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## UK Gypsies and Travellers and the third sector

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## Abstract

This paper explores the development of the UK Gypsy and Traveller third sector and details factors which have impeded development. This includes a lack of resources and skills but also illustrates how in recent years important progress has been made in community development. The paper concludes that the current cutbacks and reduction in resources for community development, combined with new policies that Gypsies and Travellers perceive as being hostile towards them, could undermine progress made. The paper argues that 'positive action' combined with greater community involvement in service delivery could strengthen the Gypsy and Traveller third sector and foster intercultural dialogue and promote inclusion. Processes evident in other branches of the third sector (McCabe et al., 2010). The paper is relevant to a number of TSRC work streams, particularly 'Below the Radar' which explores the role, function, impact and experiences of small community action groups or organisations.

### Keywords

Gypsies; Travellers; Roma; third sector; community groups; ethnogenesis.

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Dr Andrew Ryder has a long history of work with and for Gypsy Roma Traveller communities. Between 1990 and 2001, Andrew worked as a teacher in state schools and with the British Council and taught Gypsy/Roma children in the UK, Hungary and Portugal. From 2002 until 2006, Andrew was the policy officer for the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition (GTLRC), an umbrella group which lobbied for more Traveller sites and greater social inclusion. The GTLRC was awarded the Liberty Human Rights Award in 2004.

Andrew also acted as researcher to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Traveller Law Reform from 2002 – 2007 and continues to provide support and advice. Between 2006 and 2009 Andrew was the National Policy Officer for the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, and between 2009 and 2010 carried out research into Traveller Economic Inclusion. Andrew is currently a lecturer in the Institute of Sociology and Social Policy at the Corvinus University of Budapest.

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## Introduction

The first record of Gypsies in Britain dates from 1502 in Scotland and in England from 1514 (Bancroft, 2005). Roma populations across Europe are members of the same ethno-social group as British Gypsies, but their ancestors settled in other European countries (mainly in Central and Eastern Europe) earlier in the migration process which started in India and culminated in this population reaching the UK five hundred years ago (Kenrick, 2004). Another principal Traveller group are the Irish Travellers. McVeigh has argued that Irish Travellers have their origins in a Celtic (and possibly pre Celtic) nomadic population in Ireland and are not Roma/Gypsies (McVeigh, 2007). Irish Travellers have travelled within the UK at least since the nineteenth century and possibly earlier (Niner, 2002: 7).

Despite Gypsies and Irish Travellers having differing origins and cultural traditions, there are some striking similarities between the two populations. Both groups have their own distinct community languages, Anglo-Romanes (spoken by Gypsies) and Shelta/Gammon used by Irish Travellers. Both groups operate within close-knit family structures, have strong nomadic traditions which are facing erosion as a result of sedentarist policies and hold a preference for working patterns organised around kin-groups and self-employment. The strong traditions of in-family socialisation and employment related training preferred by both Gypsies and Irish Travellers has at times acted as a barrier to participation in formal education (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Both groups experience acute social exclusion (Cemlyn et al., 2009). Another common trait is that these groups are poorly organised in a formal sense and have historically had little input in decision making processes. Few formal community organisations exist.

This paper explores the development of the third sector amongst this minority, focusing on the experiences of Gypsies and Irish Travellers. It considers the role that social capital can have in third sector development amongst Gypsies and Irish Travellers, but also the obstacles that are impeding progression. The author has worked in a number of Gypsy and Traveller third sector groups as a Policy Officer and has carried out research on the Gypsy and Traveller third sector (see methodology). This paper is of importance as it seeks to raise awareness of the challenges facing Gypsy and Traveller community groups amongst a broad range of third sector experts and practitioners and is of particular relevance to what is termed the 'below the radar' workstream of the Third Sector Research Centre as it focuses on the experiences of small voluntary and community groups which are both formal and informal (McCabe et al., 2010).

## Ethnogenesis

Ethnogenesis is a process where ethnic groups develop a heightened awareness of their identity and marginalisation and develop a greater sense of unity and political mobilisation to secure equality in wider society. Commenting on European Roma ethnogenesis in the last forty years Gheorghe and Mirga state 'Large and diverse Romani communities are experiencing a process of ethnogenesis as they discover their cultural and political potential and move from a status of a despised, ignored, and marginal community of 'Gypsies' to that of a 'Romani/Sinti' minority demanding respect and rights'

(Gheorghe and Mirga, 2001). Similar processes have been at play in the UK but Ethnogenesis in an organised sense has not been an easy process for Gypsies and Travellers. The Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights (GCECWCR - the first national community group in the UK) was noted to have been weakened by the 1970s by a series of splits and factions that eroded the unity and legitimacy of the organisation (Adams, et al., 1975, 107, See also Acton, 1974: 278). Often a central tension in these disputes was - where is the voice of Gypsies and Travellers? Who represents them? What is the role of outsiders?

A notable product of third sector community groups was the late Charles Smith who had chaired the GCECWCR but had also been a councillor and commissioner for the Commission for Racial Equality. The emergence of community leaders like Charles Smith has presented an important development in the ethnogenesis and community development of Gypsies and Travellers. Increasingly, through volunteering, community group employment and activism, community members are coming forward who can establish community projects and speak for their community thus bringing a greater level of resolution to the questions outlined above about the role and powers Gypsies and Travellers can bring to bear in advocacy and community organisation. Gypsy and Traveller community groups have also acted as an interface between the wider Gypsy and Traveller community and decision makers and service providers, playing an important role in ethnogenesis, acting as a mechanism which can mediate and negotiate intercultural change and acculturation and thus facilitate social inclusion, processes evident in other branches of the third sector (McCabe et al., 2010). Thus this paper explores the role of the third sector in Gypsy and Traveller ethnogenesis.

## Methodology

The author of this paper draws upon experience as a campaigner for Gypsy and Traveller rights but also refers to a number of recent research projects they have been actively involved in as a researcher. The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) was a research project which looked at the economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers and was funded by the Big Lottery Research Fund. The research can be described as 'participatory' as Gypsies and Travellers were involved in the analysis of data and formulation of policy recommendations. Furthermore, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB), a community group, project-managed the TEIP. Semi structured qualitative interviews were carried out with 100 Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. This data was used to formulate typologies which reflected a range of life strategies adopted which included employment and volunteering in the third sector (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010). The TEIP found increased levels of volunteering, governance involvement and paid employment amongst Gypsies and Travellers in third sector groups working for this community (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010). This paper will make reference to the findings of that research. One of the key findings was that involvement in community groups and targeted services could hold the potential for community activists and workers to achieve important positions in decision making processes and platforms to effectively mediate between policy makers and the community.

Another new piece of research which this paper draws upon is the Panel Review of Coalition Government Policy and its impact upon Gypsies and Travellers. The Panel Review was project-

managed by the Travellers Aid Trust (TAT) and acted like a select committee and over a two day period took evidence from a range of stakeholders in Parliament. Key participants were Gypsy and Traveller NGOs (non-governmental organisations) who raised a number of concerns about the impact of central government policy upon their future development (Ryder et al., 2011). This research can again be described as 'participatory' as Gypsies and Travellers were heavily involved in the analysis of data and framing policy recommendations. The centrality of Gypsies and Travellers' views and aspirations in both pieces of research is characterised by the strong use of direct quotations in the reports which through a 'call to context' seeks to convey unadulterated the 'Gypsy and Traveller voice' (Ryder and Greenfields, 2010).

