to strive for 'risk minimisation'. This is presumably on the assumption that risk is always and inevitably dangerous and harmful (see also McDougall, Jarzabkowski, Mills & Gale, Moore, Danaher and Walker-Gibbs, this volume), and to be avoided at all costs. Following the theme of celebrating 'strategic uncertainties' (Stronach & MacLure, 1997), we prefer a different approach, one grounded in the recognition of risk as the prerequisite of new conceptual, methodological and empirical understandings. Rather than being minimised or avoided, risk should be mobilised and enthusiastically pursued – *carpe diem* transposed to an educational research framework.

Our conviction of the utility, even the necessity, of mobilising risk derives in part from our ongoing research into the educational experiences of Venezuelan and Australian fairground people (Anteliz & Danaher, 2000; Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001). In multiple ways, the fairground people routinely enter the spaces of permanently resident communities, and in so doing they challenge the stereotypes attached to mobile groups (McVeigh, 1997). From this perspective, their physical mobility becomes allied with their mobilisation of spatial risks in order to earn their living and to sustain their cultural heritage.

We see this process of mobilising spatial risks as potentially both a template and a metaphor for educational researchers. Space can be conceptualised as the site of multiple and often conflicting beliefs, discourses and values. In the context of an educational research project, space can indeed be risky and unpredictable, yet it can also become the place in which transformational educational practices are conceived and developed. This is precisely why spatial risks need to be mobilised – and why ‘strategic uncertainties’ need to be celebrated.

## **Introduction**

We begin this chapter as we concluded the journal article (Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001) on which it builds: by citing approvingly Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) advocacy in educational research of “uncanny openings” (see also McDougall, this volume) and a “kind of strategic uncertainty” by which “to mobilise meaning...rather than to fix it” (p. 5). This advocacy was partly what we had in mind when we argued the need for “the development of road maps for conceptualising and conducting research – however limited, partial and temporary those road maps might of necessity be” (Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001, p. 233).

This chapter is concerned with two sets of four interlinked concepts: uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space; and mobility, strategy, ethics and politics. The chapter contributes to this book’s project of articulating and deploying the notion of ‘strategic uncertainties’ in contemporary educational research borrowed from Stronach and MacLure (1997) in two key ways:

- By engaging theoretically with Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) work on uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space;
- By exemplifying our argument empirically by reference to our research into the educational experiences of Venezuelan and Australian fairground people.

At the same time, given the chapter’s location in the section of the book concerned with “Researching Environments and Spaces”, we seek to contribute to the ongoing theorisation of space. As we elaborate below, we essay this by engaging with Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) insight that “uncanny openings...turn out...to be...knots, complications, folds and partial connections” rather than spaces (p. 5).

The chapter consists of three sections:

- Modernist and postmodernist understandings of uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space;
- Australian fairground people as strategic mobilisers of spatial risks;
- Ethical and political issues in the strategic mobilisation of spatial risks in researching with Venezuelan fairground people

The argument presented in the chapter is that the fairground people's *modus operandi* of strategically mobilising the spatial risks that they traverse constitutes one possible 'road map' for contemporary educational researchers. This is because the fairground people's strategic engagements with the ambivalence that they encounter as a result of their mobility afford them opportunities to tell different kinds of stories about themselves and their lives from the superficially certain yet ultimately (en)closing stereotypes attached to itinerancy. This is precisely the kind of strategic uncertainty – one that builds on ambivalence and that mobilises risk – that we contend is vital if contemporary educational research is to be ethically appropriate and politically responsible.

### **Modernist and Postmodernist Understandings of Uncertainty, Risk, Ambivalence and Space**

Modernist understandings of uncertainty, risk and ambivalence are that they are negative phenomena and are to be avoided at all costs. While these assumptions and attitudes are manifested in deeply embedded and varied ways, we have elected to illustrate them by means of a number of specific examples in this section of the chapter. We hope to demonstrate that, while these three phenomena are not synonymous, they are closely intertwined in both public imagination and particular research paradigms. Furthermore, it is against such understandings of these terms that we position this chapter, informed by the postmodernist work of Stronach and MacLure (1997; see also Walker-Gibbs, this volume). We conclude the section by linking postmodernist understandings of the three terms with the ongoing project of reconceptualising space.

