The Road Less Travelled

Community Work and the Traveller Struggle for Human Rights in Ireland

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I Thomas McCann, certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or anywhere else on the basis of this Doctoral Thesis.

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Abstract

The Road Less Travelled: Community Work and the Traveller Struggle for Human Rights in Ireland

This study delves into the struggle for human rights within the Traveller community in Ireland, exploring the perspectives of both activists and community workers who have engaged in this cause. The research aims to develop an understanding of anti-Traveller racism from the perspective of activists and community workers, the obstacles hindering human rights, the factors that support progress towards the attainment of human rights, and the pivotal role community work has played in this struggle.

Using a qualitative approach, the study highlights the entrenched discrimination and racism experienced by Travellers. Factors which contribute to the poor living conditions, high unemployment, poverty, limited access to essential services., social exclusion, and health disparities within the Traveller community.

The study illuminates the intergenerational systemic nature of anti-Traveller racism and its detrimental effects on the Traveller community, regarding self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being. Simultaneously, it highlights the resilience and strength of the Traveller community in the face of these challenges.

Traveller activists and community workers have persistently challenged the racism experienced by Travellers, advocating for human rights, equality and better conditions. This ongoing struggle spanning six decades has been characterized by the resistance of these activist and community workers against the systemic anti-Traveller racism which was institutionalised by the Irish state.

Identified as a powerful agent of change, community work brought a framework rooted in a human rights agenda. This framework empowered Travellers to mobilize collectively and challenge the persistent racism and a sedentarist ideology that blamed Travellers for their situation.

This research culminates in actionable recommendations drawn from the analysis aimed at significantly enhancing the circumstances of Travellers in Ireland.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"Open up our minds and more importantly our imaginations, take another look at the notion of nomadism in the lives of Travellers and see it not as an aberration, but as a fulfilling and humane form of existence" (John O'Connell, 1991)

Introduction

It is widely recognised that the Traveller community in Ireland experience discrimination, racism and limited access to essential goods and services such as health care, housing, education and employment, a situation that has gone on for decades (Rottman, 1986; All Ireland Traveller Health Study, 2010). Travellers fare poorly on every indicator used to measure disadvantage, poor living conditions, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, health status, infant mortality, life expectancy, literacy, access to decision making and political representation (Rottman, 1986; Our Geels, 2010).

The relationship between Travellers and the Irish State has been marked by exclusion, denial of human rights and inequitable access to goods and services when compared with the majority community (Helleiner, 2000; McVeigh, 2008). Furthermore, historically there has been a denial of Traveller cultural identity and ethnicity, as noted in several studies (Mac Laughlin, 1999; Helleiner, 2000; Our Geels, 2010).

Prior to the 1960s, exclusion and racism experienced by Travellers was more sporadic, primarily stemming from an interdependence between the majority settled community and Travellers, as Travellers were relied upon to fulfil tasks others couldn't or wouldn't undertake, such as tin-smithing and farm labouring amongst many others (McDonagh, 2000b).

The economic and social changes that took place during the 1950s and 1960s reshaped the relationships and the role of Travellers within Irish society (McDonagh, 2000b). These changes further intensified the pre-existing hostility and racism of settled society towards the Traveller community, as the skills offered by Travellers were no longer needed due to industrialisation and mechanisation with the result that the prejudice that had endured for centuries, became more prevalent (Helleiner, 2000).

In response to these changes, the Irish state implemented a comprehensive whole of government approach that portrayed Travellers as the root cause of the problem and advocated for assimilation and absorption into wider society as the final solution (McVeigh, 2007).

However, Traveller activists and community workers resisted the oppression, racism, poverty and deplorable conditions that Travellers were living in and demanded their right to equality and dignity (Puxon, 1967; Minceirs Whiden, 2013). This challenge marked the start of a struggle with the Irish state which has gone on for the past six decades and one that looks set to continue.

The struggle for human rights for the Traveller community in Ireland has been a difficult journey. One that has required the collective efforts of Traveller community workers and activists alongside allies from the sedentary population who mobilised and lobbied for social change, with the ultimate aim being the recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority group by the Irish State, where their human rights are fully acknowledged, respected, and safeguarded.

While this road has been a long and difficult one with setbacks and struggle along the way, there has remained a strong sense of determination, solidarity and commitment to a more inclusive, equitable and rights-based society. And despite the many challenges faced by these Traveller activist and community workers, there have also been moments of achievement and solidarity, demonstrating a resolute sense of determination and dedication to achieving a society that is free from racism.

Rationale

The oppression, racism and exclusion that Travellers have experienced has been structural, systematic and has persisted over decades (Helleiner, 2000; Puxon, 1967; Costello, 2014; Leahy, 2014; Ó hAodha, 2007). This has led to a situation where infant mortality rates are three times higher among Travellers than the settled population, life expectancy is 15 years less, unemployment is over 80%, overcrowding and lack of appropriate accommodation is commonplace, educational disadvantage is deep seated with only 1% of Travellers making it to 3rd level.

The current situation has resulted in many Travellers becoming homeless, which is a new and rapidly growing concern for the Traveller community, and correspondingly, a mental health crisis, where 11% of all deaths among Travellers are due to suicide (Harvey, 2013; McVeigh, 2008; Our Geels; 2010; Donnelly-Drummond, 2014). Where despite the numerous studies highlighting the racism, discrimination, unemployment, poverty, poor health, high mortality rates, and elevated suicide rates experienced by Travellers, these conditions persist alongside the mechanisms that generate them,

*"... the circumstances of the Irish Travelling people are intolerable. No humane and decent society, once made aware of such circumstances, could permit them to persist ... [Travellers are] a uniquely disadvantaged group: impoverished, under-educated, often despised and ostracised, … on the margins of Irish society". (ESRI, 1986 ,*Paper no. 131*).*

Such thinking informs my position as a Traveller, as an activist, as a community worker and as a researcher. I believe that theory combined with action, which has been identified as praxis, can lead to positive social change (Freire, 1993). This study is my contribution to this endeavour.

Aim

The central Aim of this study is to explore the context and the factors that support and impede the Traveller Struggle for Human rights in Ireland.

Research Questions

(i)   What are the factors that have supported the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland?

(ii) What are factors that have impeded the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland?

(iii) How do community workers and Traveller activists understand anti-Traveller racism in Ireland?

(iv) What role has community work played in the Traveller struggle for human rights?

Research Design

Considering the focus of this study, I determined from the outset that a qualitative approach would be most appropriate, aligning with the research purpose of understanding and exploring the struggle for Traveller human rights in Ireland from the perspectives of the participants themselves, as well as examining the factors contributing to its emergence.

Recognising the necessity for the study to align with both the nature of the inquiry and my own position as an activist/researcher, the research design evolved gradually, considering Maxwell's assertion that research should follow an inductive approach rather than a rigid sequence or be solely derived from an initial decision made at the outset (Maxwell, 2012).

The final research design adheres to the qualitative tradition, drawing influence from the principles of community development and the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive society.

Language and Meanings

Traveller Struggle:

This term encapsulates the challenges, obstacles, and injustices faced by the Traveller community. It refers to the ongoing fight against racism, discrimination, social exclusion and the denial of human rights. The term 'struggle' emphasises the enduring effort required to overcome institutionalised racism and achieve equality.

Traveller Movement:

This term shifts the focus to the organised efforts and activism aimed at addressing the issues faced by the Traveller community. It encompasses collective actions, advocacy campaigns and initiatives driven by the community to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and demand social change. The term 'movement' implies a dynamic, evolving effort toward positive transformation.

Traveller Activist:

Traveller activist refers to individuals who is actively engaged in advocating for the rights and wellbeing of the Traveller community. These individuals often participate in protests, campaigns and lobbying to challenge discriminatory policies, demand legal protections and promote social inclusion.

Traveller Leaders:

These are individuals who hold influential roles within the Traveller community. They may lead community organisations, serve as spokespersons, and play a significant role in shaping the direction of the movement. These leaders provide guidance, voice concerns and represent the community's interests in various forums including government consultative committees.

Community Work, Community Development:

Community work and community development is a developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

Sedentarism:

A sedentary lifestyle, often referred to as sedentarism, describes a cultural, societal or individual way of life where people have established permanent settlements and do not engage in regular, long-distance migrations. In a sedentary lifestyle, communities build permanent structures for housing, agriculture, and other activities. This lifestyle is characterized by the development of complex societies, and the ability to accumulate possessions and resources over time. Sedentary communities often rely on agriculture as a primary means of subsistence, leading to the growth of towns and cities (O'Connell, 1997) .

Nomadism

Nomadism refers to a lifestyle and culture that is characterized by deliberate movement of people or groups from one location to another, without establishing permanent settlements. Nomadic communities typically rely on self-employment, seasonal migrations, herding, hunting, or foraging for sustenance. This lifestyle fosters adaptability and a deep connection to the environment and group or community, as nomads must frequently adjust to changing circumstances and geographical locations.