## Social and civic exclusion

The Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Task Force provided a definition of social exclusion:

Social exclusion is a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people do not get a fair deal throughout their lives and find themselves in difficult situations. (Cited in Perry, 2008: 2)

Not all Gypsies and Travellers suffer from economic exclusion (poverty), a number, in fact, are highly successful entrepreneurs. However, other aspects of exclusion including poor access to services, spatial exclusion and discrimination do impact on a large number of Gypsies and Travellers. Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most excluded minorities in society, experiencing poor access to services and opportunities, acute levels of ill health and disadvantage (Cemlyn et al., 2009). One of the clearest indicators of disadvantage is that economic and social exclusion is compounded by a lack of empowerment and civic inclusion. Despite an estimated population of between 200,000 and 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers (CRE, 2006), there are no Members of Parliament from this community and only two known local authority councillors.

The third sector or community sector is the sphere of social activity undertaken by non-profit and non-governmental groups and its weak state in terms of the number of established community groups amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities is again a reflection of exclusion which has hindered ethnogenesis. The National Equality Partnership has noted the challenges posed in the development of the Gypsy and Traveller third sector:

Gypsies and Travellers come from such a low base of engagement that a huge amount of work remains to be done in helping grassroots groups to grow and develop so as to have an effective voice in society. Many grassroots Gypsy and Traveller groups lack basic infrastructure and are thus unable to secure funding (2008: 54).

The Road Ahead: Final Report of the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers (CLG, 2007: 54) notes the impediments to empowerment for this minority:

Seeking to engage a community that has long been effectively excluded from public life presents its own challenges. Low levels of literacy, the lack of a settled place to live, a

mistrust of authority in general and a tradition of keeping things within the community can make it hard to establish relationships within the community. Different community representative groups concentrate on different issues and geographical areas and, in common with groups representing any constituency, may or may not be in agreement on the best way forward. Most will struggle with resources and may have limited capacity to engage with local authorities or central government.

A lack of empowerment and civic exclusion as reflected in poor levels of community organisation has been caused by structural and cultural factors. Research evidence indicates low levels of educational achievement and participation have led to Gypsies and Travellers being described as the 'most at risk group' in the education system (Wilkin et al., 2009). Low education levels can have a negative impact on attracting funding. A recent study, commissioned by the Big Lottery Fund, noted that high expectations from funders and statutory partners were required from the third sector in terms of organisational capacity and business skills (Equal Support, 2009). Thus a lack of formal education has impeded Gypsies and Travellers' ability to influence decision making processes and create organisational structures that are sustainable and able to gather funding. Coupled with this, the Travellers Aid Trust has noted there is a perception by Gypsy and Traveller groups that funders are hostile towards them and do not trust them to manage allotted funds (TAT, 2008). A key finding of the research by TAT in 2008 was that there may be a need for some form of dedicated capacity development worker or agency that could act as a form of 'broker' between groups and grant makers. For some groups such support has been lacking. Furthermore, with the notable exception of funders like Comic Relief and the Big Lottery, some funders have been reticent to financially support Gypsy and Traveller projects because of the negative publicity and criticism of such support by the tabloid press which funders like Comic Relief have been subjected to.

High levels of discrimination towards Gypsies and Travellers has impeded participation in a range of institutions and civic forums (CRE, 2006). Such trends have been accentuated by cultural and moral fears that Gypsies and Travellers have of the wider community (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Ryder argues that, amongst Gypsies and Travellers at the margins, bonding social capital (intense social networks) acts as a form of self help and defence against exclusion and discrimination. Through the maintenance of what Barth described as cultural boundaries, Gypsies and Travellers at times have kept their distance from mainstream society (Barth, 1975) which in turn has limited the development of formal organisation. However, unlike Okely (1983), who argued that such boundaries were based on ritualised taboo, Ryder argues that such practices are on the wane and instead notions of 'insider and outsider' are maintained through a fear of the wider community (Richardson and Ryder, 2012 forthcoming). Racism towards this group can lead to forms of reactive ethnicity, a tendency for ethnic groups to construct ethnicity as a defence against racism and discrimination (Ballard and Ballard, 1977).

Bonding social capital, a lack of formal education and mistrust of wider society provoked through exclusion and discrimination, has worked against community development and ethnogenesis. Instead, 'charismatic' leadership, in the shape of strong leaders whose authority is based on status and kin networks rather than organisational and formalised democratic structures, has until recent times held sway. This limited intervention in the political and formal community sector has led to representation

and development often being asserted by outsiders. For example, in the nineteenth century a social reformer (George Smith of Coalville) tried to persuade Parliament in 1883 and 1887 to introduce Bills to bring education to Gypsy children by requiring Gypsies to register mobile dwellings, which would have enabled school Inspectors to bring their powers to bear regarding school attendance (Acton, 1974: 81). Dora Yates, a prominent member of the Gipsy Lore Society (an ethnographic study group), used well-placed political connections to intercede and frustrate such reform, in order to minimise what she believed would be a disturbance to travelling traditions (Okely, 1983: 22). Later in the twentieth century, the Labour MP Norman Dodds and Liberal MP Eric Lubbock (Lord Avebury) again fronted lobbying and change through seeking parliamentary reform to provide sites (Acton, 1974). From the 1960s, a series of community groups were set up to help Gypsies and Travellers. There were perceptions by some that non- Gypsies and Travellers had too much influence. This led to Gypsies and Travellers sometimes feeling resentful that they were not being given control of their own destinies and this led to them despairingly referring to such groups as the 'Gypsy industry', a term still employed today. One of the notable groups in the early stage of formal community development was the Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights (GCECWCRC).

The formation of the GCECWCRC in 1966 was a landmark in Gypsy and Traveller ethnogenesis as it was the first national and formalised campaign structure for this community in the UK. A leading figure was the dynamic and radical campaigner Grattan Puxon who was a non-Gypsy. In the main, Puxon and other 'outsider' campaigners provided the educational and administrative skills which the largely uneducated Gypsy activists within the GCECWCRC lacked. However, this dependence on 'outsiders' or their perceived dominance within the campaign as well as different approaches on political tactics, led to a series of divisions and splits which ruptured the GCECWCRC and attempts to present unified fronts. Despite the formation of the GCECWCRC in 1966, a decade later Martin Smith in a Young Fabian pamphlet asserted:

Gypsies have no conception of democracy or representation. It is absurd for anyone to claim in a meaningful and technically democratic sense to 'represent' the Gypsies on anything. The mechanism for establishing such representation, and those attitudes and experiences which are necessary preconditions for their establishment, quite plainly are not to be found amongst any but a handful of Travellers. This near complete absence of democratic assumptions is important for the way in which Gypsies relate to each other, and in the way they relate to the non-Gypsy establishment (Smith, 1975: 6).