#### Uncertainty

The modernist search for – and obsession with – certainty is predicated on the fixed and permanent division between separate phenomena, with no possibility of fluidity across categories and no conception of liminality or 'in-betweenness'. This kind of definitive declaration lies at the heart of the forms of knowledge – and the conviction of their rightness as much as their rationality – associated with the European Enlightenment. Ironically the same commitment to fixed categories – generally positioned as differentially valued elements in social binaries (see also Rowan, this volume) – underpins most if not all of the

marginalising (see also Rowan, Moore, Danaher, Levinson and Moriarty, this volume) and distinctly *irrational* stereotypes accompanying various incarnations of ‘difference’.<sup>1</sup>

Understood in this way, certainty – as both a product and a relic of modernity – is to be regarded with suspicion, if not eschewed as a matter of ‘principle’. This is undoubtedly the case with postmodernist educational researchers such as Stronach and MacLure (1997). They refer, for example, to their book’s location “within an emerging body of educational, feminist, postcolonial and anthropological research which recognizes, and tries to write within, the necessary *failure* of methodology’s hope for certainty” (p. 4; *emphasis in original*). By contrast, they seek to contribute to “a strategic act of interruption of the methodological will to certainty and clarity of vision” (p. 4). Relevantly, given the reference above to the European Enlightenment, they link certainty explicitly with “‘science’, ‘Enlightenment ideals’ or ‘autonomy’”, mourning the loss of which “...should not become a way of life. Life goes on, and with it, perhaps, even, sometimes, if we’re creative enough, persistent enough, a sharper and less complicit educational research” (p. 152).

Significantly for the argument developed in this chapter, Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) commitment to this “strategic act of interruption” derives from their explicit identification of “the binary oppositions that have traditionally promised the comforts of certainty to philosophical thinking” (pp. 4-5). For us, our commitment to disrupting the binary opposition between sedentarism and nomadism or itinerancy (McVeigh, 1997) similarly follows the identification of the disabling stereotypes that construct mobile groups and individuals as ‘other’ to their settled counterparts. In other words, one of our expectations of ‘uncertainty’ in contemporary educational research is that it will facilitate the disruption of those stereotypes by opening up, rather than closing down, discussions around their origins and their effects.

We have sought in this theoretical starting point to the chapter to identify modernist commitments to certainty as having particular conceptual limitations (including an implicit basis in disabling social binaries). At the same time, we have asserted that postmodernist advocacy of uncertainty, such as that

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<sup>1</sup> We are aware that an implicit and teleological binarism might be inferred from our comparison between modernist and postmodernist understandings of key terms in this section of the chapter. In response, we point to Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) observation “that there is no shortage of boundaries, or of boundary disputes between modernism and postmodernism” (p. 18), and like them we prefer to emphasise the dynamic and shifting character of postmodernity rather than a fixed essence of meaning *vis-à-vis* modernity. From that perspective, our comparison between modernity and postmodernity is intended to render analytical utility rather than to represent yet another fixed binary.

promoted by Stronach and MacLure (1997), constitutes a potential means of moving beyond such binaries to more contingent and nuanced understandings of contemporary life. This is certainly the approach that we adopt later in the chapter with regard to facilitating the circulation of alternative renditions of the lived experiences of Venezuelan and Australian fairground people.

### Risk

In the early 2000s, there is a veritable plethora of terms centred on the concept of 'risk', including 'risk assessment', 'risk avoidance', 'risk management', 'risk minimisation' and 'risk reduction' – see for example Bessant, Hill and Watts (2003) on the origins and politics of 'risk talk'. According to this discourse, 'risk' might be considered synonymous with 'harm' or 'loss' and antonymous with 'safety', and hence as being an inherently negative phenomenon to be eschewed at all costs. This semantic association undoubtedly underpinned Winter's (1989; cited in Bryant, 1996) identification of 'risk' as the fourth of six principles of conducting action research: "Researchers are active agents who put themselves at risk, and therefore more than just the disembodied hypotheses of the conventional researcher are at issue" (p. 113).