Majority Settled Community:

Majority settled community refers to the sedentary population who constitute the larger segment of the population and who are the numerical majority within Irish society. It highlights the dominance and power of this group in terms of population that exerts a significant influence over social norms and policies which impact on the Traveller community who are in the minority.

Assimilation

Assimilation refers to the complex process through which a minority cultural group is absorbed into a larger dominant population. This is not only the absorption of the group into the majority culture but also the gradual adoption of its values, norms, customs, and behaviours. Assimilation is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves social, economic, and psychological changes among individuals and within communities, often with the loss of a minority cultures values, norms, traditions and language.

Thesis Structure

Building on the preceding introduction, this study is organised as follows: Chapter two delves into the historical background, tracing the emergence of Traveller resistance and the struggle for human rights in Ireland since the 1960s. It explores pivotal developments, policies, definitions, and the discourses that shaped this period, shedding light on the enduring exclusion, racism, poverty and dire conditions faced by Travellers both then and now.

Chapter three presents an exploration of the research themes, drawing upon a range of literature from both local and international publications. It specifically examines structural inequality, ideology, and community work with a particular focus on collective consciousness raising and praxis.

Chapter four highlights the methodological approach employed in this study, providing a rationale for its selection and establishing connections between my ontological and epistemological stance and the research itself. The research strategy is explicated, outlining the steps undertaken to ensure the inclusion of core fundamentals such as ethics, rigor and reflexivity. This chapter introduces the research focus, providing a rationale for its selection and delving into the researcher's personal background and interest in the study's themes.

Chapter five presents the primary findings of the research, which are aligned with the research questions. These findings encompass participant perspectives on the Traveller struggle in Ireland, the mechanisms that precipitated its emergence, as well as the challenges currently faced and anticipated in the future by the Traveller community.

Chapter six examines the findings in relation to the research questions outlined above, highlighting the connections and contradictions that emerge between the research questions, the findings, and the existing literature in the field. By applying concepts from the literature, this chapter delves into the complexities and challenges faced by the Traveller struggle in its pursuit of equality, human rights and an end to anti-Traveller racism and offers an analysis of the significance and contribution of this study, while correspondingly examining its implications and limitations, underscoring the need for future research in the field.

Chapter seven, the final chapter in this research, concludes with a summary and proposes a number of recommendations to address the identified challenges faced by the Traveller community in Ireland in their struggle for human rights.

Conclusion

This study is an exploration of the Traveller struggle for human rights among Travellers in Ireland. It aims to identify the mechanisms that underlie anti-Traveller racism, exclusion and discrimination, providing a deeper understanding of how these phenomena are perpetuated and suggests potential avenues for addressing them. While this chapter provides a concise introduction to the research and its themes, forthcoming chapters will extensively delve into key concepts that are central to the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland.

Chapter Two: Overview

Introduction

In this chapter the focus will be on providing an overview and context that situates the Traveller struggle for human rights. It will highlight key developments, government policy and the conditions that Travellers experienced that led to the emergence of the Traveller struggle. It will correspondingly shed light on who exactly the Traveller community are. Additionally, this chapter will delve into how the shift from an agrarian-based economy to a modern industrialised capitalist economy and the subsequent urbanisation impacted on the Traveller community, resulting in their dislocation within Irish society and will correspondingly examine the Irish state's response to the Traveller community in this changing climate. Lastly, this chapter will conclude by providing a timeline highlighting notable developments and policy reports that have had a significant impact on the Traveller community in Ireland.

The Traveller Community

Travellers are an indigenous ethnic minority group who share a distinct culture, history, value system, common language and nomadic traditions and are considered one of Ireland's largest indigenous ethnic minority groups (McCann, 1994; Pavee Point, 1995; Ireland, 1995; Joyce and farmer, 2000; Justice, 2017-2021). Travellers identify themselves as a distinct community and are seen by the majority settled community as such (Abdalla et al. 2010;Justice, 2017-2021).

Travellers have lived as a distinct cultural community in Ireland for several centuries and retain their own language and traditions (Kruckenberg, 2011). Traditionally, Travellers were a rural people, with extended families identified with particular counties in Ireland (Gmelch, 1977). Travellers distinctive lifestyle and culture, which was traditionally based on a nomadic tradition, set them apart from the general population and has been an integral part of Traveller culture for many centuries.

However, due to a lack of culturally appropriate accommodation and the restrictions on Traveller nomadism resulting from anti-trespass legislation introduced in 2003, many Travellers are no longer able to travel (Our Geels, 2010).

Traveller language, which is known as Cant, Gammon or Shelta, was widely spoken by Travellers in the past, however, due to lack of recognition and support for this language, it is gradually dying out (McCann, 1994).

The population of Travellers in Ireland is estimated to be between 35,000 and 40,000 (Our Geels, 2010). According to the CSO, the structure of the Irish Traveller population is very different to that of the general population, with a broad base at the younger ages and reducing sharply at higher level, with 58.1% of Irish Travellers under 25 years of age (0-24) compared to just over 33.4% in the general population (CSO, 2016). This is due to a number of contributing factors, including a lower life expectancy, health inequalities and suicide which is the cause of 11% of all Traveller deaths (Our Geels, 2010). Numerous studies have acknowledged that the Traveller community in Ireland face discrimination, racism and exclusion in accessing goods and services that the majority community take for granted such as healthcare, accommodation, education and employment (Mac Laughlin, 1999; Helleiner, 2000; McVeigh, 2007; Kelleher, 2018).

Economic and Social Change in Ireland

Prior to industrialisation and the economic changes that took place during the 1950s, the relationship between the majority community and Travellers had been one of mutual dependence (McDonagh, 2000b). The Traveller community provided goods and services that members of the rural settled community were dependent on, such as tin smithing, farm labour and many other services. The Traveller community were correspondingly dependent on the settled community, and particularly rural settled community, needing these services to earn a living that supported a nomadic way of life (McDonagh, 2000a).

Prior to the 1950s, Ireland was mainly a rural agricultural society where resources were often limited and traditional methods of repairing and reusing goods were relied upon.

Due to the lack of modern technologies such as plastics and mechanisation, people had to rely on their own abilities and resourcefulness and on the skills provided by Travellers to make the best of what they had. However, from the 1950s onward, Ireland underwent significant transformation with rapid industrialisation and urbanization (Ferriter, 2004).

The 1950's brought with it significant economic and social change as it shifted from being a small, agriculturally focused economy to becoming an industrialised capitalist society (Breen, 1990; Ferriter, 2004). During this period of rapid social and economic change, families and communities experienced significant cultural, social and economic upheaval (Breen, 1990).

This period represented a crucial change for Ireland as a whole, where different aspects of societal change within Irish society merged and from that point on, the state and class structure developed in tandem (Breen, 1990). The economic growth that followed was a significant turning point in Ireland's social progress, as the social structure from that point on became similar to that of other advanced capitalist societies (Ferriter, 2004; Foster,1989).

The growth of industrialisation and urbanisation from the mid-19th century onwards, led to the displacement of many rural communities, as manufacturing industries attracted rural migrants to the cities and towns, where they worked in factories and other industrial settings, resulting in the development of an urban working class (Breen, 1990).

As industrialisation and mechanisation progressed and expanded, individuals and families who had previously depended on agriculture to support themselves were compelled to relocate to larger cities and towns (Giddens and Birdsall, 2001). As the settled rural population migrated to bigger towns and cities, Travellers likewise followed this pattern by moving to urban areas from many parts of rural Ireland (Crowley,2009).

Numerous Traveller families relocated to larger cities and towns, However, when they arrived, they faced considerable challenges in finding suitable locations to camp and reside and found that they faced active opposition from local settled people, the local authorities and An Garda Síochána (Ennis, 2011). This was a marked departure from previous decades when Travellers followed a nomadic pattern with established traditional routes and camp sites where they would stay for particular periods of time (McDonagh, 2000).

Travellers traditionally camped in extended family groupings, whereas when Travellers moved to larger towns and cities, they were forced to camp in larger numbers with other Traveller families, due to the lack of campsites and the constant harassment. This resulted in increased visibility of Travellers (Gmelch, 1985) and also contributed to an increase in inter-family and inter-community conflicts,

"*When Travellers moved near towns and cities in the 1960s they became a very visible group*" (McDonagh, 2000b, Pg 48).

Travellers faced pervasive and severe hostility from local settled populations when they arrived in these new urban areas, fuelled by prejudiced views that often portrayed them as dirty, unsophisticated, and criminal (Hayes, 2006).