Since this statement was made, important progress has been made in developing the capacity, resources and potential of Gypsy and Traveller policy and voice groups. Cemlyn et al. (2009: 172) note:

The growth of Gypsy and Traveller organisations, conferences and activities in the last decade has been remarkably strong. Some organisations, such as the Romani Rights Association, the Society for Traveller People and the Gypsy Council (The Hub 2004, Newsletter of the Gypsy Council, Spring: 23) are of many years standing, while others have developed in the last two decades, such as the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, Friends, Families and Travellers and the Irish Traveller Movement. A very significant development was the coming together of different groups to form a solid political front, in the former Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition (which won the Liberty Human Rights Award in 2004), and subsequently the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison



Groups. These developments have met a response among sympathetic politicians, for example the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform, and public service workers, such as sections of the Police in the annual Pride not Prejudice conferences.

The next section of the paper explores some of the processes that have contributed to ethnogenesis and the development of community groups, the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in these groups and the cultural and social factors at play which appear to contradict Smith's earlier assertion.

## The Gypsy and Traveller third sector

In recent years a number of national or local community projects have become established which have pioneered important work in community organisation and service delivery which holds the potential for replication and the eventual establishment of a wider national network of community groups.

All of these groups have had difficult histories, often lurching from one funding crisis to another as a result of short term project funding which has created instability within these organisations. However, in recent years, a number have entered into a period of greater stability, reflected in a broadening of the services they offer and staff employed. This paper details the work of a handful of the successful groups such as Friends Families and Travellers, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group which featured in the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project. Also included amongst the short case studies is a profile of the recently formed Stable Way Residents Association.

### Friends Families and Travellers

Friends Families and Travellers (FFT) is a national charity founded in 1994 by a number of parents and supporters of new Travellers. The central aim of the group was to form a network of support to help this group deal with the growing levels of eviction in the wake of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. Since these informal origins, FFT has undergone a series of major changes evolving from an informal support network to a constituted charity with a permanent office and a staff of 18, half of which are Gypsies and Travellers. FFT offers services, advice, support and advocacy. The organisation is now no longer centred on new Travellers. Today over 50 percent of FFT's work is undertaken with English Romany Gypsies, 30 percent with Irish Travellers and less than 20 percent with new Travellers and others e.g. Scottish Travellers and Roma (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 141). According to Chris Whitwell, the Director of FFT, the case work and service delivery plays an important role in informing its advocacy work.

'We work at national, regional and local levels. At local level we do case work [and] outreach, which is really about supporting Gypsies and Travellers into accessing the services that they need. At national level we are still very much a campaigning and policy influencing organisation setting out how to change the agenda. .... the important strength of the organisation is the way that the case work data that we get both at the local level...[via the National Helpline] where we pick up a lot of cases from all over the country...informs the policy and campaigning work. There is a direct relationship between the grassroots service provision and the strategic work that we are doing.' (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 141)

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) is another important and fast developing third sector group. The ITMB is a registered charity that was founded in 2000. As with FFT, dramatic change has occurred and the organisation has developed from having a single employee to having a staff team of 13, a growing number of which are Irish Travellers.

#### The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain

The ITMB is a second tier organisation, which means it works on a strategic level providing a platform and lobbying opportunities for Irish Travellers to raise their concerns and influence policy, but also seeks to strengthen the community through capacity building and training (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 142).

The ITMB has developed an innovative way to increase Irish Traveller involvement in the direction of the organisation by establishing an Advisory Group which helps inform and direct the broad campaign and policy work of the organisation. This is separate to the Trustees committee. Some Irish Travellers had sat on the Trustees committee but had grown frustrated with the increasingly bureaucratic nature of Trustees meetings as the organisation grew and developed. Experienced community members remain on the Trustees committee but new participants in the organisation join the Advisory Group and as they gain experience and an overview of the organisation join the Trustees committee (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 143). Another important means of involving community members and preparing them for third sector employment is achieved through sessional temporary employment. This is done through projects and by the ITMB offering Level 2 Community Development courses for Travellers in which it is hoped participants can derive a greater understanding of the third sector and employment in the Gypsy and Traveller or wider third sector (Regan and Ahmed, 2011).

A number of important community groups have also been established with a strongly localised profile, such as the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG). DGLG is a local support group which was formed in 1987. DGLG has a remit of supporting equality of access to education and health care and community supported site development.

#### Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group

DGLG was awarded the Queen's Jubilee award in 2003 and in 2004 which is a Home Office award for innovative police training. DGLG also co-ordinates the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups which seeks to support the development of other community groups. The Co-ordinator of DGLG is Siobhan Spencer MBE (a Romany Gypsy) and the organisation has a small staff team the majority of which are also Romany Gypsies. Key activities include producing cultural and educational materials and events. DGLG has gained a number of contracts to deliver specialist service provision, advice and training from general service providers. DGLG believe these specialist contracts can provide a source of revenue for many community groups. An important capacity building activity is the 'training the trainers' programme which trains Gypsies and Travellers to deliver cultural awareness sessions to service providers and is accredited by the University of Derbyshire. The course was designed and is delivered by Gypsies and Travellers (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 144).

As has been noted already, a major barrier to Gypsy and Traveller third sector development has been a lack of support by funders or a lack of understanding on their part of the needs of these groups. An important exception has been the Travellers Aid Trust.

#### The Travellers Aid Trust

The Travellers' Aid Trust (TAT) is the only independent grant-maker dedicated specifically to supporting Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. TAT is also one of the longest standing organisations working with Gypsies and Travellers. On the 21st of January 1988, a group of Travellers, civil liberty campaigners and solicitors came together and formally set up The Travellers Aid Trust as a registered charity. Prior to this, much voluntary work had been carried out by the core founders undertaking welfare work with new Travellers at free festivals and the running of an advice line. Much of this work centred on liaising with solicitors and police around access to Stonehenge. The need for these services became seriously evident following the behaviour of riot police during the now infamous 'Battle of the Beanfield' in June 1985, in which many Travellers were assaulted, their homes destroyed and children taken into care. After having become dormant for a number of years, the Trust was revived in the late 90s and became fully active as a grant maker in 2003. Its central work since being revived has been developing and delivering a range of small or targeted grants programmes aimed at benefiting Travellers directly and strengthening Gypsy & Traveller community groups.

These grants programmes have either been funded by the Trust's own assets (which come from a modest bequest that was made to the Trust) or by securing and administering grants from other larger grant makers. The Trust has also taken on the role of co-funding, managing and administering projects that promote Traveller law reform such as the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition, The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Project and the recent Panel Review of Coalition Government policy. Over the last few years, a new area of focus for the Trust has been to work with other grant makers to improve grant making practices for Gypsies and Travellers. TAT is administered by Susan Alexander, a part time administrator. The future of TAT is at present uncertain as its core funds have been depleted through grant giving and it is due to spend out in 2012. Attempts to strengthen and expand the Gypsy and Traveller third sector could be impeded by a loss of expertise and guidance from TAT if the trust is eventually dissolved.

