

**Understanding the stigmatization of gypsies : power and the dialectics of (dis)identification**

POWELL, Ryan

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/4702/>

---

This document is the author deposited version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

**Published version**

POWELL, Ryan (2008). Understanding the stigmatization of gypsies : power and the dialectics of (dis)identification. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 25 (2), 87-109.

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

**'Understanding the Stigmatisation of Gypsies: Power and the  
Dialectics of (Dis)identification'**

First submitted to *Housing Theory and Society*, 5th January 2007; re-  
submitted, 10th May 2007; final version 2nd August 2007 by:

RYAN POWELL

Abstract: 203 words

Article: 10,015 words (excluding bibliography and endnotes)

Correspondence to:

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Unit 10, Science Park  
City Campus  
Howard Street  
Sheffield, UK  
S1 1WB

email: [r.s.powell@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.s.powell@shu.ac.uk)

tel: +44 (0)114 225 3561

## **Abstract**

Most theorisations on the stigmatisation of Gypsies have centred on structural factors: issues of race, ethnicity, the role of the media and the general incompatibility of nomadism with a sedentary mode of existence. This paper contends that a focus on the power differentials which characterize everyday social relations between Gypsies and the settled population can enhance our understanding of the stigmatisation of the former. It argues that stigmatisation is manifest in the ongoing process of disidentification, which involves the related processes of projection and the exaggeration of stereotypical constructions of threatening 'Others'. Drawing on the work of Norbert Elias an attempt at a theoretical synthesis is made that emphasises the centrality of the power differential in social relations between the two groups, which is a key factor in enabling and maintaining effective stigmatisation. The paper focuses on the dialectics of identification articulated by Gypsies in relation to their perceived collective similarity and difference, which is crucial in understanding their marginal position in British society. Using empirical data, the paper then explores the ways in which power differentials shape the social relations between Gypsies and the settled population, and how stigmatisation serves as a potent weapon in maintaining the weak position of British Gypsies.

**Keywords:** Gypsies and Travellers      power relations      stigmatisation  
disidentification      Elias

## Introduction

Gypsies and Travellers<sup>i</sup> have always operated on the fringes of mainstream British society and have faced discrimination and persecution in a range of guises since the first Gypsies arrived on the shores of Britain over 500 years ago. Historically, they have collectively been subjected to extermination and expulsion (Mayall, 1988) and more recently to policies of assimilation, modernisation (Sibley, 1986, 1987) and social control (Halfacree, 1996; Niner, 2004; Richardson, 2006b; Sibley, 1988). Such policies have often been based on racist notions that Gypsies and Travellers are in need of 'saving' or corrective treatment, and initiatives to this end have been put in motion by everyone from evangelicals to liberals which often emphasise their perceived moral deficiencies (Vanderbeck, 2003). This extensive range of pressures on Gypsies to conform to a sedentary way of life, alongside wider social transformations, have resulted in a mixture of adaptation, evasion, conformity and conflict (Mayall, 1988; IPPR, 2004). The persistence of stigma in relation to British nomadism runs deep such that the Commission for Racial Equality (2006) recently concluded that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the most excluded groups in Britain today. Advancements in terms of social mobility and access to power made by other 'weaker' groups in Britain, such as other Black and Minority Ethnic groups, gays and lesbians, and the physically impaired have not been matched in relation to Gypsies and Travellers (Gil-Robles, 2004). This stigma is not just confined to Britain but is mirrored across much of Europe with the same dynamics of marginalisation and exclusion reproduced across different spaces (Bancroft, 2005).

Theoretical frameworks seeking to explain the perceived anomic status of this group have focused attention on issues of race, ethnicity, the media, social and spatial policy and the general incompatibility of nomadism with a dominant sedentary mode of existence (at both an economic and social level). Thus, most conceptualisations have emphasised difference, and more importantly visible distinctions between Gypsies and Travellers on

the one hand, and the settled population<sup>ii</sup> on the other. This paper, however, argues that our understanding of the socio-dynamics of stigmatisation and its effects have been hindered by a neglect of the role of power in shaping the social relations between Gypsies and the settled population. It calls for a move beyond static distinctions and accounts and places the dynamics of power relations at the centre of an understanding of processes of disidentification and stigmatisation. As such, issues of ethnicity and race are not central here. The focus of this paper is on Gypsies but aspects inherent in the process of stigmatisation can also be found in relation to a range of social relations between groups where the defining characteristic is a power differential which confers one group with much greater power resources than the other (Elias and Scotson, 1994).

The paper begins with a brief discussion on conceptualisations of power before a review of the literature which draws attention to the neglect of the concept in existing accounts of the marginal position of Gypsies and Travellers. Other deficiencies such as a-historical approaches and a narrow focus on the issues of the day amounting to problems of involvement (Elias, 1987) are also identified. It is also argued that the strong boundary maintenance between different academic disciplines has meant that concurrent developments within them, as well as commonalities in terms of theoretical frameworks, have been largely unrealised and consequently cross-disciplinary understanding has not accrued.

Drawing on the work of Norbert Elias, it is suggested that in order to comprehend the process of stigmatisation, its socio-dynamics and the ways in which it is maintained by and within groups, one must first understand the complex dialectics of identification and disidentification, which enable effective stigmatisation. Only then can we begin to grasp the role of power in the process and, in turn, account for the role of the socio-spatial order in the maintenance and reproduction of social boundaries and control. This approach requires a theoretical synthesis, it is argued, as scholars in different academic areas have

largely been concerned with works confined to their own disciplines and which speak to their own particular methodological standpoints, with little attention given to concurrent arguments in other disciplines (Jenkins, 2004, p.93).

This synthesis is then drawn upon in order to understand the empirical findings from 25 qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with Gypsies in Yorkshire and The Humber in the UK, in the spring of 2006. Interviews sometimes involved more than one family member, lasted between 25 minutes and three hours, and were recorded and transcribed. The results of the analysis of these transcripts form the bulk of what is presented in the Findings section of this paper. There was also an ethnographic element to the research and informal discussions with Gypsies and visits to Gypsy sites, recorded in field notes, are also drawn upon. The findings point to the link between the processes of disidentification and stigmatisation - with each reinforcing the other where there is a relatively large power differential - and resultant apathy on the part of the stigmatised as 'power inferiority is experienced as human inferiority' in some cases (Elias, 1994). Finally, the paper concludes that an unequal power balance in social relations, the projection of exaggerated fears, and disidentification are prerequisites for continued stigmatisation which, in itself, is a powerful process in maintaining the status quo at the level of group relations. The conclusion also suggests areas for further research that would enhance our understanding of the continued marginalisation of Gypsies within British society.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The academic literature on Gypsies and Travellers is a diverse body of thought drawn from a number of different disciplines. Some of the different theoretical frameworks that have hitherto been used in explaining the marginal position of Gypsies and Travellers share some positive commonalities. However, they also share a common deficiency in terms of a neglect of the role of power, and particularly the power differentials inherent in

the social relations between the settled population (or more powerful groups) and Gypsies and Travellers (or weaker groups). Before turning to the Gypsy and Traveller literature, then, it is necessary to briefly consider some conceptualisations of power.