These negative attitudes and stereotypes that have long been projected onto Travellers and Traveller culture, continue to persist and have served as a basis for discrimination and exclusion against the Traveller community (Hayes, 2006).

The settled population were particularly very vocal in their opposition to the presence of Travellers, and frequently tried to justify this opposition by claiming that the presence of Travellers had negative implications for the area and led to a decline in property values, (Crowley, 2009), as highlighted in report on the Commission on Itinerancy,

"*In nearly all areas, itinerants are despised as inferior beings and are regarded as the dregs of society. Many feel that they would demean themselves by associating with them. Their presence is considered to lower the tone of a neighbourhood and those who live in that neighbourhood are seldom satisfied until the itinerants have been moved on. There have been actual and threatened rent strikes by local authority tenants to enforce action to have itinerants moved from the neighbourhood of their houses*". (Ireland. Commission on Itinerancy, Walsh, 1963, Pg 102).

According to Bhreathnach, (2006) the emergence of a working class contributed to opposition to Traveller encampments, as the new urban working class aspired to the symbols and status of upward mobility, represented by semi-detached houses with gardens and did not want Travellers living near them due to the perception of Travellers occupying the lowest social class position.

Bhreatnach argues in Lane, (2010) that class considerations were influential in shaping the built urban environment with the aim of preserving and reflecting social segregation. According to Bhreatnach, in Lane, (2010) the notion of class is not merely an objective assessment of variations in income, education, or occupation but also a system of social organisation that is evident in the arrangement of urban spaces.

Travellers were neither accommodated nor accepted in this modern capitalist class system because of their cultural difference and particularly because of their nomadic tradition. This refusal to accept Travellers was correspondingly rooted in the historical racism and exclusion faced by Travellers from the majority settled community for generations prior to these changes taking place.

Commission on Itinerancy 1963

Travellers arriving and camping in urban areas was regarded as a problem by the state, which faced pressure to take action from both the settled community and religious institutions (McVeigh, 2007). The catholic church, which was very powerful at the time also perceived the presence of Travellers in Ireland as creating a problem, as evidenced by a report published by a committee appointed by the Hierarchy, on December 20th 1960, which pre-dated the Commission on Itinerancy,

> *"The committee is of the opinion that the presence of large numbers of itinerants in this country creates a moral and social problem" (Newman, 1960, Pg 1).*

The establishment of the Commission on Itinerancy was the response of the state to Travellers moving to and camping in these new urban areas and to the subsequent objections of the settled community, the Church, An Garda Síochána and local authorities. The commission's objective was to examine these issues and make recommendations for addressing them (McVeigh, 2008).

In 1963, the Commission on Itinerancy published a report that attributed the problems faced by the Traveller community to Traveller culture and way of life. It recommended assimilation and absorption into the mainstream settled community as the 'final solution' (Ireland, Commission on Itinerancy., 1963; McVeigh, 2008).

Charles J. Haughey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice, stated at the inaugural meeting of the Commission on Itinerancy, in words that leave no doubt that the aim of the commission was the eradication of Traveller culture,

> *"There can be no final solution of the problems created by itinerants until they are absorbed into the general community" (Commission on Itinerancy, Walsh, 1963, pg.111).*

The commission's report stated that all efforts to assist Travellers in addressing the problems they faced must have as their ultimate aim their assimilation and should not promote or facilitate Traveller traditional way of life or culture (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963). The commission's report also led to the criminalisation of nomadism and the frequent eviction and harassment of Traveller families, as highlighted in its report,

> *"…through a rigorous enforcement of legislation which criminalises the nomadic lifestyle, Travellers will inevitably settle to avoid prosecution" (Commission on Itinerancy; Walsh, 1963, Pg. 106).*

Ó hAodha, (2011) argues that the position adopted by the Irish State towards Travellers has played a crucial role in shaping public and policy makers perceptions and attitude towards the Traveller community in Ireland, which in turn, influenced government policy and practice concerning Travellers for several decades to follow.

Charity Model

The Commission's report led to the establishment of voluntary settlement committees, whose role was to establish friendly contact and gain trust with the Traveller community, to facilitate their assimilation and absorption into mainstream society (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963). The Commission recommended that the assimilation of Travellers into settled society could be best facilitated by establishing friendly contact and maintaining regular visitations to gain their trust, while encouraging Travellers and their children to learn and adopt the ways of the settled community (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963).

During this period, the Catholic Church also aligned itself with the state's approach towards the Traveller community, which actively undermined the Traveller community's fight for equality and human rights. This is evident from the statement below by a key activist for Travellers rights at the time,

> *"In 1966, I stood on the Dublin docks and watched my trailer caravan loaded onto a ship. Destination Liverpool. I had come under attack from the notorious Archbishop McQuaid. The stand at Cherry Orchard having succeeded, the Catholic Church wanted an end to agitation" (Puxon, Personal Correspondence).*

State institutions, including government bodies, the church, An Garda Síochána and Itinerant Settlement Committees, combined with the settle community's hostility and racism towards the Traveller community in Ireland, represented a unified attempt to erode Traveller cultural identity and way of life.

The charity model and interventions of the settlement committees and the church contributed to undermining both the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights and undermined the recognition of Traveller culture and identity resulting in the silencing and exclusion of the Traveller voice (Cauley and Ó hAodha, 2006).

During what was promoted as a period of economic prosperity and growth in Ireland, being a member of the Traveller community meant being subjected to increased exclusion, racism and criminalisation because of your cultural identity and way of life.

Basic facilities were denied and violent attacks, forced evictions and harassment by the Gardaí and local authorities were a constant feature of Travellers lived experience (Ennis, 2011; Joyce and farmer, 2000).

This systematic exclusion and racism of the community saw Traveller children being segregated in mainstream education, with separate play times and exclusion from both the primary and secondary curriculums in terms of the omission of Traveller culture or presence on the curriculum and correspondingly by excluding Traveller children from participating in the lessons being taught. It resulted in poorer health outcomes for Travellers, lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, poverty, unemployment, addiction, poor mental health and disproportionately high rates of incarceration and suicide (Barry,1988; Our Geels, 2010).

This reality challenges the notion that progress benefits everyone and the economic tide lifts all boats. In the case of Travellers, it depended on which ethnic group you were born into as to whether you were included or excluded, and whether your boat rose with the rising tide or sank deeper into poverty, exclusion, racism and inequality.

Traveller Resistance

The 1960s also proved to be a pivotal moment in Irish history for the Traveller community, as Traveller and settled activists acknowledged and named for the first time, the injustice that Travellers faced. They spoke out and took a stand against the poor conditions and resisted the evictions, exclusion and racism that Travellers were experiencing on a daily basis (Puxon, 1967),

> *"Awaking from apathy to a sense of indignation, taking part in a struggle for their rights, those involved in the campaign in Ireland during 1963 to 1966 began to grow internally, feeling a new sense of dignity in their own worth"* (Puxon, 1967. Pg, 33).

For the first time in the history of the state, activists from the Traveller community along with advocates and allies from the settled community, united, protested and challenged the racism and the state's mistreatment of Travellers, which at this time included forced evictions and inhumane living conditions (Puxon, 1967).

These activists were based in Dublin's Ballyfermot, Cherry Orchard, a field that was home to over a hundred Traveller families living in appalling conditions.

The group sought support from a wide range of sources, including the Trade Union Movement, the Student Movement and the Housing Rights Campaign. Additionally, they engaged with the media to raise awareness and draw attention to the issues affecting Travellers, as highlighted in an article in the Irish Times from 1965 (Appendix F).

Despite successfully mobilising the community and bringing attention to the problems faced by Travellers, the group encountered significant opposition from the state and the church, leading to many of the leaders withdrawing or in some instances, having to leave the country due to the backlash, as previously noted in personal correspondence from Grattan Puxon.

However, the actions and the stance of the Traveller Rights Committee in the 1960s put down a marker that would influence future generations of Traveller activists and community workers to become involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights. The groundwork had been laid for the Traveller struggle in Ireland which created a foundation for future generations of Traveller activists and community workers to learn from and build on.

Although the struggle to bring about change during the 1960s faced significant obstacles that halted progress for a time, it did not mark the end of the journey. However, it would not be until the 1980s that Traveller activists with the support of settled community workers took up the mantle and once again resumed the struggle for equality and human rights.

A Human Rights Approach

During the 1980s, Travellers were living in dire conditions on the outskirts of many urban areas and faced hostility, discrimination and racism from the local settled community. A regular feature saw large numbers of the majority settled community march on Traveller camps, exemplified by the anti-Traveller protests in Tallaght and other areas around the country.

This experience is captured by Nan Joyce, a Traveller leader during the 1980s, who lived in a mobile home on the Tallaght by-pass with her young family, who witnessed first-hand the hatred and hostility that was expressed at these anti-Traveller marches,

"When the march came down, there was a lot of chanting like the Klu Klux Klan, they were all shouting 'OUT, OUT, OUT, all together' (Joyce and Farmar, 2000, Pg 101).