At an even more localised level a number of residents groups exist on the network of 320 local authority sites. The number is no more than a handful but an important reform has been enacted which highlights the need for these groups. The Coalition Government has declared 'Travellers who play by the rules and live on authorised local authority sites will also gain improved protection against eviction when the Mobile Homes Act is applied to their sites. Those who live according to the terms of their agreement will have a stable home and the benefit of other rights and responsibilities already available to residents of other mobile home sites' (cited in Ryder et al., 2011, 38).

However, rather than being an act of generosity by the Coalition Government, Gypsies and Travellers have had to wait seven years for this reform and it came about because of external pressure. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgment on the Connors case in 2004 ruled

that the UK Government should act on the discriminatory and unequal nature of the tenancy rights of Gypsies and Travellers living on local authority sites. In 2007, the UK Government finally indicated it would address the issue by bringing local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites within the scope of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 in the Housing and Regeneration Bill (Johnson et al., 2010). This provision was finally being brought into force on April 30th 2011.

Traveller site residents groups could play a key role in helping residents understand their new rights and responsibilities and help ensure effective representation at the envisaged Residential Property Tribunals that will deal with disputes or grievance hearings resulting from the Mobile Homes Act 1983. It should be noted that residents will be unable to secure legal aid for legal representations but councils will be able to call upon their own in-house legal teams (though the majority of possession actions will still be dealt with by the county court where legal aid will be available). Thus, well organised and skilled residents' groups could help redress this rather one sided state of affairs (Ryder et al., 2011: 38). As noted, a huge challenge is that only a handful of residents groups exist on the national network of 320 local authority sites, a challenge compounded by the geographic location of many sites occupying marginal space which accentuates exclusion and the poor literacy levels of residents who often suffer from a sense of powerlessness and acute exclusion.

#### Stable Way Residents' Association

Stable Way (previously known as the Westway Travellers site) became a local authority site in 1976. Prior to this, it had been a traditional stopping place used by Gypsies and Irish Travellers for centuries. The site has 19 pitches (family spaces for caravans and mobile homes) and the site has a small community centre located in a portacabin. 95 Irish Travellers reside on the site (Regan and Ahmed, 2011). The site is under the Westway flyover and there is 24/7 traffic travelling overhead. Frequent complaints are made by residents about noise and pollution. For eight years, Westway Development Trust, with increased resourcing from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, has been funding work with families on Stable Way, employing a freelance community worker and the community group Southwark Travellers Action Group to provide advocacy and support (Regan and Ahmed, 2011). This work has included the establishment of Stable Way Residents' Association

The Association has existed since October 2008 and has been supported by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), Supporting People, Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, Westway Development Trust, Harrow Club and Advice Now. In 2010 the association constituted itself as a formal and legal voluntary group. It aims:

- to improve the quality of life of Travellers living in the RBKC;
- to improve the voice and participation of Travellers in the policies and decisions affecting them;
- to enable access to debt and legal advice;
- to enable a place for children, young people and adults to come together to learn and have fun;
- to work for and with, and to represent, Travellers living on Stable Way.

(Regan and Ahmed, 2011)

The association is striving to increase the say the residents have in the broad management of the site and support services and is involved in projects such as computer literacy classes. However, decades of isolation and exclusion mean that the evolution of such residents' groups can be a slow process. A report on the progress of the group notes 'Whilst there is support for the Association by most residents, there is still the fear that this is another 'red herring' that does a lot of talking though without much meaningful action. For those officers actively involved with the Association this can be a barrier to full participation' (Regan and Ahmed, 2011). To develop such an association and overcome distrust can require high levels of resources and time. Unfortunately, few authorities are committing the same level of resources as those involved in the pioneering work to develop Stable Way Residents' Association.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Staff in the third sector**

The above case studies are just a small selection of a wider number of unique and important Gypsy Roma Traveller community groups that have undergone relatively rapid change and transformation in recent years. As noted, a key development for the national organisations has been the increased level of employment of community members. In this sense, 'positive action' has played an important role. Positive action involves taking practical steps to support specific socially or economically disadvantaged communities with the purpose of helping them to achieve full and effective equality. Thus Gypsy and Traveller staff have benefitted prior to employment through targeted training and awareness raising about the organisations which employ them. For some intern positions, mentoring, volunteering or sessional employment have proven to be valuable first steps into more permanent employment positions. 'Knowledge of the community' has been listed as an essential requirement in job descriptions and is one factor that has assisted in the recruitment of community members. It should also be noted that the community groups offering positions have also effectively nurtured community staff by giving ongoing support and skills development, a process often helped by having Gypsy and Traveller staff within the organisations providing informal support networks. Here staff from the community can act as role models for new incoming staff but also understand the challenges that can be experienced by working in what for some Gypsies and Travellers will be at first difficult and challenging work environments.

Having staff from the Gypsy and Traveller community has greatly extended organisations' knowledge of the communities they serve and the effectiveness of services and outreach. It can also be argued that the employment of Gypsies and Travellers has helped some national organisations gain greater levels of trust from this community towards the organisations now employing Gypsy and Traveller staff, organisations which in the past did not always receive the full support and trust of the communities they were seeking to serve and were labelled by some to be part of a 'Gypsy industry'. The failure of some organisations in the past to reach out at a grassroots level to Gypsy and Traveller communities was compounded by the fact that some of the communities they tried to work with were tightly bound through bonded social capital which made them wary of outsiders, including those who sought to help (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 149). Chris Whitwell of FFT has noted:

Any structure, any organisation that proposes to work on behalf of a community, needs to be fairly representative of the community which it's working on behalf of. You wouldn't expect a women's organisation to be staffed by a bunch of men making decisions about what's best for women. I guess it is the same with Gypsies and Travellers except that...the traditional Traveller community is often coming from quite a low base of engagement with mainstream processes....we benefit from having a mix of Gypsies and Travellers and non-Gypsies/non-Traveller staff. They learn from each other. Quite a lot of staff that don't come from a Traveller background learn obviously about culture and customs of the Traveller community and the staff from the Traveller community are learning about mainstream processes and structures (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 141).

The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project found that the great majority of these newly employed Gypsy and Traveller staff are women. There was a perception by some respondents that traditional male perceptions of work amongst Gypsies and Travellers meant such work would not be considered suitable for males (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 71). However, such work for Gypsies and Travellers females did represent radical departures from traditional notions of work which in some families has tended to emphasise that women should work within extended family networks or engage in domestic duties rather than waged employment. Employment in community organisations could present a number of other cultural challenges. An unexpected disadvantage for a number of staff is the perception of some Gypsies and Travellers that these staff are no longer fully part of the community. One young Irish Traveller stated:

When I started to work here there was talk going around and people saying 'Can we trust her?' or 'Is she a kind of like a 'country person', a settled person (non-Traveller). Is she going to be like them?' or 'Can we say this to her?' .... For a long time I was trying to work out my way to prove to them that because I'm working here it does not mean I'm not one of 'them' (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 72).