At the same time, the automatically negative connotations of 'risk' in educational discourses have been challenged by a number of contemporary commentators (see Rowan, this volume). For example, Swadener (2000) equates "the rhetoric of 'children and families at risk'" with "the currently popular language for describing those who are *socially excluded* or at risk of failure in various systems or contexts..." (p. 117; *emphasis in original*). Swadener elaborated a number of questions designed to contest the assumptions underpinning "the hegemony of the risk rhetoric and ideology" (p. 118) – such "hegemony" (see also Rowan, McIntosh and Levinson, this volume) being manifested in her assertion that "the term 'at risk' has become a buzzword, and is often added to the title of proposals in order to increase the likelihood of funding" (p. 118). However, although we share Swadener's concern with the disabling effects of assigning labels – however well-meaning they might or might not be – to particular marginalised groups (Danaher, 2000), we dissent somewhat from Swadener's (2000) suggestion "that we reconceptualize *all children* as 'at promise' for success, versus 'at risk' for failure" (p. 118; *emphasis in original*). It is not that we deprecate the sentiment underlying this suggestion, but rather that, for the purposes of this chapter, we elect to emphasise instead Stronach and MacLure's (1997) observation that "...we need a kind of cultural revolution in educational research, not in favour of some new orthodoxy, but in favour of experiment, creativity and risk..." (p. 152). Indeed, many of the chapters in this book might be seen as delineating some of the implications of associating 'risk' with "experiment" and "creativity" for designing and conducting a particular educational research project.

## Ambivalence

Whether understood as ‘undecided’ or ‘contradictory’, ambivalence (see also Danaher, this volume) has much in common with uncertainty and risk as helping to distinguish between modernist and postmodernist understandings of those terms. As we elaborate below, our particular interest in ambivalence lies in its potential for the suspension of judgment, for the construction of new openings that might allow the entrance of alternative narratives about fairground people. In other words, we seek to celebrate the uncertainty of this term – to take the risk of engaging with the ambivalence of ambivalence – in the interests of disrupting the disabling binary that attends the social construction of itinerancy.

Significantly for our argument, Stronach and MacLure (1997) have linked ambivalence to:

a pervasive anxiety that has accompanied the dissemination of postmodernism through the disciplines, that the openings it promises are also dangerous openings, that might cut away the grounds of its own arguments, or remove any platform for critical or political agency. (p. 7)

By contrast, Stronach and MacLure prefer a less definitive – and more uncertain, risky and ambivalent – construction of postmodernity and its implications for contemporary educational research:

It follows that we reject a choosing between ‘opening’ and ‘closing’ for the more ambivalent principle of ‘intermittence’, a notion that plays between ideas of transmission and interruption while refusing to privilege transmission as the ‘message’ and interruption as its negation. As in the Morse code, the gaps are as necessary and communicative as the signals. (p. 147)

They connect this principle of “‘intermittence’” with what they call “an *erratic epistemology*”:

Educational research needs to address these uncertainties as a methodological and narrative challenge, to adopt the inherent ambivalence of what we may call an *erratic epistemology*..., and to develop a continuous deconstruction – to pick on one urgent need – of the vocabulary of educational discourse, and of governmentality more generally. (p. 152; *emphasis in original*)

These ideas of “‘intermittence’” and “an *erratic epistemology*” are clearly linked with our view of ambivalence as a suspension of judgment, as an opportunity to catch one’s breath and to look anew at attitudes and actions directed towards others.

According to Stronach and MacLure (1997), ambivalence plays an ambivalent role in contemporary social life. On the one hand, ambivalence is perceived as the enemy of modernity, revealing both the constructedness and the ultimate futility of its efforts to classify and segregate all manifestations of social life into differentially valued paired categories. On the other hand, ambivalence can function as an ally of postmodernity, by making explicit and

visible the limits on claims about social life and by underscoring the need for such claims to be contingent and modest. Ambivalence thus takes its place beside uncertainty and risk as three concepts that contemporary educational researchers might find useful in tracing the multiple and often contradictory engagements between individuals and groups and the institutions of teaching and learning.