Despite living in appalling conditions, abject poverty, educational disadvantage and experiencing racism on a daily basis, Travellers along with settled allies, took on the monumental task of seeking justice for their community and re-ignited the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights (Joyce, 2000).

Although the 1980s was a time of conflict and hostility towards Travellers, it was similarly a time of hope and transformation, when Travellers themselves became increasingly more active in seeking better conditions for their families and their community and correspondingly challenged the racism and discrimination that they had to endure (Joyce and Farmar, 2000).

Traveller organisations that emerged during the 1980s held a different perspective to that of the Itinerant Settlement Committees, who had operated on the premise of Travellers as a subculture of poverty that needed to be rehabilitated.

These emerging Traveller organisations focused on the experiences of the Travellers themselves and placed racism, equality and human rights at the forefront, with the Traveller voice at the centre (Ennis,2011; Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group., 1993;O'Connell,1994; Joyce and farmer, 2000).

These groups aimed to raise awareness of the structural nature of inequality, poverty, and racism experienced by Travellers and through this process, empower the community to come together and act collectively for social, political and cultural change, while simultaneously promoting and valuing Traveller culture and identity.

One of the main objectives was to build a strong collective Traveller movement that would be led by Travellers themselves and would effectively represent and campaign on issues facing the community.

Traveller organisations that emerged from the 1980s onwards prioritised the participation of Travellers in collective action to challenge the dominant discourse and stereotypes about Travellers and Traveller culture and encouraged Travellers themselves to lead the struggle (Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group., 1993; ITM,1995).

Traveller rights activists and community workers who became involved during the 1980s viewed Travellers as an indigenous ethnic minority group, whose culture and way of life had been demonised and criminalised and who were entitled to demand equality, justice and human rights (Joyce and Farmar, 2000).

Minceir Misli, which means 'Traveller Movement' in Gammon or Shelta, was established during this period, representing the first Traveller only group to mobilise and organise the Traveller community to stand up and demand their rights. This marked a significant moment in the history of the Traveller struggle in Ireland because it was the first time that Travellers themselves came together without the involvement of members of the settled community.

Correspondingly, this marked a new departure as it was the first time that Gammon had been used to name an organisation or movement, demonstrating the importance of language as a cultural marker for the Traveller community (McCarthy, 1994). Minceir Misli rejected the prevailing discourse that viewed Travellers as a subculture of poverty in need of rehabilitation and assimilation. Prior to the establishment of Minceir Misli, Travellers were regularly excluded from discussions on issues affecting their community or were invited only as a tokenistic gesture (Ennis, 2011).

The approach of Minceir Misli was a departure from this exclusionary practice where Travellers themselves claimed their own space. This provided Travellers the opportunity to stand up, take action and importantly, lead the change (McCarthy, 1994).

This approach challenged stereotypes that the settled majority held of Travellers and also challenged the internalised negative stereotypes that many Travellers held of themselves, resulting from generations of oppression and racism. Minceir Misli built on the foundations that Traveller rights activists had laid in the 1960s and set the scene for the development of the Traveller struggle for human rights that exists in Ireland today.

A Time of Change

The 1980s was a time of both conflict and hope for the Traveller community, as activists and leaders again began to take a stand against the systemic racism and inequality facing their community (Joyce and Farmar, 2000). And like the 1960s, there were members of the settled community who recognised the injustice in the treatment of Travellers.

Amongst these were settled community workers who introduced community work into the Traveller struggle in a more structured and formalised manner. The introduction of community work in the 1980s to the Traveller community played a crucial role in empowering and advancing the Traveller struggle for human rights. According to Fraser, in (Farrell and Watt, 2001) community development interventions with the Traveller community were in contrast with the previous interventions of the settlement committees, that were largely based on a charity model that aimed to address individual poverty and did not involve Travellers themselves.

The charity model was based on the belief that poverty and exclusion were primarily the result of an individual's failure to adapt to societal norms and did not consider the structural causes of inequality and poverty (McCann, 1994).

The community work approach was underpinned by a set of core principles and values that supported Travellers to develop a framework that empowered the community to come together collectively and to understand why the situation had developed as it had, and most importantly, to mobilise collectively and bring about change for themselves and their community (Farrell and Watt, 2001).

Community work provided a framework for advocacy and support for the Traveller community, which proved to be a significant turning point in their struggle for equality and human rights (Harvey, 2013).

Community work brought a social analysis that empowered Travellers to question the taken for granted norms and encouraged them to view what was happening to the community through a critical lens, one that made power relationships and structural inequality visible.

This analysis was based on an understanding of society as being unequal, where some groups have more power, resources and control and where other groups, such as Travellers, are excluded based on their cultural or ethnic identity (Baker *et al.*, 2004).

Community work interventions from the 1980s onwards were based on a bottom-up approach, as Travellers were empowered to become actively involved in directing and leading the change, as opposed to the 1960s and 70s, when itinerant settlement committees working on behalf of Travellers had used a top-down approach, with members of the majority settled community deciding what was in the best interest of the Traveller community.

The difference between a top-down and bottom-up approach is crucial in empowering marginalised and excluded communities such as the Traveller community to participate in collective action and in developing self-determination. Failure to utilise a bottom-up approach reinforces the exclusion, racism and discrimination these groups face in wider society and serves to undermine a human rights approach (Alinsky, 1972; Ife, 2010).

Traveller organisations from the 1980s onwards were no longer based on a traditional model of organisation that claimed to speak on behalf or do things for Travellers. These organisations fitted with Traveller culture, values, and norms and empowered Travellers to challenge the racism and oppression that they were experiencing, settled and Traveller community workers and activists worked in partnership and solidarity to achieve these aims.

A key focus of the community work with Travellers that emerged from the 1980s onwards, was an analysis of the racism that Travellers experienced and the development of responses to challenge it (Farrell and Watt, 2001).

According to Collins, (Farrell and Watt, 2001) an ideology of settled supremacy underpins the racism that Travellers experience, which encompasses a set of beliefs and values that promote the idea that the settled majority community are superior while portraying Traveller culture as inherently inferior. The racism that Travellers experience has been constructed around culture and ethnic identity, where Traveller culture and identity has been racialised (Farrell and Watt, 2001; McVeigh, 2008).

According to O'Connell in Lentin and McVeigh, (2002) what marks the racism Travellers face different from other forms of racism, is the sedentarist approach to nomadism, which views the nomadic tradition as an aberration that necessitates elimination, either by modernisation or failing that, coercion.

Traveller and settled activist and community workers challenged the myth that racism only began when refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Ireland and challenged the denial that the mistreatment of Travellers was racism (Farrell and Watt, 2001).

The ongoing collective struggle for human rights for the Traveller community has been propelled by Traveller and settled activists and community workers, commencing in the 1960's and re-emerging in the 1980s with increased vigour and determination, to challenge anti-Traveller racism, oppression and the inequality that is experienced on a constant basis, (Lentin and McVeigh, 2002). However, the racism that Travellers experience has not diminished, but rather prevails, despite the many decades of activism and struggle that have passed (Puxon, 1967; Joyce and Farmer, 2000; Our Geels, 2010).

Table B: Timeline

1960 - The Commission on Itinerancy - The role of the Commission was to research the situation regarding the Traveller community, produce a report and to make recommendations as to the best ways to address the situation in relation to Travellers in Ireland.
1963 -The Commission on Itinerancy Report is published
1963 – 66 - The Traveller Rights Committee - Traveller rights activism challenged the dominant discourse that viewed Travellers as a nuisance and a problem that needed to be solved and campaigned for Traveller rights.
1965 - Itinerant Settlement Committee – The first Itinerant Settlement Committee meeting takes place in Dublin.
1970 - National Itinerant Settlement Committee – Establishment of NISC which later became the National Council for Travelling people.
1980 - Rosella McDonald – A Traveller woman takes a court case challenging evictions in Dublin, which she won, setting a precedent that established that local authorities had to offer Travellers alternative accommodation before they could carry out an eviction.
1980 - **The Review Body** – Establishment of Review Body whose aim was to review the situation of Travellers in Ireland and make recommendations. Published its Report in (1983).
1982 - The Tallaght by-Pass Anti-Traveller Protests – Commencement of Anti-Traveller marches and protests

1982 - Committee for the Rights of Travellers – Founded in response to what was happening to Travellers on the Tallaght By-pass, was made up of Travellers and settled allies.
1983 - Nan Joyce - A Traveller woman stands as the first Traveller candidate in a general election.
1983 – 85 - Minceir Misli - Establishment of the first Traveller only organisation to mobilise the Traveller community.
1984-5- Dublin Travellers Educational Development Group – Established, providing the first courses on community work with Travellers

1985 - The Monitoring Committee - As part of the review body report, the Irish Government established a Monitoring Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Review Body Report.
1988 - National Traveller Women's Forum – Established to address issues specific to Traveller women
1990 - The National Council for Traveling People - formerly National Itinerant settlement committee, is Disbanded
1990 - The Irish Traveller Movement – Established, representing a national network of Traveller organizations working within the Traveller community.
1995 - Taskforce on the Traveller Community - **E**stablished to identify the issues facing the Traveller community and make recommendations on how to overcome these problems,
1996 - Monitoring Body – The Irish Government established a Monitoring Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Taskforce report.