Also within community groups and targeted services, Gypsies and Travellers could experience cultural tensions presented by working within new and alien work environments. One Gypsy employed in a community project commented:

I'm respected here but the downside is not having had the education a lot people have got. A lot of them have been to college and university and their everyday way of speaking and jargon is a lot different to mine. Not all words but some I have difficulty with and have problems with myself thinking am I dumb, when I speak is it coming out like a broad accent or just uneducated and that bothered me for a while. Now my confidence is such that I say well that's the way I am and I speak like I do and that's it (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 72).

Third sector employment has not only encouraged Gypsies and Travellers to develop new skills, but also bridging forms of social capital in situations where they work with and liaise and form partnerships with non-Travellers and develop essential skills needed in formalised advocacy for their communities. Thus third sector involvement is playing a growing role in intercultural change where changes in community roles and perceptions are being gradually mediated and transformed in gender roles, work patterns and engagement with outsiders.



Some Gypsy and Traveller community groups have remained informal, lacking charitable or company status and in some cases even constitutions. For some Gypsy and Traveller activists it has, in their opinion, enabled them to remain in control of what they do. However, such informality has prevented them getting larger grants or employing staff and sadly in some cases activists have been overwhelmed by demands for help which they have selflessly tried to meet but in the process have suffered from exhaustion and stress. As a result of this, organisations have often not been able to evolve to meet growing calls for help from a highly excluded minority. As noted earlier, Gypsies and Travellers have wrongly or rightfully termed the Gypsy and Traveller third sector as part of a 'Gypsy Industry' in which outsiders, by virtue of their professionalisation, are able to carve out careers dealing with their communities but which is perceived to offer few opportunities for community members. This factor has been described as creating a ceiling which prevents Gypsies, Roma and Travellers from being able to have a meaningful role in the direction of community groups, a process described by one critic as 'NGOisation' (Trehan, 2001). Such perceptions have often impeded opportunities for certain projects to forge meaningful links with the Gypsy and Traveller communities they serve and highlight the dangers inherent when projects do not create valid roles and a sense of ownership for community members. The author of this paper would argue that the examples presented by the three staffed case study organisations illustrate models of development which demonstrate that it is possible for 'NGOisation' to be overcome. These examples show that the community itself can have a growing and meaningful role in the direction of community groups which indeed is essential if community groups hope to serve and support Gypsies and Travellers through a community development model as opposed to one based on paternalism.

Research for the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project led to the formulation of a table typifying the traits of a model local Gypsy and Traveller community group which was in effect a synthesis of all the good practice organisations reviewed by TEIP. The table indicates the possibilities for community involvement and employment:

Table 1: A model local Gypsy and Traveller community group

Governance	Trustees – approximately 50% from the community and/or an advisory group composed primarily of community members which focuses on broad strategic decisions and campaign decisions.
Services	<p>Policy activities and 'Community Voice' activities and direct welfare/economic/training services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● business support in association with Business Links and the Co-op Diversity Action;</li> <li>● welfare support (helplines/case work);</li> <li>● partnership agreements with statutory service providers providing outreach/mediation and support for the job centre, health services, Traveller Education Service, Connexions, local training and education institutions and</li> </ul>

	<p>consultation and research based especially on local authority planning issues and race and economic equality duties;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct service provision in training and other areas run from a social action centre.</li> </ul> <p>The above would be mapped out in local area agreements, compacts, Total Place Agreements.</p>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 50 % Gypsy, Roma, Traveller staff (possibly recruited through positive action).</li> <li>• Staff development would be offered to address education and skills gaps and possible progression to management through a specifically designed training course.</li> </ul>
Volunteers	Structured and rewarded volunteering opportunities based on a written volunteering policy – leading to skills progression and employment.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mix of local (reflected in local area agreement) and central government finance from departments like Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Office of the Third Sector, now Department of Education/Office for Civil Society, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).</li> <li>• Charitable donations</li> <li>• Self-generated income through service provision and social enterprise.</li> </ul>

(Source: Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010a: 278)

As is evident from this summary of some of the findings of the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project, Gypsy and Traveller organisations are now making huge strides in terms of size and services offered. An important and exciting dynamic is the growing involvement and employment of Gypsies and Travellers in these groups which has been an essential ingredient in offering more successful advocacy, services and outreach. A key question is whether this process of ethnogenesis will benefit from new social policy trends.

## Personalisation and empowerment

Although much attention has been given to definitions of personalisation which allow personal budgets to facilitate client choice in public services, this paper adopts a broader definition which is taken to mean providing service users with a more ‘customer friendly’ and personalised way of negotiating their access to and use of services. Personalisation allows service users to have more say in how resources are used and helps them to become designers and producers of services as well as facilitating ‘self-organising solutions’ (Hiscock and Stirling, 2009).



The dimension of personalisation which enables individuals to purchase their own care and support may have little relevance for Gypsies and Travellers. Given the lack of a developed care and health sector focused on Gypsies and Travellers and general difficulties experienced by Gypsies and Travellers navigating mainstream services (as a result of illiteracy and/or enforced mobility and discrimination (Van Cleemput et al., 2007; Van Cleemput, 2008), few Gypsies and Travellers may have the ability to navigate pathways to personalised services through the use of personal budgets. Thus the chances of focused Gypsy and Traveller care groups fuelled by Gypsies and Travellers using personal budgets to acquire specialist support may be slight.

Although important progress has been made in the development of Gypsy and Traveller organisations in recent years, these groups (as with the wider third sector) face a series of new opportunities but also challenges. The next section of the paper gives an overview of the rapidly changing policy and funding terrain in which the Gypsy and Traveller third sector is located and contemplates the impact upon a growing yet fragile network of Gypsy and Traveller organisations. The development of more Gypsy and Traveller community groups could be facilitated by policies of personalisation and empowerment which have been championed by successive Governments in recent years which seek to create not only greater flexibility in service provision but involvement through community design and delivery creating new partnerships with community groups and minorities (Cabinet Office, 2008).

All main political parties entered the 2010 general election proposing that citizens themselves, whether as individuals or communities, should participate much more than they currently do in the delivery of public services: 'Politicians across the political spectrum recognise that the next phase of public service reform needs to encourage and enable the active participation of citizens themselves in the attainment of important social goods. This will require a new partnership between citizens and public services' (McNeil 2009).

This could involve community groups being engaged as mediators between service providers and their clients, or actually delivering services in partnership with established providers (Table 1: A model local Gypsy and Traveller community group - indicates some of the potential partnerships that can be forged between service providers and the community). It is also possible that services could be delivered independently using local authority premises obtained under assets transfer to offer a range of services such as training, guidance and counselling. One pioneering community group in this field has been the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG). The Finance Hub interviewed the co-ordinator of DGLG Siobhan Spencer:

Siobhan thinks that there is a future for organisations winning contracts and she hopes it will develop. Although she admits it has been a slog to get all the necessary policies in place, and everything up to date but they have brought in outside support to help them with this once they are fully accredited, they will be recognised in other areas by other potential customers (Finance Hub, 2007).