### **A Note on the Centrality of power**

Lukes' (1974) three-dimensions of power provide a useful starting point. We do not have the space here to do justice to this seminal work but charting the progress towards the three-dimensional view of power is necessary for an understanding of the development of the concept (for a fuller discussion see Lukes, 1974, pp.21-25). The one-dimensional view of power is essentially that put forward by the pluralists and in Dahl's words is 'the power of *A* to get *B* to do something *B* would otherwise not do' (Dahl in Lukes, 1974, p.11). Lukes shows that the one-dimensional view is inadequate in tackling the complexities of power in the real world due to its focus on behaviour, decision-making and observable conflict. Similarly, while an advance on the one-dimensional view is made through the two-dimensional views incorporation of non-decision-making, overt conflict and control over agendas, it is still found wanting on account of its overemphasis on behaviourism and observable conflict. The three-dimensional view represents a critique of the overly individualistic behavioural focus and Lukes summarizes the main features of this approach as a focus on: control over political agendas (involving decisions and non-decisions); issues and *potential* issues; observable and *latent* conflict; and subjective and *real* interests. For Lukes this view represents the most insidious exercise of power as it encroaches on and shapes the consciousness of individuals and the way they view their situation. It prevents people from having grievances by:

*'...shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial' (p.24).*

This conception is certainly closer to the realities presented in the empirical findings of this paper. However, Lukes draws attention to some difficulties with the three-dimensional view, most notably the focus on individuals. Power and control can also be exercised by groups so as Richardson (2006b) rightly asks 'in observing a group how is it possible to identify the precise mechanisms of the exercise of power?' (p.39). It is in relation to this problem that Elias's figurational sociology has particular resonance.

The concept of human figurations is central to any understanding of Elias's sociology and deserves attention here. The premise is that individuals are bonded together in various figurations through their interdependencies, which is an inescapable fact of everyday life and characterizes all human relations. These figurations are constantly in flux as the power differentials - both within and between different human figurations - that dictate their development change this way and that. The development of figurations is a long-term process in which outcomes are unforeseen and unplanned, as no individual or figuration of individuals can control the overall direction. For Elias, power balances, like human relationships in general, are bi-polar at least, and usually multi-polar; and should be perceived as everyday occurrences (1978, p.74). For wherever there is functional interdependence balances of power are always present.

The extent of the power differential seen in a figuration is a crucial factor in determining the characteristics of that figuration. Elias provides a comprehensive example of the importance of power differentials for human figurations in the introductory essay to *The Established and the Outsiders* (1994). The book is based on findings from a study, conducted with John Scotson, of two very similar groups on a suburban housing estate in Leicester, given the fictitious name of Winston Parva. Indeed, the two distinct groups were so similar in terms of social class, ethnicity, nationality, religion and other socio-economic indicators that the only evident difference was in terms of their length of residence on the estate. After studying the relations between these groups, which were



characterized by conflict, Elias came up with a conceptual framework of great analytical insight: established-outsider relations. Those residents who were relatively new to the estate were the outsider group and the longer term residents, who had lived there for several generations in many cases, were termed the established group. What Elias and Scotson observed was the systematic stigmatisation of the outsider group who were thought to lack the superior human virtue which the dominant group attributed to itself (1994, xv). Consequently, the outsiders were excluded from all non-occupational contact and this was maintained through 'praise-gossip' for those adhering to this and 'blame-gossip' directed at those breaking the taboo.

The key to identifying the root of the conflict rested on a figurational approach through which one could see that the source of power for the dominant group was social cohesion; not difference (e.g. race, class) which often serves to mask power differentials (Elias, 1994, xviii-xix). Elias stresses the importance of the interdependent nature of the two groups and the need to look beyond the individual:

*'In Winston Parva, as elsewhere, one found members of one group casting a slur on those of another, not because of their qualities as individual people, but because they were members of a group which they considered collectively as different from, and as inferior to, their own group.'* (Elias, 1994, xx)

Elias's theoretical framework builds on that of Lukes through its exploration of the power dynamics involved in the group setting and particularly by drawing attention to interdependencies. In this sense it is able to address the ways in which power can be exercised and maintained at the group level and emphasizes the importance of collectivities for identification and disidentification. This suggests a need to focus on social relations for an understanding of the stigmatisation *process*, not on its more visible outcomes.

ni Shuinéar (1997) asks a fundamental question which supports the argument to look beyond the surface for a better understanding of the dynamics of power and stigmatisation: 'why are nomads who have 'settled down' still hated as strong as ever?' 'The mobility of Travellers has long been constructed as a social problem; now their settlement is also being constructed as problematic' (Vanderbeck, 2003, p.375). Given this situation one can conclude that the cultural practice of nomadism is not, on its own, a sufficient explanation for the continued vilification of Gypsies and Travellers. Nor should explanations be sought solely through a focus on ethnicity which, as Mayall contends, can do more harm than good by distracting scholars from the task in hand: 'To become obsessed with tracing pedigrees as an essential stage in identifying a separate race is to be diverted from the key issue of the relationship between the travelling and settled societies' (1988, p.186). Notions of a lack of morals, dirt, violence, deviance, laziness, illiteracy and racial purity ("real" Gypsies) have all been used to justify discriminatory responses to Gypsies and Travellers and explain their continual stigmatisation. Thus arguments to justify the enforcement of conformity and sedentarisation were modified over time (Mayall, 1988, p.185) with these modifications taking place against a backdrop of social change which brought about an increasingly differentiated society.

This suggests the need to move beyond simplistic notions which place nomadism or ethnicity (or any other visible marker of difference) at the core of this 'hatred', in order to better understand the complex relationship between Gypsies and the settled population. Elias's theory of established-outsider relations sheds light on this matter:

*'What one calls "race relations"...are simply established-outsider relationships of a particular type...Whether or not the groups to which one refers when speaking of "race relations" or "racial prejudice" differ in their "racial" descent and appearance, the salient aspect of their relationship is that they are bonded together in a manner which endows one of them with very much greater power resources than the other and enables that group to exclude members of the other group from access to the centre of these resources and from closer contact with its own members, thus relegating them to the position of outsiders' (1994, p.xxx).*

In other words, it is the interdependent nature of the social relations between groups and the power differential that characterises that relationship where one should focus one's attention in order to comprehend the socio-dynamics of stigmatisation. The fact that members of the two groups differ in terms of physical appearance or language for instance, 'merely serves as a reinforcing shibboleth which makes members of an outsider group more easily recognisable as such' (Elias, 1994, xxx). As we shall see, markers of difference are important aspects in the process of identification but alone they cannot account for the boundary maintenance and strong feelings of anomie<sup>iii</sup> one encounters on the part of powerful groups in relation to weaker groups. We shall return to Elias in the discussion on the empirical findings of the research but let us first consider some other relevant theoretical concepts.

### **Insights and Limitations in the Gypsy and Traveller Literature**

The existing academic discourse relating to the marginalisation of Gypsies and Travellers provides us with some theoretical tools with which to develop our understanding of the weak position of Gypsies and Travellers (McVeigh 1997; ni Shuinéar 1997; Sibley 1981, 1987, 1988; Vanderbeck 2003). Some of this literature, however, appears to draw upon a selective reading of the current stock of knowledge. Narrow conceptualisations which seek to isolate particular factors at play in the stigmatisation process have an over-reliance on the thinkers of the day in an attempt to provide explanations based on contemporary issues (see Elias, 1987). In order to fully comprehend the complexities inherent in this process it is necessary to focus our attention on the interdependent nature of the social relations of Gypsies and the settled population, while at the same time appreciating that the shaping and outcome of these relations is a long term development with power as the defining characteristic.