1998 – 2002 Equality Authority, the Equal Status Act and employment Equality Act - The establishment of the Equality Authority in 1999 and the subsequent introduction of the Equal Status Act in 2000 which outlawed discrimination on nine grounds including membership of the Traveller community.
2003 - Anti-Trespass Legislation - Anti-trespass legislation is introduced which allows the Gardaí to confiscate a mobile home where the person does not move their caravan within 48 hours and turned what had previously been a civil matter into a criminal offence.
2017 – 2021 - National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy
2017 - Ethnic Recognition of Travellers - Travellers are recognised as an Ethnic Group by the Irish state

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

While the previous two chapters provide the rationale for undertaking this study and the context in which Traveller resistance emerged, the literature presented here seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights in Ireland, by providing a theoretical and historical backdrop that situates Traveller resistance in a broader political and social context. The aim here is to provide the reader with an understanding of the challenges that the Traveller community face in terms of the structural inequality and ideology that positioned Travellers as the creators of their own exclusion and poverty.

The literature supports an understanding of the power differentials that exist between Travellers and both the State and wider society and provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics that support anti-Traveller racism and exclusion of the Traveller community in Irish society. It correspondingly highlights the key role that community work has played in empowering Travellers to challenge structural inequality, racism and the denial of human rights.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an analysis of oppression, power and racism the Traveller community face and demonstrates the link between structural inequalities, a sedentarist ideology and anti-Traveller racism.

Section two identifies how structural inequality and sedentarism framed Travellers as a sub-culture of poverty and denied Traveller cultural identity and ethnicity. This section provides an analysis of how Traveller leadership served to mobilise the Traveller community to address this injustice and examines the role of both settled allies and Traveller partnership organisations, concluding with an examination of political representation and both claimed and invited spaces.

The final section explores how a community work framework empowered the community to develop and challenge inequality through critical consciousness raising and mobilisation, that created the conditions for Travellers to develop their own analysis and take collective action to challenge the unequal structures in an effort to bring about social change and realise a more equal society.

Section One - Institutionalised Oppression.

Introduction

In this introductory section of the literature review, the primary objective is to delve into fundamental concepts that underpin structural inequality, oppression and Anti-Traveller racism. Within this framework, my aim is to examine the experiences of oppression faced by Travellers in Ireland, by employing Young's (1990) "Five Faces of Oppression" as a conceptual framework. These five dimensions—exploitation, marginalization, cultural imperialism, powerlessness, and violence—offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of oppression. Among these dimensions, marginalisation stands out as particularly dangerous, involving the systematic exclusion of racially marked individuals and groups from participation in society, accompanied by severe material deprivation and the erosion of cultural identity.

Structural Inequality

Understanding society in terms of social systems provides a sense of the central sets of relationships that structure people's lives and in particular account for and influence the inequality between them. According to Baker et al, (2004) a social system is a set of social relationships that are organised around a central set of social processes and outcomes. Walsh in Jenks, (1998) argues that, in order to develop an understanding of society as a phenomenon that exists objectively as a reality, it is essential to acknowledge firstly, that definite forms of organisation impact how those living in society relate to each other and secondly, that this shapes relationships in certain ways.

According to Bhaskar, (1989) society is ever changing and cannot exist independently of humans, whose agency in their daily lived experiences transform and reproduce the social world.

Freire, (1993) claims that social reality is a product of human action and agency and does not exist by chance. While Thompson, (2011) claims that social divisions such as class, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability and gender simultaneously shape social order and engender inequality, oppression and discrimination.

Baker et al, (2004) correspondingly argue that structurally generated institutional practices can be defined as hegemonic, which can produce and reinforce social inequalities. According to Koca-Helvaci, (2016) the inequalities that are produced, range in terms of some being more damaging than others and have implications for social relations and overall well-being.

Young, (2011) furthermore argues that increasing numbers of individuals that experience social marginalisation and exclusion are racially marked. Baker et al, (2004), claim that the inequality experienced by those hailing from working class communities and those in receipt of welfare support is reproduced through the unequal economic and social structure, while in the case of the Traveller community in Ireland, the generative cause of inequality is due to a prolonged history of marginalisation and cultural exclusion.

Oppression

While the term oppression is frequently utilised in theoretical and philosophical discourse as well as by radical social movements, there often exists a lack of comprehensive understanding and discussion regarding its direct implications and the multifaceted nature of oppression (Young, 2011). Young (1990),claims numerous scholars argue that the Marxist concept of exploitation falls short in encapsulating the full spectrum of domination and oppression. Specifically, the Marxist emphasis on class which fails to account for other significant forms of oppression such as sexism, racism, ageism and homophobia. These forms of oppression operate independently of class dynamics, although they may intersect with class-based oppression. Among these, marginalization emerges as particularly pernicious, as it involves the systematic exclusion of racially marked individuals from meaningful participation in social life, accompanied by severe material deprivation and cultural erasure.

According to Young, 2011, oppression consists of five elements: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence, claiming that marginalisation is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression, whereby a whole category of people can be expelled and excluded from participation in social life with the potential for severe material deprivation and even, in the most extreme circumstances, extermination.

Harvey,(1996) uses the term "civilized oppression" to characterize the everyday processes of oppression in normal life, while Ruth, (1988), defines oppression as the systemic mistreatment of members of one group by members of another group or by society in general.

Ruth, (1988) argues that mistreatment is central to the social system and is therefore reflected in the education and legal systems, the mass media and correspondingly in social customs and norms, claiming that in order for oppression to persist, members of the dominant group must be conditioned to play the role of the oppressor, claiming that it is therefore the system that enforces the oppression and not the individuals who are conditioned by it to act as agents of oppression. Correspondingly, Young, (2011) argues that because oppression is systematically reproduced through economic, political and cultural institutions, it cannot be eliminated through changes in leadership and legislation. According to Thompson, (2011) in order to develop our understanding of how oppression works, it is important to recognise that it operates at three separate but interrelated levels: personal, cultural, and structural (PCS). While each of these levels is important in its own right, it is important to understand the dynamic between these levels and claims a PCS analysis can help us to do this. Haugaard, (2002) states that a system exists within the structures and institutions whereby certain goals and certain actors are privileged by authoritative power structures that confer specific power to them while denying such power to others.

Power

Power is an integral part of how society functions, operating through formal and informal relationships and through cultural norms and practices. According to Petitt, (2013) and Dahl, (1992), all relationships and institutions are implicated by power relations.

Bhaskar, (1989), claims that the structures that agents reproduce or shape through their activity are correspondingly structures of power which may involve oppression, domination and alienation.

Lukes, (2005) offers a three-dimensional view of power, with the key focus on decision making and control over the political agenda. This theory examines the potential for particular concerns and issues to remain outside of the political arena. This can happen through the implementation of social forces, through institutionalised practice or through decision making processes that occur in the absence of observable conflict, thereby supporting the interests of those holding the power and invisibilising the interests of those challenging it (Lukes, 2005).

Thompson, (2007) argues that the application of power is multi-dimensional and can apply in many ways such as ideological assumptions, access to resources and structural barriers that block progress. Petitt, (2013) claims that our cultural frame of reference informs the lens through which we perceive and address power. This will be influenced by whether we are concerned with social, political or economic relations, our methods of analysis, the strategies we use and the entry points we adopt to challenge power relations.

Petitt, (2013) focuses on the more nuanced aspects of power that exist outside the very tangible and obvious abuses of power, claiming that the effects of power are intertwined in the fabric of our daily lives, in the way in which we frame issues, in how decisions are made, in how members of one group may be valued and how members of another are marginalised. Power can also be viewed in the construction of discourse. According to Foucault's theory of language, holding the power to name and define and generate discourse, generates the capacity to create structures of power (Thompson, 2006).

This type of power is evident in cases where the dominant group holds power over an oppressed group who are limited or excluded from discussions of how they are defined (Dillon, 2014). An example of the use of power external to the community, is the power to name and define. The manner in which the Irish state defined Traveller culture and way of life, greatly influenced how Travellers were viewed and treated by the State and is a concrete example of the power of discourse (Thompson, 2007). Travellers, in this instance, were defined by the Irish State as a problem that needed to be solved (McVeigh, 2008).