It should also be borne in mind that successful personalisation of services is dependent on effective negotiation between clients and service providers. The paucity of community groups, in conjunction with a lack of confidence and skills on the part of some individual Gypsies and Travellers, combined

with a lack of awareness of these groups' needs by service staff could mean that this group misses out on the potential opportunities within the personalisation agenda.

Personalisation could increase 'back office' costs and demands on third sector groups if contracted to deliver services and projects and is another factor that could exclude Gypsies and Travellers. However, partnerships between established NGOs and smaller community groups can overcome such obstacles (Dickinson and Glasby, 2010). Such support was provided by Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group where it was able to assist a smaller community group (the Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group) with the expertise to project-manage and administer a Supporting People Services contract (Finance Hub, 2007).

Personalisation also poses a threat in the sense that organisations endowed with formal structures seek to capture niche markets and obtain contracts and services but in effect 'monopolise' these areas in the search for profit. Such ventures are likely to give little regard to community development and ethnogenesis (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010).

## Social enterprise

Another trend in social policy is an emphasis on the economic and social benefits of social enterprise for excluded groups, a topic which has been until recently neglected with regards to its application to Gypsies and Travellers. Social entrepreneurs are typically viewed as individuals who bring business and market based skills to the pursuit of social change (Peattie and Morley, 2009: 40). A major mechanism through which such entrepreneurs operate are through social enterprises. A social enterprise is:

.. a business set up to tackle a social or environmental need. Rather than focusing on maximising shareholder value, their main aim is to generate profit which can then be used to further their social and environmental goals. The social enterprise movement is incredibly diverse, encompassing co-operatives, development trusts, community-owned businesses and social firms, among many others (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2009: 5).

To date, only a small number of social enterprises have been developed by Gypsies and Travellers. Homebase (a Community Interest Company (not for profit organisation) to build and manage sites) has been established and may provide a template that will inspire the establishment of other such groups but is a lone exception. More evident in the accommodation sector are private Gypsy site developers, where Gypsies and Travellers themselves have over a number of years developed private commercial sites. Developers like Gloria Buckley MBE can be described as social entrepreneurs because of the work they have put into creating high standard sites and disseminating good practice at a local and national level (EHRC, 2009). Other Gypsy and Traveller social entrepreneurs have set about establishing small community groups and securing local service contracts and bookings for diversity training.

Another variant of mutualism are Community Land Trusts (CLTs) which are locally-based not-for-profit organisations that own land and property in trust for the benefit of a defined community. A Community Land Trust is a legal entity, like a Company or a Co-operative, which holds assets, such as land, for a group of people. The Trust exists independently of its members and its assets cannot be

sold on for profit but are held, in perpetuity, to preserve their use for a specific purpose (Community Land Trust Website 2010). A number of Community Land Trusts to develop Traveller site provision have been under active consideration, with the Sussex Community Land Trust, for example, established by Travellers to develop sites. CLTs could provide a formalised framework for the practice of Travellers within extended families, combining resources and buying land and developing a site (Ryder et al., 2011). The development of authorised CLTs though, would proceed with the consent of the local authority. This would avoid costly and negative legal wrangles which have been caused in the past when families have developed unauthorised planning developments, often because they did not have the confidence or trust in their local council to enter into discussions prior. CLTs could herald a new era of partnerships between Gypsies and Travellers and local authorities, but again, as with other social enterprise initiatives such schemes are something of a rarity.

A failure to develop larger numbers of social enterprises and co-operative ventures may lead to Gypsies and Travellers falling behind other ethnic groups in developing business initiatives that can support community members to overcome the hurdles posed by greater regulation and bureaucracy. Such business initiatives also have the benefit of working in a way which is culturally appropriate to Travellers by working with fellow community and family members, especially in the case of co-operatives. Mutuality also endows participants with a degree of control and self-determination and represents community self help and self-reliance (Stevenson and Fitzhugh, 2010) which are prized features of Traveller cultural traditions.

The development of social enterprise and mutualism could hold profound implications. Bonding social capital has been noted as being a valuable asset for successful social enterprise projects (Evans, 2001). The high level of bonding social capital and notions of reciprocity within the Traveller economy and community and growing development of a service industry for an increasingly recognised highly marginalised minority, could present important opportunities for targeted projects which employ Gypsies and Travellers. Social enterprise could also lead to the development of more effective and targeted services amongst Gypsies and Travellers suffering acute exclusion (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010). It has been suggested that social enterprises located in disadvantaged areas have a potential competitive advantage due to their degree of embeddedness in the community (Peattie and Morley, 2009). However, as the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project has made clear, the promotion of social enterprise amongst Gypsies and Travellers will require more targeted action and support from agencies like Business links and key government departments (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2010).

Formalised mutualism amongst Gypsies and Travellers may have been hampered by the Homes and Community Agency budget for site provision for the coming year being cancelled as part of the deficit reduction programme by the Coalition Government (Traveller Times, 2010 Summer). Although there are indications that the grant will be reinstated, anxieties remain regarding financial support for site development and it appears the sum allocated will not be as great as in previous years (Ryder et al., 2011). The Localism Bill will introduce a New Homes Bonus which aims to provide incentives for local authorities to build new homes by matching council tax raised from new homes for the first 6 years. CLG has set aside almost £200m for financial year 2011/12 and £250m for each of the following three years to support the bonus. It is estimated that local authorities will receive up to £10,000 per new home allowed (Ryder et al., 2011). The Panel Review noted that there are concerns

as to whether the New Homes Bonus can adequately promote site construction including that to be delivered through CLTs and social enterprise as it is feared councils hostility to site provision will not be overcome through such incentives (Ryder et al., 2011).

## Gypsies and Travellers and the Big Society and localism

A flagship area for Coalition Government social policy is the 'Big Society' which seeks to promote new partnerships between community groups and wider service providers and decision making forums. In this process social enterprise is to be encouraged and community groups given the chance to run and deliver services (Emery/Guardian, 27/5/2011).

Those working in the Gypsy and Traveller third sector fear the opportunities for the employment of community members and delivery of devolved and effective services and involvement in the design and shaping of services and policy will be missed by the dearth of Gypsy and Traveller community groups (Ryder et al., 2011). It is likely that groups that are the most organised, confident and well resourced will be the best placed to seize opportunities presented by the Big Society (Bartlett, 2009).

Social policy initiatives intended to assist Gypsies and Travellers have often failed when they have not included community members in mapping their design and involved in service delivery. For example, Arnstberg (1998) notes that welfare interventions designed for Roma communities in Sweden floundered and were counter-productive because they did not reflect the communities' needs and aspirations. In fact, the policy of rehousing and integration undermined traditional Roma social networks and work practices and accentuated their exclusion by leading to welfarism. This led to Swedish Roma viewing the policy as an imposition to be resisted. In a similar vein McCarthy has noted the inherent dangers of excluding Irish Travellers from decision making processes in social policy:

Policy decisions that fundamentally affect Traveller lives are constantly being developed without any input from the Traveller community. Policy decisions reflect the cultural norms of the settled community. How these decisions will affect Travellers is never considered. Without knowledge of this distinct lifestyle, policy decisions cannot be sensitive to their needs (McCarthy, 1994: 28).