Some geographers have drawn on notions of the 'Other', first put forward by Edward Said (1978), and have developed these arguments in application to the Gypsy and Traveller

population (Holloway, 2005; Richardson, 2006a; 2006b). For instance, Richardson's argument centres on the role of discourse in the control of the Gypsy and Traveller population, mainly that emanating from the media and the political establishment, which is made possible through Bauman's notion of 'Othering' resulting in a lack of concern for the well-being of the 'Other'. Richardson (2006b) shows how negative discourse and 'othering' are more prominent throughout society in application to Gypsies and Travellers than to other marginal groups. The account is also valuable in the sense that it draws attention to the outcomes of these dynamics: the translation of discourse into actions of social control. However, this a-historical conceptualisation of 'Othering' enabling discriminatory practice and maintaining the peripheral position of Gypsies and Travellers within society, whilst identifying that the media and political institutions are complicit in the reproduction of stereotypes and stigmatisation, neglects the fact that these groups are not the root causes. Similarly, Holloway's (2005) time-space specific account of the racialization of Gypsies and Travellers by the white residents of Appleby (the venue of the largest annual horse fair in the UK attended by thousands of Gypsies and Travellers) does not focus on the development of Gypsy-gauje<sup>iv</sup> social relations. While Holloway's findings on 'the ways in which white rural residents identify and construct Gypsy-Travellers through bodily and cultural markers of difference' (p.351) are useful in terms of a comprehension of how social boundaries are constructed and maintained, her focus on race and ethnicity also means that the central role of power in the social relations between the two groups is downplayed. While such accounts are valuable and important in aiding our understanding of the stigmatisation process, there is a need to link these factors to the processes at play in the face-to-face and group relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies.

Other geography scholars have paid attention to the ways in which the spatial order is implicated in placing Gypsies and Travellers at the margins of society (Halfacree, 1996; Sibley, 1987). Such accounts stress the ways in which contemporary, and often urban, Gypsies and Travellers do not conform to the romanticized image of the "real" Gypsy; the

'independent, strong, self-sufficient and exotic Romany, living out a rural existence in brightly painted caravans, selling their craft wares but largely remaining outside non-Gypsy society' (Halfacree, 1996, p.54). Mayall asserts that 'arguments permitting the creation of a Travellers' hierarchy based on race, with the elevation of the 'pure-blood' Romany as the central feature, were adopted overtly and tacitly by most people' (1988, p.79). As Gypsies and Travellers do not generally conform to this imagined stereotype they are more often than not found wanting and therefore likely to be considered deviant and in need of corrective treatment (Sibley, 1987, p.81). Crucially, in terms of the process of stigmatisation, this mythologized past contributes to the *dehumanisation* of Gypsies as well as the reproduction of an oppressive spatial order:

*'The importance of an imputed racial purity is that the people actually encountered by members of the larger society, often in conflict situations and particularly in cities, can be dismissed because they do not conform to the romantic racial stereotype. In the case of British Gypsies the use of terms like 'tinker', 'itinerant', and 'diddikai' all suggest a failure to meet the standards implied in the stereotyped view - they effectively dehumanise and legitimate oppressive policies'* (Sibley, 1987, p.80 - my emphasis)

In a similar vein, Halfacree (1996) posits that new travellers are also measured against the norms of the sedentary mode of existence but, again, they are invariably found wanting. Drawing on Cohen (1972) Halfacree explains the 'folk devil' status of new travellers, with reference to the selective, and therefore mythical, social construction of the rural idyll.

It is useful to consider Halfacree's notion of Travellers as contemporary folk devils alongside de Swaan's ideas on the ways in which identification and, by extension, disidentification is called upon for political ends: 'In mass politics...political entrepreneurs attempt to mobilize one or another structure of identification, defining and redefining their appeal until they hit upon a version that works' (1995, pp.31-32). A similar argument is also put forward by Sigona (2003) in a discussion on the circularity of labelling and policy formulation in relation to Kosovo Roma: 'The attempt to deny Roma identity is neither a

contemporary prerogative of the West, nor peculiar to it. In Kosovo both Serbs and Albanians have denied, hidden, forcedly removed and then recalled the Roma whenever required by their political needs' (p.72). This resonates with Halfacree's description of Travellers as the New Right's 'enemy within', constructed as a threat to the purified and homogeneous rural communities of the English countryside. But again, this speaks more to the outcomes and maintenance of a process, rather than an understanding of the 'how' and 'why'.

### **Purification, Categorisation and Projection**

One theoretical concept which has managed to cross disciplinary boundaries is that of purification put forward by the social anthropologist Mary Douglas in her seminal work *Purity and Danger* (1966). Douglas argues that people need to classify other people and objects in order to make sense of the world and, where classification is not possible, that which cannot be classified is viewed adversely. Consequently a strategy of purification is employed which excludes anything or anyone that falls outwith our frames of classification: 'the unclassified residual category is dirt, pollution, a threat to the integrity of the collectivity' (Sibley, 1988, p.410). This notion has been further developed by Sibley (1988) in his work on the purification of space which involves the rejection of difference and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity. Sibley's work is valuable as he points to the 'historical continuity in the urge to exclude 'others' and to purify social space' which stems from the desire to maintain boundaries, thus expelling polluting agencies and excluding threatening groups and individuals (1988, p.411). Hence Sibley looks beyond the here and now and suggests the need for a more long-term approach in understanding the rejection of difference. Interestingly, citing the example of Gypsies, he also outlines how purification can work as a two-way process with the weaker group using purification for their own ends: 'Conversely, in some cases we might see purification rules as survival mechanisms which maintain an economically and politically weak group within a larger society, for example, indigenous minorities, Gypsies, and some religious communities'

(p.411). This dynamic could also be seen as a direct response to the lack of access to power on the part of the Gypsy and Traveller population and resultant exclusion; more a tactic of 'making do' (de Certeau, 1984). Indeed, it should be noted that power is a relationship and Gypsies and Travellers are never *powerless*; their independence and tactics and strategies bear this out (see Okely, 1983; Sibley, 1981). The point is that they are on the wrong side of an unequal power balance.

In terms of its outcomes the purification thesis has some resonance with Elias's 'established-outsider' framework. For instance, Douglas touches upon the way in which the threatened group is able to maintain the boundary through the social relations and norms within that group such that: 'Group members accuse deviants in their midst of allowing the outside evil to infiltrate' (Douglas, 1973, p.169). This notion bears resemblance to Elias's ideas about 'group charisma' (this is discussed in more detail below) whereby the 'power ratio of a group member diminishes if his or her behaviour and feeling runs counter to group opinion so that this turns against him or her' (1994, xxxix). However, the social relations within and between groups are not central to the theory of purification and as a result one cannot understand the ways in which exclusion is established and maintained; a view consistent with other criticisms of labelling theory which argue that it neglects power and structure (see Jenkins, 2004, p.74).

The notion of classification in the purification thesis has similarities to the concept of categorisation, which has received particular attention in sociology:

*'[C]ategorisation is a routine and necessary contribution to how we make sense of, and impute predictability to, a complex human world of which our knowledge is only partial. The ability to identify unfamiliar individuals with reference to known categories allows us at least the illusion that we know what to expect from them'* (Jenkins 2004, p.82).