Powell, (2008) claims that while there are common themes in the theoretical frameworks used to explain the marginalisation of Travellers in the Irish context, they fail to examine the role of power and particularly, the implications of the power differentials that are inherent in the social relations between Travellers and wider society. However, according to Ledwith, (2011) a simplistic, dualistic model of power that polarises the oppressor and the oppressed fails to adequately capture the complexity and intersectionality of patterns of racism and discrimination. While Thompson, (2011) claims that the ideas relating to specific groups who benefit from these power relations and correspondingly conceal the inequalities of the power relationships, are maintained in part by ideology.

Ideology

Baker,et al,2004, argues that while the economic relations of production influence the course of history, they are not determinants, arguing that what is overlooked, is the reality that such institutions and structures of exploitation are the realisation of historically accepted principles and ideologies that are inherently opposed to equality. According to Simonds, (1978) ideology can be understood as a system of thought that preserves the social order in the interest of the dominant group. Thompson, (2007) claims that ideology is a collection of ideas that support specific social arrangements with the effect of maintaining and legitimising the status quo, thereby justifying, protecting and reinforcing the power differentials that are inherent within them.

Thompson, (2007) correspondingly argues that ideology can be seen to function in various ways, for example, an ideology can define that which is "normal" thereby

defining that which is both abnormal and deviant.

According to Heywood, (2012) ideologies are fluid and ever changing and adapting to shifts and changes in other ideologies. Considine and Dukelow, (2009) argue that opposing ideologies are frequently labelled in terms of left or right of the political spectrum.

However, there are exceptions to this dualistic model, such as the Traveller community, who are defined as neither left nor right in the Irish political context and are therefore relegated to a position outside the political arena entirely.

According to Burden, (1998) social policy is central to ideological debates, considering how we deal with offenders, in terms of whether we rehabilitate or punish them, or correspondingly, who gets included and importantly, who gets excluded. According to Ledwith, (2011) ideology informs how society is organised based on the values and beliefs of that society by reinforcing and justifying power imbalances between the different groups, thereby maintaining and preserving the status quo. Such thinking becomes entrenched and is viewed as common sense. Gramsci, (2010) defined it as fragmented, disjointed and contradictory thinking that serves to justify reality for the privileged.

From the 1960s onwards, two competing ideologies regarding Travellers in Ireland emerged. The first ideology portrayed Travellers as a subculture of poverty (âOhAodha,2006). In contrast, Traveller activists and community workers advocated for an alternative perspective, viewing Travellers as an indigenous ethnic minority group with a distinct culture, identity, and language with nomadism being a central part of Traveller culture, while correspondingly highlighting structural inequality and anti-Traveller racism as the root of the challenges faced by the community (Joyce and farmer, 2000).

Racism

According to Manning and Ohri, (2011) racism is more than a set of attitudes and actions. It is embedded in institutional structures and practices, which once institutionalised, gathers a force of its own which unchallenged, gains momentum and power. Fanning, (2002) claims that institutional racism can be recognised as the reflection of racist practices and principles in the organisations and institutions of society, while Thompson, (2006), argues that racism is both a political and social process, which ascribes racial difference as pseudo-biological racial deficits, thereby justifying racist practices.

According to Rolston, (2004) despite the fact that other European countries were adopting progressive race relations laws and policies, Irish public opinion that was reinforced by the attitudes of politicians and policymakers, claimed that racism didn't exist in Ireland because unlike their European counterparts, Ireland had no people of colour.

Acknowledging the existence of racism against Travellers in Ireland has been a slow and laboured process, despite having signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1968.

Anti-Traveller Racism

Irish Travellers have been experiencing racism for generations, possibly centuries, though it has only been in recent decades that this has been challenged collectively by Traveller activists, community workers and Traveller organisations (Rolston, 2004).

Some researchers have traced anti-Traveller racism back to a post-colonial mindset of sedentarism and a rise in the property- interest owning bourgeoisie who rejected the nomadic lifestyles and supported the budding monoculturalism that was being born out of a Catholic conservative nationalist ideology (Mac Laughlin, 1999).

Acton and âO hAodha, (2006) claims that the racism experienced by the Traveller community has only been addressed in two contexts. Firstly, in asserting that Travellers, as a minority ethnic group, do in fact experience racism and secondly, by detailing how this racism manifests and is experienced by the community.

Correspondingly, Acton and âO hAodha, (2006) argue further that the experience of racism faced by Travellers in Ireland and why it continues, is an area that warrants further investigation and theorisation.

According to Fanning, (2002) the justification for the exclusion and discrimination of Travellers from 1963 onwards was characterised by the racialisation of Travellers as a deviant and violent underclass.

Similarly, âOhAodha, (2006) argues that the manner in which Traveller culture was defined by the state and the particular terminology and definitions that were used, served to deny the anti-Traveller racism that was prevalent in Irish society, as evidenced, from the Dail Debates below,

> *"To suffer from racial discrimination Travellers would need to suffer distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. The Government's view over the years and repeated in the draft report under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has been that Travellers do not constitute a distinct group from the population as a whole in terms of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin"* (Vol. 572 No. 3)

According to Fanning, (2002) the Irish state's legacy with regard to the Traveller community is characterised by the persistence of institutionalised racism as is evident in social policy that serves to exclude and discriminate against Travellers, which has been justified by the long-standing denial of Travellers ethnicity and claims that key reports examining the experience of Travellers in Ireland are characterised by the persistence of institutional racism.

Rolston, (2004), highlights that as minority ethnic groups, both Irish Jews and Irish Travellers are white, and recognising that their experience was one of racism, paved the way for a more sophisticated and nuanced analysis of racism as being independent of skin colour.

Fanning, (2002) claims that even though Irish society has changed with the emergence of new communities such as Black and other ethnic minorities who are increasingly visible and, despite an increased focus on racism within the media and political and academic discourse, debates on racism have tended to depict racism as a new phenomenon by failing to include the historical experience of Travellers in Ireland as one of racism.

According to âO hAodha, (2006) how Travellers were defined by the state, has influenced, shaped and reinforced policy, practice and attitudes that serve to justify the inequality, exclusion and racism that Travellers in Ireland experience.

Lentin, (2006), claims that racism can easily be dismissed as phantasmic or as a behaviour born of individual prejudice, while McVeigh in Lentin, (2006) contrasts English and Irish racisms, noting that while the former is steeped in imperial justification and colonial domination, the latter is related to Irish sedentarism. According to Lentin, (2006) the most important precursor to contemporary anti-racism in Ireland has been the action by, and on behalf of Travellers, claiming that the Traveller movement, made up of various groups of Travellers and non-Travellers, was responsible for introducing the term racism into Irish political discourse.

And even though Travellers have been recognised by the Irish state as an ethnic group, Travellers continue, in contemporary Ireland, to experience persistent racism, discrimination and exclusion.

In summary, while the debate on Travellers in the 1960s was based on the assimilation of the Traveller community, from the 1980s onwards, there was a focus on Traveller culture and ethnicity that framed Traveller experience as a denial of human rights and racism (Fay, 1990).

Section Two - Traveller Resistance – The Road Less Travelled

"It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in organised struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves" (Freire, 1993, Pg 47)

Introduction

In this second section of the literature review, the culture of poverty theory is examined (âO hAodha, 2006), in conjunction with the opposing theory that positioned Travellers as an ethnic minority as proposed by Traveller activists from the 1980s onwards (Joyce and Farmar, 2000). The role of both Traveller leaders, (Joyce and farmer,2000) along with their settled allies, (Puxon,1967; DTEDG,1992) is correspondingly examined. This is followed by an analysis of the Traveller/settled partnership, (ITM,2008) and political representation and its role in realising change. Section two concludes with an analysis of the concept of claimed and invited spaces (Cornwall and Coelho,2007).

Culture of Poverty

From the 1960's onwards, we see the emergence of two competing frameworks of understanding in relation to Travellers in Ireland. The first, an ideology that defined Travellers as a subculture of poverty, (âO hAodha, 2006) which has influenced social policy and policy makers and correspondingly, wider settled community in Ireland for over fifty years with its influence still felt today.

According to McCann, (1994), the sub-culture of poverty theory served to deny the racism that Travellers were experiencing in the Irish context, a belief that hinged on the State's continued refusal to accept the ethnic status of the Traveller community. âO hAodha, (2006) claims that the 1963 Itinerancy Report suggested that Travellers were impeding economic development and the progress of tourism in Ireland and that they represented a general impediment to growth.

Whereas McCarthy, (1994) takes a different view of this ideology, claiming that it

placed an emphasis on education and training as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty, but this focus also served to divert attention from the structural causes of poverty and exclusion.