Hence, it is imperative that Gypsy and Traveller community groups continue to grow and flourish if the foundations of ethnogenesis are to be built upon. An important aspect of this process is capacity building - that is organisational development and staff training which enables community groups to grow and secure stable financial foundations and offer high standard services. By virtue of further capacity building, Gypsies and Travellers can build upon their present fragile foundations and further mobilise from within the community enabling them to effectively shape and influence social policy. It is a cause of concern that the Capacitybuilders programme (a non-departmental government body) will be phased out in 2011. Capacitybuilders gave significant support to capacity building initiatives for a number of Gypsy and Travellers organisations. For example, the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups delivered the training programme 'training the trainers' to improve the training capacity of Gypsies and Travellers in diversity training and the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain focused on developing Traveller site residents' groups and providing training and work experiences for young Gypsies and Travellers in the third sector. A condition of the grant was that recipients develop the use

of PQASSO assessment, thus having in place efficient and modern office operations that will facilitate further expansion but also help work out priorities, improve service user involvement in the charity, create better working practices and policies, get the management committee more involved and take more responsibility, and improve the relationship between volunteers and users. This use of PQASSO could provide the important foundations for its wider application in the Gypsy and Traveller third sector, but the author of this paper would argue that financial assistance, planning and support is needed to further disseminate the 'good practice' that has been achieved.

The Coalition Government has indicated an intention to create 5000 community organisers and a Big Society Bank to support third sector and social enterprise development. To date, little information has been relayed to the Gypsy and Traveller third sector about how much support they can expect from Big Society funding streams but it should be noted that at the present moment there is anxiety about levels of support and whether smaller groups can survive and continue to operate. This is a fear compounded by the current financial crisis which is reducing levels of local authority support and charitable donations. These fears were strongly aired at the Panel Review of Coalition Policies and their impact upon Gypsies and Travellers (Ryder et al., 2011).

The Roma Support Group (RSG) is one of the few organised projects for Roma in the UK and is delivering innovative work for Roma groups which could be replicated and extended elsewhere using the Roma Support Group as a model. The Roma Support Group informed the Panel Review that they had (like their Gypsy and Traveller counterparts) been severely affected by the financial crisis and cutbacks, which was creating insecurity as to the sustainability of the agency's work.

The Roma Support Group had contemplated applying for the Government's transition fund but noted that 90% of BAMER (Black and Minority Ethnic Refugee) organisations could not apply for a proportion of the £100 million Government Transition Fund, (which is supposed to equip leading community organisations to a sustainable bridge to self-sufficiency during economic cut-backs) because they receive less than 60% of their funding from taxpayer funded sources and were therefore not eligible for support from the Fund. The Panel Review was informed that this condition not only disqualified Roma Support Group but also most small to medium charities in the country from the safety net provided by the Transition Fund. The Roma Support Group stated 'How does this agree with the government's rhetoric to engage our sector in opportunities to build vibrant and resilient civil society? Many small-medium size community groups, which deliver vital and life-saving work for the most marginalised members of our society, will go under well before opportunities ever emerge' (Ryder et al., 2011).

The Roma Support Group also informed the Panel Review about London Councils (a pan London association of boroughs) which had introduced funding cuts on hundreds of small community support services. These cut-backs included funding for the Roma Support Group's Education Support Project. This resulted in a challenge to the policy in the Royal Courts of Justice. This case has highlighted the fact that these cuts usually hit frontline support for the most disadvantaged and socially excluded groups and are undertaken without 'due regard' being paid to equality duties as required by s71 Race Relations Act 1976, section 76A Sex Discrimination Act 1976 and section 49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995). The Roma Support Group informed the Panel Review that their case could set a legal precedent and act as a model for legal challenges to be brought by other Gypsy Roma Traveller

groups affected by punitive cuts which impact negatively in relation to Equality duties (Ryder et al., 2011).

Aside from a lack of funding reducing Gypsies and Travellers' input into the Big Society agenda, there is the issue of trust and community relations. A high incidence of racism has meant that Gypsies and Travellers are often wary of the intentions of external agencies (Richardson and Ryder, 2012 forthcoming). This may impact negatively on the effectiveness of personalisation, empowerment and inclusion in the 'Big Society', and as has been noted, trust is central in forming meaningful and inclusive service provision and relations. For campaigners for Traveller law reform the bitterest blow in recent months has been the Coalition Government's endorsement of the Conservative Green Paper on planning which pledged greater curtailment of unauthorised developments and encampments but also the abolition of regional spatial strategies and with them the end of regional pitch targets (Ryder et al., 2011). Under the banner of localism and an antipathy towards 'Big Government' the Conservatives oppose these targets but in the process it has been claimed may unleash the worst forms of 'nimbyism' that will now lead to central government failing to compel local authorities to provide sites for a highly excluded group (Avebury et al., 2010). Campaigners have argued that this policy will completely derail attempts to address the national shortage of sites (Avebury et al., 2010). Campaigners have long argued that it is this shortage of sites that has been a major cause of economic and social exclusion for Gypsies and Travellers and fissure in community relations (Richardson and Ryder, 2010).

The Coalition Government wishes to create a 'localist' dimension to the planning system by creating a 'bottom up' rather than what it describes as 'top down' approach of Regional Strategies (Localism Bill Part 5: 24-31). Under Government proposals Parish Councils or 'Neighbourhood Forums' will have the power to direct and determine local development through neighbourhood development orders and plans. Local residents will also have the power to initiate referenda on decisions by local authorities. A fear expressed by some campaigners to the Panel Review is that local people will follow a 'nimby' agenda opposing unpopular developments like social housing and Traveller sites. In the past large scale public meetings and campaigns have been orchestrated against site proposals, actions which have proven to be traumatic to Gypsy and Traveller communities and detrimental for community cohesion (Ryder et al., 2011).

Local authorities and Neighbourhood Forums are to engage in consultations on planning issues. Given the paucity of Gypsy and Traveller community groups and apprehension about attending forums where they fear they may be subjected to hostility (CLG 2007), it is likely that Gypsy and Traveller input into such discussions may be minimal. As was the case with Regional Strategies, local Gypsy and Traveller populations may look towards national organisations or a local community group within their region to help them in presenting their arguments and aspirations. However, such support was hard enough to facilitate where there were a limited number of regional consultations, but the large number of localised discussions and debates in the reformed 'localist' planning system will present an even more considerable challenge to Gypsy and Traveller organisations and may warrant targeted financial support to enable groups to deliver this role or establish some form of presence in the many areas where the localised Gypsy Traveller third sector is weak. Clause 100 of the Localism Bill '*Financial assistance to neighbourhood development*' authorises the Secretary of State to give financial assistance in connection with neighbourhood planning. Such funding could finance Gypsy



and Traveller third sector development and ethnogenesis but also input into localised planning discussions ensuring that past failures in terms of community engagement are not repeated (Ryder et al., 2011).