Thus categorisation prepares the ground for the imputation of stereotypes as the individual is recognised as part of a collective and the behaviour that one would expect

from that collective, reinforced through media discourses for instance (Cohen, 1972; Richardson, 2006b; Vanderbeck 2003), is attributed to the individual. Categorisation is a general interactional process of collective external definition (Jenkins, 2004), and as we shall see later it is a key component in the process of disidentification. Jenkins' categorisation goes further than the notion of classification put forward by Douglas in the sense that it is able to account for the central role of power by placing more emphasis on the consequences for both *categoriser* and *categorised*.

A recurring theme within the literature which requires some attention here is the theoretical concept of projection whereby 'impulses and feelings that are unacceptable to the person are disavowed and attributed to other persons' (de Swaan, 1995, p.26). For ni Shuinéar (1997), in her reflection on the persistence of stereotypes and anti-Traveller sentiment in Ireland, projection provides the central explanation as to why 'Gaujos hate Gypsies so much' (see also Richardson, 2006b). With reference to the social relations of Irish Travellers and 'buffers' (the Irish equivalent of gaujes), and the weaker position of the former, she argues that 'buffers' need Irish Travellers 'to personify their own faults and fears, thus lifting away the burden of them' (p.27). The romanticized image of the rural Gypsy will not do in the performance of this function as the 'genuine Romany' is too different and distant from the faults of the 'buffers'. She posits that while some fears and faults are consistently drawn upon over time others change with corresponding changes in society. Thus as Mayall argues: 'The age of religion and superstition gave way to the age of science and new myths and stereotypes developed, allegedly based on empiricist objectivity derived from fact -finding missions to the Gypsies' camps' (1988, p.185).

### **The Dialectics of (Dis)identification**

While ni Shuinéar's argument incorporates social change in the sense that these faults and fears are not immanent but change as society changes, she perhaps places too much emphasis on the process of projection. Implicit in ni Shuinéar's account are concepts



developed further in sociology such as: the notion that perceptions of Travellers are associated with the 'worst', most anomic element of the travelling community (Elias, 1994); and the idea that identity (or, more appropriately, identification) is a dialectical process (de Swaan, 1995; 1997; Jenkins, 2004). de Swaan examines the process of disidentification with reference to 'Hutu'-'Tuutsi' relations in Rwanda:

*'Through projection, all evil but still human characteristics have been assigned to the 'Tuutsi', by exaggeration they have been demonized into superhuman proportions of evil and, finally, through dehumanization they have been transformed into vermin. The process of disidentification is complete.'* (de Swaan, 1997, p.115).

As well as the process of *projection*, the *exaggeration* required in de Swaan's account of disidentification is clearly evident in application to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Britain as exemplified by media discourse (Morris, 2000; Richardson, 2006a; Turner, 2000) and encapsulated in the following quote: 'The Martin affair<sup>v</sup> created space for the expression of views that constructed rural crime as Traveller crime and suggested that the presence of Travellers was somehow incompatible with life in rural communities' (Vanderbeck, 2003, p.369). The 'space' created was predominantly that in the media, and this strikes a chord with Cohen's notion of a moral panic whereby a public outcry is created in response to perceived deviance (1972). The media play a pivotal role in terms of the way in which they exaggerate particular events and the effects of these events on the 'threatened' element. Thus, as Vanderbeck asserts, in the case of the Tony Martin affair *all* rural crime is attributed to Gypsies and Travellers and the extent of this crime is exaggerated. The threat of larger travelling groups and discourse about increasing numbers of Gypsies and Travellers have also been used as a means of *exaggerating* the imagined threat that they cause to the dominant order (Mayall, 1988; Sibley, 1987). Thus, projection, exaggeration and the process of dehumanisation (articulated by Sibley above) have all been shown to be applicable to Gypsy and Traveller populations. One can therefore conclude that de Swaan's notion of disidentification is a particularly valuable theoretical tool in aiding our understanding of the stigmatisation of Gypsies.

According to Jenkins identification is the 'production and reproduction during interaction of the intermingling, and inseparable, themes of human similarity and difference' (Jenkins, 2004, p.94). That is, who we *are* is as much dependent on who we *are not*. It is a cognitive and emotional process in which people increasingly come to experience others as similar to themselves (de Swaan, 1995). A key aspect in the dialectics of identification is the ability to distinguish, to recognise similarity and difference - categorisation (discussed above) being one such means by which we make sense of ourselves and others. However, rather than re-charting old territory (for an excellent and comprehensive discussion on the internal-external dialectic of identification see Jenkins (2004)) I want to consider the specific aspects of identification as they relate to our concerns here, that is, Gypsies. And for this it is useful to turn again to de Swaan.

de Swaan (1995) charts how the earlier identifications of kin and proximity have widened with the onset of social differentiation and increasing interdependencies between human beings. Thus, the village, once the primordial unit of social organization (i.e. the unit of survival) has been replaced by the nation-state as the unit of survival and competition. de Swaan asserts that when human beings first began to practise sedentary agriculture, they settled near neighbours and two principles of identification were evident: familial ties (or bonds of clan); and proximity - referring to shared lands and collective efforts of defence, policing, irrigation:

*'In the villages new identifications developed, uniting neighbours against outsiders: against landless vagrants, but also against the peasants of adjacent villages, pilferers of the common woods, cattle rustlers or upstream pollutants'* (de Swaan, 1995, p.27).

Now, however, the urban mode of life and mass politics have led to new structures of identification, referring to classes, races and nations, and also to religious groups and ethnicities; with the result that political entrepreneurs attempt to mobilize one or another structure of identification (de Swaan, 1995, p.27). However, as others have shown

(Halfacree, 1996; Vanderbeck, 2003) the mobilization of these identifications are more often than not made with Gypsies and Travellers on the receiving end, i.e. a disidentification *from* Gypsies and Travellers. de Swaan posits that identifications evolve with the transformations of human society, yet this long-term process, as we shall see, appears to be even slower in the relations with Gypsies.

The preceding discussion has elucidated the need to place power relations at the centre of conceptualisations of the stigmatisation of Gypsies. Related processes of categorisation, projection and disidentification have also shown to be important mediating factors in enabling collective stigmatisation. The following section of the paper draws on the theoretical concepts outlined above in the presentation of the empirical findings of the research.

## **Findings**

This central section of the paper focuses on power relations and the ways in which categorisation and the process of collective identification contributes to a 'we-image' *among* Gypsies and a process of disidentification *from* the settled population and other travelling groups. Conversely, in Gypsies' articulation of their perceived similarity and difference they also express the ways in which disidentification *from* Gypsies is evident among the settled population. To paraphrase de Swaan (1997, p.115), identification *of* Gypsies, disidentification *from* Gypsies and avoidance of all identification *with* Gypsies are the necessary conditions for the maintenance of power differentials, the feeling of superior human virtue in the 'we-image' of the settled population, and the resultant stigmatisation. The discussion that follows presents evidence to support these claims and shows how Gypsies are unable to counter their stigmatisation due to their weaker position with the resultant apathy ensuring this imbalance is maintained. Thus, though stigmatisation can be viewed as an outcome of disidentification it also reinforces this process by further

weakening the recipient group and reinforcing the threat of contamination and taboo on social contact among the more powerful group. This situation is shown to be further accentuated by the lack of access to those in positions of power on the part of Gypsies. These dynamics also have implications in the form of social control as they inform spatial policies - which are formulated in the interests of the dominant power (the settled population) - on the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

### **Gypsies, Categorisation and Disidentification**

Interviewees articulated their difference from a range of 'Others' and this was often reinforced through the process of categorisation. Gypsies were aware that they were categorised and this often resulted in a construction based on stereotypical views which prompted the erection of social boundaries and a taboo on social contact.