The culture of poverty theory was first introduced by Oscar Lewis in 1958 (Harvey and Reed, 1996). According to Harvey and Reed, the culture of poverty theory has been used by various Governments to deny the racism, inequality and consistent poverty that specific groups experience.

âO hAodha, (2011) claims that in the case of the Traveller community in Ireland, the culture of poverty position was based on the premise that Travellers moved onto the road during the great famines of the 1800s when they were evicted by landlords, claiming that these views were very much in keeping with sociological theories at the time.

Travellers as an Ethnic Group

However, this theory was challenged by Traveller activists and community workers who proposed an alternative narrative, one that identified Travellers as an indigenous ethnic group (Joyce and Farmar, 2000). This alternative perspective viewed Traveller's as a people who both identify themselves and are identified by others as culturally different, who have close family bonds and who share a common language and traditions, such as nomadism. This view acknowledges that Travellers have a long-shared history and ancestry.

They countered that firstly, Travellers are an indigenous ethnic minority group with their own distinct culture, identity and language. Secondly, that structural inequality and anti-Traveller racism was at the root of the problems faced by the Traveller community in Ireland.

This represents a significant stage in the Traveller struggle, when for the first time Travellers lobbied for recognition as a distinct ethnic group and a time when Gammon was first used to name a Traveller organisation. It signalled to the wider society and to the Traveller community that Travellers rejected the sub-culture of poverty theory (Tovey and share,2003; Joyce and farmer,2000).

According to McVeigh, (2007) the issue of ethnic identity has been central to the Traveller struggle for human rights for decades, acknowledging that Travellers have their own unique culture, lifestyle, norms, traditions and value systems with nomadism being a cornerstone of their culture, an argument that has been supported by numerous sociologists and human rights bodies (Fanning, 2002; Ó hAodha,2011;McVeigh,2007;Ireland.Equality Authority, 2006) and correspondingly by the Traveller community themselves who for decades have challenged and struggled to be recognised as an ethnic group, particularly from the 1980s onwards (Joyce, 1985; Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group, 1992).

Traveller Leaders

According to Ricketts and Ladewig, (2008) leaders represent a critical aspect of collective action. They play many key roles from devising strategies, framing demands, organising the mobilisation of resources and inspiring commitment and participation, claiming that it is the context under which leadership operates, rather than the style of leadership that matters, with the result that this context is open to more than one style of leadership or tradition (Ricketts and Ladewig, 2008). While there are commonalities in leadership across many domains, a distinctive aspect of community leadership is the absence of formal authority as a means to get things done in community leadership roles.

Traveller leaders emerged at crucial points in the Traveller struggle in Ireland, particularly during the 1960s and 1980s. These were times of change, when Traveller leaders became increasingly active in seeking better conditions for the community and challenged the racism and inequality that Travellers were experiencing (Joyce and Farmer, 2000; Puxon,1967; DTEDG, 1992). Ruth, (2006a) describes this as transformational leadership as its focus is on collective action to realise social change.

According to Ennis et al, (2011) Traveller activists and leaders lobbied, protested and resisted the forced evictions that were taking place on a regular basis at this time. However, for some of the community workers and activists there was a price to pay. As Bhreatnach, (2006) reminds us, Grattan Puxon, one of the key activists and initiators of the Traveller struggle for human rights during the 1960s was exiled from Ireland.

Despite the challenges, Traveller resistance during the 1960s played a critical role in terms of politicising Travellers and laying the foundation for a re-emergence of the Traveller struggle for human rights. The establishment of Minceir Misli in the 1980s represented a radical break from the past and the beginning of a new phase in the struggle for Travellers rights in Ireland, as Traveller leaders claimed their own space. As highlighted by Nan Joyce,

> *"The last few years have been a great point in Traveller history. When I first started speaking it was very hard to get Travelers to speak or take my place, now there are many Travellers that are well able and willing to speak up for themselves… [such as] our own group, Minceir Misli" (Joyce and Farmar, 2000, Pg 118)*

Besides challenging the poverty, racism and inequality experienced by the community, Traveller leaders played a crucial role in inspiring other Travellers to engage in collective action, (Stammers and Ebrary, 2009).

According to Minceirs Whiden, (2013) Traveller leaders have played a critical role in terms of the development and the mobilisation of Travellers in the struggle for human rights in Ireland. While, Tovey and Share, (2007) claim that the Traveller movement has played a significant role alongside other minority groups and some elements of wider society, in putting pressure on the Irish Government and Irish society to embrace cultural diversity.

Role of non-Travellers

Members of the majority settled community have played a significant role throughout the history of Traveller resistance in Ireland particularly from the 1960s onwards. According to Ennis, (2011) it was customary that non-Travellers represented and spoke on behalf of Travellers. Members of the settled community regularly acted as the voice of Travellers, particularly in the earlier stages of the Traveller struggle and were often the gatekeepers between the Traveller community and the state.

During the early 1960s the Dublin Itinerant Settlement Committee was formed, with the aim of winning support and steering public opinion towards the settlement of Travellers, (Bewley, 1974). According to Fanning, (2002) Travellers had practically no role to play in these settlement committees during the 1960s and 1970s. Key outsiders in these settlement committees acted on behalf of Travellers, to the extent that Travellers were conspicuous by their absence either as leaders or as grassroots members.

According to Murdoch, (2002) there were no Travellers on these committees and a noticeable lack of consultation with Travellers. Though well intentioned, it was members of the settled community who represented Travellers rather than Travellers themselves. Fanning, (2002) describes such efforts to act on behalf of Travellers from the 1960s onwards, as paternalistic, as Travellers were rarely given the opportunity to become involved and seldom consulted, or asked what their views were, on the issues that were impacting directly on their lives.

Correspondingly, there were members of the settled community who recognised the injustice in the treatment of Travellers and became involved in empowering and mobilising Travellers to take collective action and campaign for equality and respect for cultural difference. Allies who stood with Travellers and resisted the evictions and challenged the poor conditions and unacceptable treatment that Travellers were experiencing, such as Gratton Puxon and many others,

> *"When there has been established a relationship based on equality and respect a free and frank discussion of Travellers' problems and the problems of their neighbours (two aspects of the same thing) can take place and the seeds can be sown for identification of one with the other" (Puxon,1967, Pg,31).*

âO hAodha, (2006) claims that Travellers marginalised position within Irish society has consistently resulted in representations of Travellers that are for the most part affected from without, though in later years, recognises the increasing development of powerful evocations from within the community.

Traveller/Settled Partnership

Settled community workers who became involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights particularly from the early 1980s, took a very different approach, based on community development values of equality, partnership and respect for cultural difference. The Irish Traveller Movement claims that this partnership model has brought both communities together in solidarity with a common purpose to achieve equality for Travellers in Ireland and also recognises that the partnership model has supported the development of a stronger Traveller voice that placed a value on Traveller ethnicity, culture and way of life (ITM, 2008).

According to Minceirs Whidden, (2010) from the early 1980s, a tangible shift took place that has witnessed a move from the traditional hierarchal model, with non-Travellers in positions of power to a more collaborative model with members of both communities working alongside each other in solidarity and partnership.

However, some members of the settled community who have dedicated many years of voluntary service in the Traveller struggle, expressed fear that their role would no longer be needed or valued, particularly with the development of professional community work practices as highlighted by Sean O'Riain,

> *"Some voluntary/amateur well intentioned settled people who have been involved in the Traveller struggle, are beginning to fear that professional Traveller groups do not have any real role for them in the Traveller struggle" (âO Riain, 2000, pg,103).*

There are also others who have been critical of the partnership model, claiming that it has engendered a tokenistic approach, a move they claim that has not gone unnoticed by the community (Lentin, 2006).

According to Minceirs Whiden, (2010) organisations that have emerged based on partnership have brought many benefits and continue to be a valuable resource for the development of the Traveller struggle, by contributing to the empowerment of Travellers and facilitating the move towards Traveller leadership and ownership of interventions by the Traveller community themselves.

Fay, (1990) argues that the racism that Travellers and Roma experience is caused by the majority population, and consequently, the majority population has a role and responsibility in challenging and addressing this racism in Irish society.

In a discussion document prepared for its AGM in 2008, the Irish Traveller Movement stated That, while acknowledging the positive role that the partnership between settled and Travellers working in Traveller organisations has played, it argued that organisations needed to be constantly aware of, and ensure that power differentials that exist between Traveller and settled activists and community workers, are recognised to ensure they do not become a source of disempowerment and division within Traveller organisations (ITM, 2008).

Thompson, (2011) argues that organisations can be seen as microcosms of the wider society that can reflect structural relations of class, ethnicity and gender replicated between individuals and groups and that having an understanding of power relations, both formal and informal, is therefore a fundamental part of tackling inequality.