## An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020

The Panel Review of Coalition Policy and Gypsies and Travellers noted that the Hungarian Government in its presidency of the European Union has launched a Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies which would shape European and national policy on this issue (European Commission, 2011). It is expected that national governments, guided by the framework, will devise a national strategy to address Roma, Gypsy, Traveller exclusion which will have clear goals and targeted actions focusing on four crucial areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing.

The Framework envisages National Roma Integration Strategies to have an important role for Gypsy Roma Traveller NGOs and calls for strategies to be 'designed, implemented and monitored in close co-operation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities' (European Commission, 2011).

The Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, if delivered in the UK in accordance and within the parameters as set out by the EU, will be of profound importance in the development of policies to address Gypsy, Roma, Traveller exclusion and provide an opportunity for NGOs in policy development. However, it should be noted that Gypsy Roma and Traveller NGOs expressed extreme concern about the lack of funding available to them in the wake of the recent financial crisis. Some were even unclear as to whether they would be able to continue in their work (Ryder et al., 2011). If this were to happen, then invaluable good practice in employment, training and service provision (all of which has been centred on community involvement) could be lost. Hence, unless the present network of Gypsy Roma and Traveller groups is sustained, important foundations for further ethnogenesis and input into the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies could be lost.

## Conclusion

Gypsy and Traveller ethnogenesis as reflected in the development of modern community groups, the mobilisation of Gypsy and Traveller employees and activists within these groups, may be a prerequisite to deliver the sustained campaign and development that is needed to secure genuine political and social inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers. In the past, ethnogenesis has been derailed and hijacked by factionalism and rivalry which is in part a product of groupings based on 'charismatic' authority who have felt threatened and marginalised at attempts to modernise. Likewise, non- Gypsy and Travellers, in the opinion of some, have paternalistically dominated the Gypsy and Traveller third sector. In their defence, others would argue that such outsiders have stepped into a vacuum and attempted to create support structures that increasingly involve and empower Gypsies and Travellers. Yet until recently, the results have been mixed and although important progress has been made, only a fragile network of community groups exist with Gypsy and Traveller employment in these groups being at an early stage.

Greater educational achievement by Gypsies and Travellers and Positive Action in employment will counteract charges of paternalism and see Gypsies and Travellers themselves take greater control of the community groups that seek to serve them. As has been noted however, the dynamics of such change may also deliver a degree of acculturation whereby many traditional norms and values associated with Gypsy and Traveller identity are adapted and reinterpreted. Ethnic identity is not a static phenomena; change and adaptation is a natural process and one which in many respects Gypsies and Travellers have been extremely adept at through a process of cultural borrowing 'bricolage' (Acton, 1997). This process of cultural and organisational adaptation contains many challenges and difficult transitions. Liégeois captures this predicament:

'The Gypsies face a fundamental dilemma: to remain Gypsy in the face of the new policy of assimilation, they must organise; but organising to deal with non-Gypsies means learning to use their tools (such as associations with presidents, treasurers, secretaries, and so on, which in turn means accepting values and ways of doing things that modify lifestyles. These come to resemble those of non-Gypsies, which is just what the Gypsies are seeking to avoid. The organised Gypsy now in a position to respond to the non-Gypsy looks around to find that tradition has been left behind' (Liégeois , 1998: 167).

However, adaptation can be on the terms of Gypsies and Travellers who can through modernised NGOs secure political goals important to their community. Testament to the formal organisational abilities of Gypsies and Travellers is supplied by the Light and Life Gypsy Church, an evangelical Christian movement led and inspired by Gypsies which has a wide network of missions across the country and organises national events and bible schools. It is also possible in this process of community development to fuse the old with the new. For example, a revitalised Gypsy Council has adopted a strategy of holding roving meetings with members and supporters at traditional Gypsy fairs combined with effective wider outreach to its supporters through Facebook. No doubt there will be some traditional Gypsies and Travellers who will denounce those who embrace and seek modernisation in terms of political engagement and community development, but these are the same voices that forty years ago decried those who sought formal education and literacy (Save the Children, 2001). It may be that the present debate about empowerment and civic engagement for Gypsies and Travellers is as profound for the future of this minority as the debate that took place over formal education.

Whilst this paper signals that new and promising developments in community organisation and civic participation can be detected, it should be noted that they are fragile and at an early stage of development. The erosion of support services and a loss of funding for the Gypsy and Traveller third sector, coupled with the dismantling of policies to deliver sites and instead a greater focus on enforcement rather than provision, could do much to undermine modernisation, adaptation and ethnogenesis. A growing sense of threat and exclusion will fuel 'distancing' and mistrust and 'go it alone' strategies which although they have bolstered and preserved identity and tradition in the past, have been less effective in delivering equality and challenging societal racism towards this group



## Appendix 1: Some of the Gypsy and Traveller organisations active in England

### **National**

Friends Families and Travellers

<http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/>

The Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights

Visit them on Facebook.

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain

<http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/>

The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups

<http://nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/>

UK Association of Gypsy and Traveller Women

National Travellers' Action Group

### **Capacity Building**

The Travellers Aid Trust (TAT)

TAT has produced important guidance for funders interested in supporting the Gypsy and Traveller third sector 'A Grant-makers Guide to Supporting Gypsies and Travellers' which is available on the TAT website.

<http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/>

### **Local**

Canterbury Gypsy and Traveller Support Group

Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Voice

<http://travellersvoice.org/>

Clearwater Gypsies

<http://www.clearwatergypsies.com/index.html>

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group

<http://www.dglg.org/>

East Anglia Gypsy Council

East Nottinghamshire Traveller Association

Hull Gypsy and Traveller Exchange

Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group

<http://www.lglg.co.uk/>

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange  
<http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/information/GATE.html>

Leicester Gypsy Council Liaison Group

The London Gypsy Traveller Unit  
<http://www.lgtu.org.uk/>

One Voice for Gypsies and Travellers  
[www.onevoice4travellers.org.uk](http://www.onevoice4travellers.org.uk)

Roma Support Group  
<http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/>

Romany Rights Association

South West Alliance for Nomads  
<http://gypsytravellerhelp.org/>

Society For The Promotion And Advancement Of Romany Culture  
<http://sparcgypsiesandtravellersnortheast.org/index.html>

Somerset Gypsy liaison Group

Southwark Travellers Action Group  
<http://www.peckhamsettlement.org.uk/what-we-do/stag.html>

TravellerSpace  
<http://travellerspace-cornwall.org/index.htm>

York Travellers' Trust  
<http://www.yorktravellerstrust.org.uk/links.html>

This paper could have made reference to many other exciting projects and initiatives but the scope of the paper has not enabled wider exploration however the reader can learn more by visiting the websites of the listed groups. Friends Families and Travellers has created a database of national and local Gypsy Roma Traveller projects: <http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/database/database.html>.

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## Below the Radar

This research theme explores the role, function, impact and experiences of small community groups or activists. These include those working at a local level or in communities of interest - such as women's groups or refugee and migrant groups. We are interested in both formal organisations and more informal community activity. The research is informed by a reference group which brings together practitioners from national community networks, policy makers and researchers, as well as others who bring particular perspectives on, for example, rural, gender or black and minority ethnic issues.

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