"The minute they find out you're Travellers, doesn't matter how long, you could be in a house for 80 year, the minute they found out you were a Traveller: "don't talk to 'em they're Gypsies, you know what they're like" #09

The above quote immediately draws attention to the dialectics of (dis)identification with a clear boundary erected by "them" when "they find out" that someone is a Traveller. Though this may not be immediately recognisable in the absence of symbolic or cultural markers of difference (Cohen, 1985), once this is realised the individual is categorised as a Gypsy and there is a negative association - "you know what they're like" - implying the threat of deviance or pollution. The power this endows to the categoriser and the inability of the categorised to fight back is further illustrated by the evident discord among Gypsies about who they are categorised alongside:

#24: "Because at the end of the day [new travellers] give Travellers a bad name because they stink, they're stinky people, that's the top and bottom of it, they're rough, scruffy, horrible people."

#25: "They're always taking drugs aren't they? They never stop."

#24: "And they use the word Traveller, that's the root of the problem, they use the word Traveller and they made the word Traveller unusable for real Travellers."

The fact that new travellers are even referred to as "Travellers" is a cause of concern for the above respondents who are keen to distance themselves from this "problematic" group who do not conform to the symbolic norms of Gypsy culture. New travellers are constructed as inauthentic (in opposition to "real Travellers"), dirty and lacking the cultural heritage of nomadism that Gypsies are endowed with. Yet categorisation lumps *all* Travellers together and this respondent is acutely aware of the fact to the extent that the very term 'Traveller' is deemed contaminated by the association with new travellers. This perceived threat of pollution also goes some way to accounting for the re-emergence of the word Gypsy as the preferred term of self-identification among the population where in the past this had derogatory connotations. Claiming the word back is a means through which Gypsies can disidentify from other travelling groups while at the same time invoking the racial stereotype of the "real" Gypsy.

Disidentification and stigmatisation on the part of Gypsies was also apparent in relation to Irish Travellers though not with the same fervour as that applied to new travellers. Gypsies applied similar exaggerated and stereotypical views to Irish Travellers as were applied to their own collective by the settled population, often constructing them as violent and linking them to excessive alcohol consumption.

"It's not that [Gypsies who have moved into housing from a particular site] don't get on with people, it's the Irish people, them lot, they're not the type that wants to get with you. Soon as they go to a pub they'll come back and cut you up or smash your home up. That's the kind of people they are, you don't have to say anything to 'em, you don't have to bother 'em but when they've had a drink they go mental" #23

Other constructions of Irish Travellers drew upon the idea that they travelled together in much larger groups and had no respect for private property, drawing attention to themselves, which had implications for *all* Gypsies and Travellers. So, then, it follows that the dialectic of identification and disidentification is played out more strongly within the context of an external threat (de Swaan, 1997). This threat is also evident in the

discussion below in relation to the settled population; most notably in terms of attitudes towards formal schooling:

"After 11 [years of age], we don't believe in [formal education]. We want them to learn to keep their own culture going and still know the ways of their own culture. If they go to school that gets knocked out of 'em. Their own ways gets knocked out of 'em" **#14**

"My little lass, she's seven now, she hits eleven and she can read and write I'll pull her out [of school]. Because all I've seen of the big schools is drugs, sex, smoking and drinking. I don't want that for my kids, that's not the Traveller way for kids" **#19**

The external threat in the form of the interrelated loss of culture and fear of pollution accentuates the need for disidentification; the projection of fears (drugs, sex and so on) onto the settled population and the exaggeration ("all I've seen of the big schools") of these make this process possible.

### **The Stigmatisation of Gypsies**

A distancing from the settled population and other travelling groups on the part of Gypsies is not a particularly new finding (see Okely, 1983; Sibley, 1981) but it does illustrate the importance of collective identification in the maintenance of social boundaries, which are central tenets of my argument. Of most interest in this paper however, are the *effects of* this dialectic process of identification and disidentification; carrying with it as it does implications in the form of exclusion and stigmatisation. Through the processes of categorisation, projection and exaggeration, exclusion is legitimised in the collective mindset of the settled population as *all* Gypsies are associated with deviance, and when measured against the social norms of the dominant group are found wanting. '[A]n established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the "bad" characteristics of that group's "worst" section - of its anomic minority' (Elias, 1994, xix).

"Don't get me wrong there's good and bad with everybody, but you'll get a lot of things what's just *exaggerated*...If I went down to one of these pubs and just say got into some aggravation and I got barred, we all get barred, they don't just bar me, they bar all of us, even though the others'd never done anything wrong" **#08** (my emphasis).

"But there's a lot of Gypsies, same as people in houses, a lot steal, just go out there looking for things to steal and obviously we know that, we're not stupid, but not everyone is the same" #13.

The second quote above would suggest that in their case Gypsies are acutely aware of the stereotypes attributed to them but at a loss as to the reasons why this should be the case. The quote draws attention to the differences in terms of the ability to cast a slur and to maintain the taboos on contact and interaction. Whereas the settled population would tend to construct all Gypsies and Travellers as deviant (in this case as thieves) the Gypsy above recognises that some Gypsies and 'gaujes' are indeed involved in petty crime, but not all of them. This entrenched stereotype amongst the settled population derives from their perceived standing as superior human beings: the complementarity of group charisma (one's own) and group disgrace (that of others) (Elias, 1994). Thus individual behaviour which is incompatible with the norms of the dominant society is applied to the whole of the weaker group and results in a desire for boundary maintenance against the threat of pollution. The behaviour of Gypsies is then understood within this imagined framework and the ability to maintain the boundary (and the ability to stigmatise) is dependent, in turn, upon the maintenance of the power differential:

*'Give a group a bad name and it is likely to live up to it...How far the shame of outsiders produced by the inescapable stigmatisation of an established group turns into paralysing apathy, how far into aggressive norm and lawlessness, depends on the overall situation'* (Elias, 1976, xxviii).

The following quote encapsulates a typical attitude amongst respondents and seems to suggest an apathetic response on the part of stigmatised Gypsies as opposed to an aggressive one:

**Int:** "Do you get any hassle round here?"

**#23 (Housed Gypsy):** "Like I said to you I don't know if it's because I'm a Traveller, Gypsy, whatever you wanna call me, people don't talk. There used to be Travellers over here at number 17 before, before I moved here and I think they used to torment the people in the house and when they think to their self 'another lot's coming', it's all the same lot you know what I mean? It puts people off doesn't it? But what can you do?"