### Space

It is fitting, in view of this chapter's location in the section of the book dealing with "Researching Environments and Spaces", to conclude this distillation of the chapter's conceptual framework by focusing on postmodernist conceptions of space. It follows from the discussion to date that space understood from this perspective is uncertain, risky and ambivalent – certainly, as we explore below, this is how mobile fairground people experience and approach the physical spaces through which they travel. Furthermore, we argue, in the final section of the chapter, that this is also how contemporary educational researchers might wish to approach their interactions with other research participants in the 'space' of a particular research project or site.

As we indicated above, we are taken with Stronach and MacLure's (1997) observation that the "uncanny openings" that they advocate in educational research help to "open spaces which turn out not to be spaces, but knots, complications, folds and partial connections" (p. 5). We believe this to be a characteristically provocative exhortation to researchers to take nothing for granted about the apparent meanings of research data and relationships, and to be alert continuously to nuances and subtleties that might yield different kinds of insights into social life in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such an approach is clearly consistent with the postmodernist understandings of uncertainty, risk and ambivalence outlined in this section.

What we take from this account of social space is an understanding that uncertainty, risk and ambivalence abound in such space, and that the specific mix of altruism and exploitation, of valuing of and contempt for difference in a particular situation is neither predictable nor guaranteed. One can react to this analysis with alarm and despondency, or at least with caution and a certain cynicism. Alternatively, and as we seek to demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, one can recognise – as we read Stronach and MacLure (1997) as having done – that uncertainty, risk and ambivalence contain the potential for positive possibilities, and in particular for a reappraisal and reworking of traditionally disabling social stereotypes. We explore below some of these possibilities in relation to both the fairground people's mobilisation of the spatial risks with which they engage and our own roles and responsibilities as researchers of Traveller education.

## **Australian Fairground People and Mobilising Spatial Risks**

The previous section of this chapter elaborated a theoretical framework centred on the associations among four interrelated concepts: uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to apply those four concepts to the Australian fairground people's lived experiences and interactions with non-mobile Australians. (Lack of space precludes this application being made to the Venezuelan fairground people. For information about their working lives, see Anteliz and Danaher [2000] and Anteliz, Danaher and Danaher [2001].) The argument presented in this section is centred on the first two of the second set of concepts identified in the introduction to the chapter: mobility and strategy. That is, we contend that the Australian fairground people deploy their mobility strategically, by turning into an advantage the uncertainties, risk and ambivalence attending their shared space with local people as they pass through those people's communities. From this perspective, Australian fairground people can be considered mobilisers of spatial risks in order to earn their living. (This depiction has important resonances with the characterisation of Australian occupational Travellers as "space invaders who routinely disrupt the boundaries between urban and rural" [Danaher, Danaher & Moriarty, 2003, p. 164].)

The dimension of uncertainty is evident in the educational initiatives that Australian fairground people have pursued. The 'showies', as they are known, have a comparatively stable cultural history, with multiple generations of many families having a connection with the agricultural show circuits. These circuits have played an enduring part in Australian cultural history. The arrival of the agricultural show in small country towns and large cities has played a unifying role within these communities, bringing the people together to exhibit their produce, socialise and amuse themselves on the rides and other diversions. Moreover, the show provides a site wherein the role and value of regional communities can be demonstrated publicly through the exhibition of best practice in agriculture and animal husbandry.

The long and enduring role of the show could have the potential to breed a certain degree of complacency and even defensiveness about the community's future, a sense that since the show has played such a culturally constitutive role in Australia's history its future is guaranteed, and that no body (either social or governmental) could possibly countenance its decline or demise. By embracing notions of uncertainty, however, the community is better able to engage with a future that is less assured than might be assumed. Owing to factors such as climate change and the impact of drought, fluctuations in global commodity prices and technological and cultural transformations, many rural industries in Australia have had to change their practices radically or else to face extinction.



The initiative shown in establishing the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children in 2000 (Moriarty, Danaher & Danaher, 2004; see also Moriarty, this volume) demonstrates the show community's belief in the importance of education in equipping their children with the skills and dispositions to engage with an uncertain future. Rather than resign themselves to the limited schooling opportunities to which they have been exposed in the past and rely on familial connections to gain a viable position on the show, show community members are now enhancing their capacity to pursue careers away from the showgrounds and to develop the technological and creative skills that will assist them in adjusting to transformations in practices on the show circuits.