Again, the respondent refers to the interviewer as the categoriser, is clear that she herself is the categorised and suggests a lack of control over this: "whatever you wanna call me". Furthermore, she is acutely aware of the fact that she is categorised with other deviant Travellers and also of the potential for negative stereotypes being applied to her and the possibility that she will "put people off". Perhaps most importantly, however, she appears helpless in the face of this situation - even though it is wholly wrong, it is accepted apathetically as illustrated by the final rhetorical question "But what can you do?" This apathy is a direct product of the inability of Gypsies to close ranks and fight back. Two further illustrations of this apathy are shown below where the stigmatisation is accepted and 'managed' in a kind of Goffmanesque (1968) way so as to construct it as an 'ordinary', everyday occurrence:

"Well you always get a bit of problems with bullying but kids is kids isn't they?" #01

"You go to the shops and things and you get followed and things like that there, that's what they does, it's a thing you get used to, not that it's nice like but you get used to it" #06

The issue of bullying at school is accepted and downplayed as an inevitable aspect of childhood. One could posit that the same attitude would not be evident amongst much of the settled population and, in such an instance, there would be a response of some sort; most likely the issue would be taken up with a Teacher or someone else in a position of power that could prevent a re-occurrence of the bullying. Again, the central explanation to this difference lies in the power differential falling heavily against Gypsies. Indeed, the very process of stigmatisation, and particularly where this is experienced emotionally, may serve to further accentuate this power differential given the evident apathy set out here. This, in turn, disarms Gypsies and they are unable to retaliate:

"Like if we don't know what names to call 'em, we don't call names, we just hit 'em because they, because you're not, like I don't know, we don't know how to say something" #14

The power to stigmatise is not apparent among the Gypsies; they are not equipped with the same weaponry of stigmatisation that the more powerful settled population have.



Words such as "gyppo" and "pikey" have the potential to hurt because those using them 'have an ally in an inner voice of their social inferiors' (Elias, 1994, xxiv). Gypsies commonly refer to non-Gypsies as "gaujes", which literally translates as "bumpkin" or "clod-hopper" (McVeigh, 1997, p.12) and conveys an imagery of a 'simple' people, yet the resultant shame and humiliation is not forthcoming due to the weaker position of Gypsies. In other words:

*'Their power to bite depends on the awareness of user and recipient that the humiliation of the latter intended by their use has the backing of a powerful established group, in relation to which that of the recipient is an outsider group with weaker power resources. All these terms symbolise the fact that the member of an outsider group can be shamed because he does not come up to the norms of the superior group because, in terms of these norms, he is anomic.'* (Elias, 1994, xxv).

### **Maintaining Stigmatisation**

Now we have an appreciation of the socio-dynamics of stigmatisation it is necessary to explore how this is maintained by, and within, groups. While Elias posits that the only situation wherein contact with the outside group may be admissible is the occupational setting, my findings suggest otherwise. Clearly in the case below the social conditions, that is the power differential within the workplace, allow the stigmatisation to be played out and the shame and embarrassment to ensue.

"Well in my nighttime job the woman had a cup and it said 'hands off you thieving Gypsies', she wrote on it in a marker pen" **#13**

The key to the strict adherence to taboos on social contact with Gypsies on the part of the settled population rests within Elias's notions of group charisma (applying here to the settled population) and group disgrace (to the Gypsy population) and relate to the standing of individuals within their own group. Thus those who break such taboos are likely to witness their own standing, their position within the group afforded the greater degree of charisma and thought to be of greater human virtue, adversely affected. As Gypsies are regarded as failing to observe the norms of the settled population contact

with them is perceived as a threat to these norms and those individuals indulging in interaction with Gypsies are therefore also threatening.

"Like, my friends, my gauje friends now, they won't talk to me now, they don't wanna know. Since I got with James and moved on [this site] they just don't want anything to do with me"  
**#22 (Gauje now living on a Gypsy site).**

Though not a Gypsy herself, the above respondent is articulating her experience of the collective emotional barrier erected by the dominant group. Such situations were often met with bewilderment on the part of Gypsies who were at a loss as to why they should be excluded and ostracised so vehemently. The quote below, where a female respondent speaks of the greater degree of sociability on Gypsy sites, illustrates this:

"Well in a trailer there's more people to mix with. It's like here now, I've lived here for five year and I only know that old lady's name next door, nobody else round here talks to you. I don't know if it's because they realise what you are, I don't know what it is, or people just don't mix no more, I don't know what it is, but in a trailer it's more social, like your own lot or, you know what I mean, it's a lot better" **#23 (Housed Gypsy).**

If we follow Elias's cue that stigmatisation is at its most powerful when it enters the mindset of the stigmatised one can see, albeit tentatively<sup>vi</sup>, how this is played out in relations between Gypsies and the settled population. That is, where power inferiority is experienced as human inferiority the effects are accentuated. The following quote exemplifies how the socio-political climate, and particularly planning authorities, contributes to this sense of inferiority or anomic status through the criminalization of the traditional nomadic way of life:

"I'd just like to have somewhere legal to live, that's the only thing that I want, somewhere where I actually have a right to live, rather than always knowing that your life's illegal. That is the only thing that would make a difference to us, having a proper legal place, or places to live, and that would change just about everything. It would change how I felt about myself, it would change how I felt about the family, it would change how people out there felt about us"  
**#02**

There is a sense of criminality instilled in the mindset of the above interviewee and when she measures herself against the norms of the dominant society - in this case expressed

through the planning system - she is found wanting and struggles emotionally with her socially defined position as deviant. Similarly, this dynamic is also expressed in terms of 'getting on' in life, again constructed against the norms of the dominant society, by a parent when talking about the future prospects for his daughter:

"If she can be one in a million of a Traveller to finish school and to make something of herself, to make an example on other Travellers that'd be a good idea wouldn't it, a good thing" #22

One could assume that this respondent is implying that Gypsies can't "make something of themselves"; they are anomic, inferior and generally do not amount to anything when measured against the norms of the sedentary mode of existence. Thus the emotional power of stigmatisation is obvious, and the ability to stigmatise the collective is in itself a key factor in ensuring that the power resources of Gypsies remain low.

### **Stigmatisation and the Spatial Order**

Sibley (1981; 1987) sees the Caravan Sites Act of 1968 as 'a programmed response to deviance' in the form of a systematic attempt to restrict settlement. He argues that resistance to site provision on the part of local authorities stems from the fact that Gypsies are seen as a 'problem', and where provision is forthcoming it is often limited to prescribed and, more often than not, marginal locations; as has been the case in Britain and the Netherlands (though obviously under different legislation). Sibley illustrates how designation - part of the legislation of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act - served as an instrument of control and is one example of how the spatial order, informed by the popular perception of Gypsies and Travellers, reproduces dynamics of marginalisation and exclusion. Designation imposed financial penalties on families stopping in designated areas but not on an official site. The result of the legislation was that large areas of London, where designation applied to contiguous districts, became 'no-go' areas for families not accommodated on official sites (1981, p.83).

Now we have an appreciation of the mechanisms through which Gypsies are stigmatised and the subtle ways in which their outsider status is maintained we can now briefly examine how these dynamics are reproduced through the spatial order; and how the developments outlined by Sibley are made possible. A key factor here that we have already touched upon is the lack of (and access to) power resources among Gypsies, to the extent that they have little or no control over their own environment as shown by the quote below:

"Whatever they do on [this site] they sit between their self and they decide what you want and what you don't want, and there's time and time again I've said "why don't you get one of us there?" Never happens" **#19**

For instance, local Councillors have a vested interest in issues relating to the location of Gypsy sites in the form of re-election and therefore a greater degree of involvement in their experience of this particular figuration. The result is a propensity to maintain their power base and so attempts are made to decrease the threat of Gypsies and, by default, they are also complicit in the erection of boundaries - physical, social and emotional - between the settled population (a group to which they belong) and Gypsies.