In relation to risk, it is significant that it was largely the mothers on the show circuits who pursued the initiative of establishing the dedicated mobile school. As the school's principal commented: "It's always been the women who were the risk-takers". The show is conventionally understood as a masculine field, given the dependence on the physical labour of setting up and dismantling 'joints' (such as laughing clowns) and 'rides' (such as ferris wheels), repairing equipment and transporting the joints and rides over large distances in often unfavourable conditions. But the role of women in being prepared to risk their self-esteem in confronting their community's deficient school experiences and the impact of those experiences on levels of literacy, social and negotiating skills, health and career options was very important. In taking the initiative to establish links with governmental bodies such as Education Queensland and to prosecute their cause with civic and political leaders, the mothers played a proactive role in finding creative solutions for the problems of establishing mobile classrooms that could travel the show circuits. As such, they were party to an experiment in educational innovation with far-reaching consequences.

The value of ambivalence has been in suspending the judgements that have often strained relationships between the show and settled communities. These relationships have tended to be configured within a series of binary oppositions that have the effect of positioning Travellers within values associated with deficiency, disadvantage and danger, as depicted in Table 12.1:

*Table 12. 1: Values associated with fixed residence and itinerancy*

<b>Fixed Residence</b>	<b>Itinerancy</b>
Settled	Unsettled
Orderly	Disorderly
Regulated	Unregulated

That is, the norms and regulations of social institutions connected with education, law and government are seen as being more securely embedded within settled communities of permanent residents than they are within transient and mobile communities whose members seem less readily 'captive' to these forces. From this perspective, transient communities are represented as a threat to the social order, something regarded as other and alien (McVeigh, 1997). The establishment of the show school might be regarded in some sense as a move to make the show community subject to the norms and routines of the schooling project. But it might also be apprehended more ambivalently as a site in which those norms and routines are unsettled and perturbed as they are made to fit the lifestyles and values of the mobile community.

These tensions remain unresolved, appropriately given the positive value attributed in this chapter to the role of ambivalence. Teachers and other staff involved with the show school have indicated the importance of flexibility (see also Mills & Gale and Levinson, this volume) in adjusting their practices to accommodate the needs of a travelling community. On the other hand, ultimately the students' outcomes are being evaluated and judged within the normative procedures of the school system. One of the aspirations of the show school, for example, has been to break the cycle of illiteracy that has been prevalent in this community. This long-term goal is not always reflected in the standardised testing to which the children are subject, and whereby their results are judged against those of others within the system rather than being considered in the context of their history. So, within this institutional context, there is a need to be open to alternative narratives of student development and empowerment that challenge dominant, normalising and standardised models.

For the Australian fairground people, space is complex and contested. They have their own spaces – the 'private' parts of the showgrounds, their caravans and often their houses in particular places along the show circuits. The 'public' parts of the showgrounds are shared with the officials of the agricultural show societies and with the local people who attend the shows and patronise the 'joints' and 'rides' of 'sideshow alley'. The 'public' parts of the local towns are also shared with the townspeople. In many ways these are 'risky spaces', yet the fairground people are often adept at strategically mobilising 'spatial risks' by sallying forth, being proactive and taking the initiative in their approaches to the locals – whether in terms of negotiating arrangements for next year's show or of lobbying for improved educational provision for their children. These spatial risks therefore engage with the positive possibilities contained within the uncertainty and ambivalence of the fairground people's interactions with local communities.

## **Researching Strategically with Venezuelan Fairground People**

Having explicated a theoretical framework centred on the four concepts of uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space, and having explained how Australian fairground people strategically mobilise spatial risks, we turn now to consider briefly how ethics and politics underpin our efforts to mobilise similar spatial risks in our roles and responsibilities as researchers working with Venezuelan fairground people. In doing so, we assert that this kind of strategic mobilisation of spatial risks provides one possible approach for contemporary educational researchers in their interactions with other research participants in a particular research project or site.

Two examples must suffice here. The first example was the necessity of the third author of this chapter to rely on the assistance of an interpreter in conducting interviews with fairground people in Caracas, Venezuela's capital city (Danaher, 2001). While that phase of the research could not have been completed without the interpreter's involvement, that involvement added to the research's complexities and risks. Yet, rather than seeing those risks as negative and as needing to be minimised, we sought to mobilise them strategically in the space of the research project, by including the interpreter's perspective in the research design and findings (Danaher, 2001).