Thus, disidentification, resultant stigmatisation, the reproduction of stereotypes within the mass media and the exclusion of Gypsies from positions of power (and exclusion from access to those in such positions) create a climate for the symbolic boundary to be translated into a physical one through the location of sites in peripheral and marginal locations, often some distance from residential areas and out of the view of the settled population, thus limiting the perceived threat.

"They won't let us integrate with house dwellers and they wouldn't say we was them, so why can they put new age travellers in with us?" **#08**

The above quote conveys a sense of weakness on the part of the respondent in relation to their social interaction and their perceived identity. Power is implicit within the quote,

"they won't let us integrate", and points to the complicit role of local authorities and planning administrations in maintaining geographical, and therefore social, boundaries and limiting the possibilities of identification *between* these two antagonistic groups:

*[M]uch of the restructuring of identifications actually proceeds not by radiation, but rather through conduction, i.e. by face-to-face contacts in primary settings: in the family and among peers...identifications apparently survive and flourish more readily in a much more compact, face-to-face setting' (de Swaan, 1995, pp.32-33).*

Even where Gypsy and Traveller sites are planned near residential housing settlements the disparity in terms of the cohesion, organisation and therefore power of the two groups more often than not results in a 'victory' for the settled population in terms of boundary maintenance (that is, the very low success rate for Gypsy and Traveller planning applications), and this continued dynamic contributes to the apathy we have witnessed already. The following quote illustrates this:

"The problem is, let's just say the Council said 'yeah we'll [build a site]' then they're looking round for some land and if they went near some houses there'd be petitions 'we don't want Gypsies round us' before even they got Gypsies near 'em...and it's just an ongoing thing where you can't really win innit?" **#01**

By pursuing such oppressive policies against Gypsies local authorities serve to accentuate the situation by reinforcing stereotypes. Sites being located in marginal, inhospitable spaces - often in industrial locations or next to refuse tips for instance - contributes to the notion that Gypsies and Travellers are not "real" pure-blood Romanies but a 'sub-standard' group lacking the superior human virtue of the settled population.

"They think we're scruffy but they put us in scruffy places, they think 'oh yeah Travellers are always next to tips and things' it's only 'cos they put us next to scruffy places" **#13**

"Sort of, for normal people it'd be unacceptable half the places where they do put sites" **#19**

Note the second quote where there is reference to "normal people", meaning the settled population, and by extension suggests that this interviewee emotionally experiences herself and her community as abnormal. Therein lies the power of the emotional barrier in

the sense of the ability to stigmatise and therefore maintain a sense of power superiority experienced as human superiority. This is what makes such oppressive policies possible and they, in turn, have the effect to limit social contact between Gypsies and the settled population and this could also perhaps serve to support racist notions, evident in professional and academic discourses, about Gypsies and Travellers being insular and 'unapproachable'.

"It's miles away from anywhere though and they've just stuck 'em there. It's hard to believe when you see it...and then it's like they've dug an 'ole and put 'em in it because it's, the banks come right above the trailers" #15

Thus policies which serve to segregate Gypsies against their wishes and situate them within marginal spaces play a role in the maintenance of the outsider status of Gypsies but these dynamics and their mechanisms can only be appreciated within a framework which first acknowledges the importance of identification and power.

## **Conclusions**

This paper has argued that unequal power relations and disidentification are the central mediating factors enabling the stigmatisation of Gypsies. This process takes place at the micro level in the day-to-day social relations between Gypsies and the settled population in a range of spaces and settings. While commentators have directed efforts towards structural factors in search of a better understanding of the marginalisation of Gypsies this only tells part of the story, albeit a very important part. Certainly the media, government policy, ethnic and cultural differences and a lack of understanding and knowledge of the latter play a key role in perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing and maintaining stigma, but there is a need to link these structural factors and their characteristics to the process of disidentification and the everyday power relations within and between groups. Thus, in order to grasp the continued outsider status of Gypsies there is the need for a long-term, processual approach which empirically examines the social relations between Gypsies and the settled population alongside structural changes. The figurational sociology of

Norbert Elias appears well equipped with the theoretical tools to meet this challenge. An Eliasian approach could enhance our understanding as to the ways in which the socio-dynamics of stigmatisation operate in this particular human figuration. Current theoretical conceptualisations on the marginalisation of Gypsies and Travellers have neglected the role of power in shaping these relations and focused too much on the short-term problems of the day. These factors are undoubtedly at play in the reproduction of boundaries and stigmatisation, yet they are more likely to be outcomes of a long-term process, the central characteristic of which is the uneven power balance in relations between Gypsies and Travellers on the one hand, and the settled population on the other. These theoretical frameworks have, to an extent, also neglected each other as a result of strong disciplinary boundaries, and this has also served to slow the development of a theoretical synthesis equipped to examine the complexities of power and identification within Gypsy-gauje figurations in a constant state of flux.

As yet approaches have not been able to account for the dynamism of social relations and the centrality of power in the continued stigmatisation of Gypsies. There is therefore a need to explore the complexities inherent in the *processes* of disidentification and stigmatisation rather than merely analysing their effects and outcomes. Static conceptualisations fail to incorporate the role of changes in wider society, and a preoccupation with the issues of the day blocks the path to an appreciation of long term changes.

*'An approach to an established-outsider figuration as a stationary type of relationship can be no more than a preparatory step. The problems with which one is confronted in such an exploration come into their own only if one considers the balance of power between such groups as changing and works towards a model which shows, at least in broad outline, the human - including the economic - problems inherent in such changes'* (Elias, 1994, xxxv).

Once power is placed at the centre of a theoretical framework one can then begin to explore how the struggles and contestations across time and space are determined by

fluctuations in the power differentials between groups and how these changes are reflected in policy and practice. As Sibley argues, an appreciation of the power relations within a given space gives meaning to that space (1995, p.76). Fruitful areas of inquiry could include considerations of changes in the economic sphere (such as that developed by Sibley) and also cultural transformations and the effects of these for the identifications (and by extension disidentifications) of Gypsies. Bringing dynamism back in is also imperative to develop our understanding of how identifications (and disidentifications) are widening with the onset of rapid social transformations which mean humans, and the figurations that they form with others, are subject to ever increasing webs of interdependence (Elias, 1978, 1982; de Swaan, 1995). The effects of these developments on Gypsies should be a primary concern for academics, and in particular how these changes impact upon the interdependent relationships between Gypsies and the settled population in different settings.



## Endnotes

---

<sup>i</sup> The terminology employed to refer to 'Gypsies and Travellers' is an emotive and controversial issue packed with cultural and political significance and, while different populations share commonalities in terms of their nomadic, semi-nomadic, or previously nomadic way of life, recognising their difference remains crucial. In this paper, the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is therefore used as a collective term to refer to all Gypsy and Traveller populations. The term 'Traveller' is never used without an identifying prefix ('new', 'Irish') other than to quote individuals using this terminology, but the term 'Gypsy' is used alone, to refer to Romany Gypsies (regardless of their nationality, although all Gypsies interviewed for this research were English) who form the primary focus of this paper. Where reference is being made to a particular group, or where an issue is discussed that is relevant to one group and not others, the proper name is used – e.g. Gypsy, new traveller, and so on. Capitalisation of the collective term reflects the ethnic minority status of Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The findings in the empirical section of this paper refer solely to Gypsies.