The second example is the different and multiple economic, geographical, political and sociocultural spaces in which we interact with one another in the context of this research project. Again, instead of seeing our respective and shared interests and subjectivities as obstacles to be overcome or suppressed, we seek to mobilise the risks that those interests and subjectivities constitute in the space of this project. Thus we bring to bear different conceptual and methodological lenses in project design and data collection and analysis. The process of negotiating meanings and understandings in this context encapsulates the strategic mobilisation of uncertain spatial risks, both in our relationships with the fairground people and in their engagements with the numerous communities through which they pass.

Clearly the ethical and political dimensions of these multiple mobilisations of spatial risks are crucial. We have ethical responsibilities and rights in relation to the fairground people, to the interpreter, to one another and to ourselves. Those responsibilities and rights are inextricably bound up with the circulation and exercise of power at varying levels (Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001). In keeping with this chapter's theoretical framework, these ethical and political dimensions are uncertain, risky, ambivalent and enacted in and through various kinds of space (see for example Danaher, Danaher & Moriarty, 2003). These dimensions are also linked indispensably with the mobilities and strategies of being and becoming educational researchers working with occupational Travellers.

For these reasons, we attest to the value of relationships between researchers and fairground people that are “limited, partial and temporary” (Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001, p. 233) – and also uncertain, risky and ambivalent. Such an approach provides a context for being ever ethically and politically attentive to the nuances of these relationships, reflexive about the conditions for their possibility and open to their convergences and divergences. This is likely to be the most significant benefit of researchers strategically mobilising spatial risks.

## **Conclusion**

We want...to indicate the productive value of taking risks, exploring the unknown and letting go of the familiar and the ‘safe’. This involves embracing ‘dangerous possibilities’ and seeing them not so much as risky but, rather, as *risqué*: that is to say, as lively, animated, spirited and capable of moving us beyond immediate dangers into new ways of thinking about and ‘doing’ gender reform in literacy contexts. (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum & Lankshear, 2001, p. 6)

This statement about “gender reform in literacy contexts” reflects our corresponding aspiration for Traveller education research. We contend that both Venezuelan and Australian fairground people and we as Traveller education researchers engage in and embrace “‘dangerous possibilities’” as they and we move strategically through the uncertain, risky and ambivalent spaces of mobility. In the fairground people’s case, they do this in order to earn their living. In our own case, we do this conscious of the ethical and political dimensions of our actions and with a view to helping to construct “new ways of thinking about and ‘doing’” the education of mobile communities, based on the celebration of difference and the circulation of alternative renditions of the fairground people’s lived experiences rather than on the perpetuation of disabling stereotypes about them. For us, these “‘dangerous possibilities’” and these “new ways of thinking about and ‘doing’” resonate strongly with Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) focus on strategic uncertainties, and also with the idea of the fairground people and Traveller education researchers as mobilisers of spatial risks.

A key element of this approach is the ongoing reconceptualisation of space. Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) reference to “uncanny openings...which turn out not to be spaces, but knots, complications, folds and partial connections” (p. 5) highlights space as a contested terrain with multiple and often competing beliefs, discourses and values (see also the three conceptualisations of space portrayed in Moriarty, Danaher and Danaher [2003]). Yet, as we have argued above, space is also the potential site of mobilised risks, something that we see as a crucial implication of Stronach and MacLure’s (1997) support for “...a kind of cultural revolution in educational research,...in favour of experiment,

creativity and risk” (p. 152). From this perspective, the fairground people’s interactions with non-mobile communities contribute both a possible template and an important metaphor to the “road maps for conceptualising and conducting research” that we advocated previously (Anteliz, Danaher & Danaher, 2001, p. 233). Thus fairground people’s and Traveller education researchers’ enactments of the role of spatial risk mobilisers accord closely with Stronach and MacLure’s emphasis on educational research as involving “uncanny openings” and “a kind of strategic uncertainty” by which “to mobilise meaning...rather than to fix it” (p. 5). In this way, uncertainty, risk, ambivalence and space are intertwined and interdependent – however temporarily and tentatively – with mobility, strategy, ethics and politics.

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