<sup>ii</sup> I use the term settled population to refer to non-Gypsies and Travellers in general. Obviously, this is a heterogeneous group and differences in attitudes towards Gypsies and differences in power resources are wide ranging. Yet, as Richardson (2006b) has noted 'for the purposes of allowing a distinction between Gypsies and Travellers, and non-Gypsies and Travellers, a term is necessary and settled community is often used in the relevant literature' (p.6).

<sup>iii</sup> I use the term anomie here in precisely the same way as Elias and Scotson (1994) do in *The Established and the Outsiders*. In this context the crucial point to remember is that the 'anomic' that Elias and Scotson speak of can only be understood in opposition to the 'nomic or norm-setting section'. In Elias's words: '*an established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the "bad" characteristics of that group's "worst" section - of its anomic minority. In contrast, the self-image of the established group tends to be modelled on its exemplary, most "nomic" or norm-setting section, on the minority of its "best" members*' (Elias, 1994, xix).

---

<sup>iv</sup> 'Gauje' is the term commonly used by Gypsies to refer to non-Gypsies. There is no widely accepted spelling of the word and it sometimes appears as 'gorger' (which closest reflects its pronunciation), 'gorgio', 'gaje' or 'gaujo' (as in the case of ni Shuinéar, 1997).

<sup>v</sup> 'The Martin affair' refers to the case of Tony Martin who was prosecuted for the murder of 16-year old Gypsy Fred Barras after he and an accomplice, who was also shot and wounded, attempted to burgle his house in 1999. The case attracted widespread media attention and Martin was sentenced to life in 2000. He was released in 2003.

<sup>vi</sup> Given that my interviews were with Gypsies and did not include research on the views of the settled population it would be inappropriate to give too much credence to the views of the latter as articulated by the former. There is certainly the need for more research in this area; an issue addressed in the Conclusions.

---

## References

- Bancroft, A. (2005) *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: modernity, race, space and exclusion* (Avebury: Ashgate Press).
- Bauman, Z. (1983) Industrialism, consumerism and power, *Theory, culture and society*, 1(3), pp. 32-43.
- Cohen, S. (1972) *Folk devils and moral panics* (London: MacGibbon and Kee).
- Cohen, A. P. (1985) *The symbolic construction of community* (London: Tavistock).
- Commission for Racial Equality (2006) *Common ground: equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers* (London: Commission for Racial Equality).
- Dahl, R. (1957) The concept of power, *Behavioural science*, 2, pp.201-205.
- de Certeau, M. (1984) *The practice of everyday life* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- de Swaan, A. (1995) Widening circles of identification: emotional concerns in sociogenetic perspective, *Theory, culture and society*, vol.12, pp. 25-39.
- de Swaan, A. (1997) Widening circles of disidentification: on the psycho- and sociogenesis of the hatred of distant strangers - Reflections on Rwanda, *Theory, culture and society*, 4(2), pp. 105-122.
- Douglas, M. (1966) *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of purity and taboo* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul).
- Douglas, M. (1973) *Natural symbols* (London: Barrie and Jenkins).
- Elias, N. (1978) *What is sociology?* (London: Hutchinson).
- Elias, N. (1982) *The civilizing process, Vol II: state formation and civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Elias, N. (1987) *Involvement and detachment* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Elias, N. (1994) A theoretical essay on established and outsider relations, in: Elias, N and Scotson, J. L. *The established and the outsiders* (2nd ed) (London: Sage).
- Elias, N and Scotson, J. L. (1994) *The established and the outsiders* (2nd ed) (London: Sage).
- Fletcher, J. (1997) *Violence and civilization* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Gil-Robles, A. (2005) *Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights on his visit to the UK* (Strasbourg: Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights)
- Goffman, E. (1968) *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity* (Harmondsworth: Pelican).

- 
- Halfacree, K. (1996) Out of place in the country: Travellers and the rural idyll, *Antipode*, 28(1), pp. 42-72.
- Holloway, S.L. (2005) Articulating Otherness? white rural residents talk about Gypsy-Travellers, *Transactions of the institute of British geographers*, 30, pp. 351-367.
- IPPR (2004) *Moving forward: The provision of accommodation for Travellers and Gypsies* (London: IPPR).
- Jenkins, R. (2004) *Social identity* (2nd ed) (London: Routledge).
- Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: a radical view* (London: MacMillan).
- Mayall, D. (1988) *Gypsy-Travellers in nineteenth century society* (Cambridge: CUP).
- Mayall, D. (1995) *English Gypsies and state policies* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press).
- McVeigh, R. (1997) Theorising sedentarism: the roots of anti-nomadism, in Acton, T. (ed) *Gypsy politics and traveller identity*, pp. 7-25. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press).
- ni Shuinéar, S. (1997) Why do gaujos hate Gypsies so much, anyway? a case study, in Acton, T. (ed) *Gypsy politics and traveller identity*, pp. 7-25. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press).
- Niner, P. (2004) Accommodating nomadism? an examination of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers in England, *Housing studies*, 19(2), pp. 141-159.
- ODPM Gypsy & Traveller Unit. (2006a) *Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments: draft practice guidance* (London: HMSO).
- Okely, J. (1983) *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge: CUP).
- Richardson, J. (2006a) Talking about Gypsies: the notion of discourse as control, *Housing studies*, 21(1), pp. 77-96.
- Richardson, J. (2006b) *The Gypsy debate: can discourse control?* (Exeter: Imprint Academic)
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
- Sibley, D. (1981) *Outsiders in urban societies* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Sibley, D. (1986) Persistence or change? conflicting interpretations of peripheral minorities, *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 4, pp. 57-70.
- Sibley, D. (1987) Racism and settlement policy: the state's response to a semi-nomadic minority, in Jackson, P. (ed) *Race and Racism* (London: Unwin Hyman).
- Sibley, D. (1988) Purification of space, *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 6, pp. 57-70.

- 
- Sibley, D. (1995) *Geographies of exclusion* (London: Routledge).
- Sibley, D. (1997) Endangering the sacred: nomads, youth cultures and the English countryside, in: Cloke, P. and Little, J. (eds) *Contested countryside cultures: Otherness, marginalisation and rurality*, pp. 218-231 (London: Routledge).
- Sibley, D. (1998) Problematizing exclusion: reflections on space, difference and knowledge, *International planning studies*, 3, pp. 93-100.
- Sigona, N. (2003) How can a nomad be a 'refugee'? Kosovo Roma and labelling policy in Italy, *Sociology*, 37(1), pp. 69-79.
- Turner, R. (2000) Gypsies and politics in Britain, *The political quarterly*, 71, pp. 68-77.
- Vanderbeck, R. (2003) Youth, racism and place in the Tony Martin affair, *Antipode*, 35, pp. 363-384.
- Vanderbeck, R. (2005) Anti-nomadism, institutions, and the geographies of childhood, *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 23, pp. 71-94.