Minceirs Whidden, (2010) claims that the partnership model represents the 3rd stage of the Traveller struggle in Ireland and that Travellers are now moving into a 4th stage, where Travellers are taking leadership of the movement both at local and national level, making it not only a Traveller movement, but more specifically, a Traveller led Movement.

However, it is important to acknowledge the role and contribution that settled allies have played collectively in supporting and empowering Travellers to challenge the racism, inequality and the denial of human rights that they have experienced for decades, both those who are still with us and those who have passed on (Minceirs Whidden, 2010).

Political Representation

According to Hänni, (2018) political representation is a key aspect in developing an inclusive society particularly in relation to minority groups and their need to generate effective policy responses. However, marginalised and excluded groups face incredible challenges in their effort to advance their communities interests, where exclusion from decision making processes can be based on their poor bargaining position, relative to established polity members (McAdam, 1982).

Pitkin, (2004) identifies four forms of representation: formal, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive. McGarry, (2014) elaborates on this, making a distinction between representation of and representation for, with the former referring to the construction of Roma identity and how they are perceived and understood, and the later referring to the Roma capacity to articulate their own needs and exercise some control over the dominant images and discourse used to portray them.

According to Guo and Musso, (2007) voluntary groups have acted as intermediaries between marginalised groups and mega structures i.e., government. They achieve this by giving voice to individual and group concerns. Bhreatnach, (2006) notes that the voluntary sector has played the mediator role between Travellers and the state and were a key element in bringing the concerns of Travellers into the realms of the established structures of the state.

According to the Equality Authority, (2006) Non-Governmental Organisations provide an important mechanism that ensures the inclusion of the voices and interests of excluded communities to ensure their experiences of inequality are effectively articulated. Crickley, (2014) claims that voluntary organisations and those engaged in such work, are often viewed as either fools or saints, allowing for little constructive criticism of the work they do or their overall contribution. While the Equality Authority, (2006) argues that, to effectively combat discrimination and promote equality, the voice of groups experiencing inequality not only need to be articulated, but also need to be heard and enabled to have influence.

However, Farrell and Watt, (1996) claims it is important to consider the reality that the community and voluntary sector are not immune to rendering the marginalised communities, that they represent, invisible by their very own structures and processes.

Claimed Spaces

From the 1980s onwards, Traveller and settled community workers and activists created both partnership organisations and Traveller only spaces or, what Cornwall and Coelho describes as 'claimed spaces' (2007). Evidence of such claimed spaces can be seen in the establishment of Minceir Misli (Considine and Dukelow, 2009). This group of politicised Travellers, engaged in strategies of direct-action campaigns and aligned themselves with other movements such as trade unions and other groups that were emerging on the Irish landscape at the time (McCarthy, 2014).

Tovey and Share, (2003), claims this was a very significant stage of development in the Traveller struggle, as it marked a shift, that signalled to the wider society and to the Traveller community, that Travellers saw themselves as a distinct ethnic group who counted language as an important part of their identity, Travellers claimed and named this space themselves. This self-defining and self-naming was a statement to both wider society and to the State, that Travellers were not willing to accept the discourse that deemed them a sub-culture of poverty that needed to be rehabilitated and assimilated (Tovey and Share, 2003).

This was replicated by the establishment of Minceirs Whiden (Travellers Talking) in 2004, as a Traveller only space that seeks to engender full participation and inclusion of Travellers in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Ireland. who claim the most significant development, has been the emergence and increase in the number of strong Traveller leaders who are calling for greater Traveller inclusion in the decision-making arenas that impact on Traveller lives (Minceirs Whiden,2010).
Correspondingly, the numerous national and local Traveller partnership organisations that have come into existence since the mid-1980s are a further example of claimed spaces that according to Cornwall and Coelho, (2007) are a critical aspect in terms of the development of political capacity building, strategic planning and capacity building that supports meaningful participation and engagement in invited spaces.

Invited Spaces

The Irish Government has created a range of consultative spaces for Traveller engagement, that allows for increased input and engagement in terms of how Travellers live their lives and policies that impact on them (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). According to Gaventa, (2006) the creation of such invited spaces provides opportunities for those who have previously been on the margins of society to exercise agency and address issues such as poverty, exclusion and racism. Cornwall and coelho, (2007) claims invited spaces create an opportunity where those, who have been marginalised and excluded have the opportunity to engage with the state.

This process involves both engagement in policy development and political arenas and shifts their position in previous spaces of engagement, arguing that any claim to space is a claim to power. However, despite the rhetoric, the creation by the state of citizen participation is less a reality than it is an ideal. Lefebvre, (1991) argues that space is a social product, it is not neutral, but is rather a constructed means of control and power. According to Gaventa, (2006) consultative spaces can be viewed as potential opportunities, moments, or channels where groups can affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that impact on their lives.

Over the past four decades a number of consultative spaces have been created by the Irish Government where Traveller representatives have been invited to participate. These include the Review Body, 1983; the Taskforce on the Traveller Community, 1995; National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, 2015; National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (1998) and Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (1998). However, despite the creation of these consultative spaces and high levels of Traveller activists and community workers engagement with them, and despite the resulting development of positive policy toward the Traveller community, in many instances, there has been a continued lack of implementation of these policies.

Recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group by the Irish state, eventually came about in 2017, following decades of struggle by Travellers and their allies. This resulted in a shift that challenged the position of Travellers in Ireland as a sub-culture of poverty, to state recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group. However, it is important to consider that any basic rights, that have been gained for Travellers, have been hard won. None were granted as a gift from the State, on the contrary, they were borne out of the struggle and hard work of Traveller and settled community workers and activists over many decades (McVeigh, 2008).

Section Three - Community Work

Introduction

In this section of the literature review, Ledwith's framework of critical praxis (Ledwith 2011) serves as a valuable lens through which to comprehend the intricacies of community development. Ledwith's model highlights the significance of fostering critical consciousness and scrutinising dominant ideologies and power dynamics, thereby exposing the mechanisms of hegemony. By empowering individuals and communities to participate in collective action, this framework enables the identification of underlying root causes and the pursuit of substantive, enduring change within societal frameworks.

Community Work Practice

The lens through which we perceive the world is immensely influential, permeating our very essence and shaping our actions. This ingrained perspective, often accepted as common sense, profoundly impacts how we navigate our surroundings (Ledwith, 2011). Using, Ledwith's, 2011, model of critical praxis, serves as a framework, that not only fosters the cultivation of critical consciousness but also facilitates the identification and interrogation of prevailing ideologies, thereby unveiling the subtle mechanisms of hegemony.

A framework which in turn, empowers individuals and communities to engage in collective action aimed at effecting meaningful and sustainable change within societal structures.

According to Ledwith,2011, community development begins in the everyday lives of people, this is the initial context for sustainable change, it is founded on a process of empowerment and participation, which encourages people to critically question the taken for granted reality, this is the basis for collective action. Ledwith and Springett, (2010) argue that community development practice seeks to enhance knowledge and skills and foster confidence to empower the communities they work with to develop their own analysis and identify the root causes of their problems, and subsequently, how these problems can be addressed.

A primary aim of community development is the process of consciousness raising or conscientisation that seeks to bring about social change through collective action, whereby the community develops an awareness of the social, economic and political contradictions or the hegemony that serves as a justification for their oppression and exclusion from full participation in civil society (Ledwith and springett,2010; Ledwith, 2001; Freire, 1993).

The All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work (AIEB) defines community work or community development as

'a process of working in, with and alongside communities, guided by the principles of equality, participation, and empowerment, with a collective analysis of social issues, aimed at collective action for progressive social change. It is a developmental activity comprised of both task and a process, working to achieve a more socially just society in which human rights are realised and discrimination is addressed' (AIEB, 2016, 5).

According to Bhattacharyya, (2004) community development can be considered to be the pursuit of agency and solidarity with an ultimate goal of autonomy, and the development of a capacity for communities to order their world by creating and reproducing change and by recovering the power to define themselves and their experience. Crickley, (2014) claims that, not only are the tasks at hand important in community work, but equally, the processes through which these tasks are carried out.

According to the European Community Development Network 'Community development is concerned with working collectively with communities and groups for positive social change, inclusion and equality. It is often described as placing equal emphasis on product and process. Community development is an approach to addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality, that emphasises the participation of those experiencing the issues at all levels of intervention' (EUCDN).

Ledwith, (2011), suggests that in order to be effective, community work must move beyond consultation to participation, from capacity building to empowerment, and from consciousness raising to collective action in order to realise social change.

Twelvetrees, (2008) claims that, from the 1980s, the experience of particular groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, older people, gay men and lesbians, people with disabilities and others were firmly on the agenda of community work as it was becoming increasingly acknowledged that such groups were systematically denied opportunities and excluded, based on prejudice and racism. Popple, (1995) states that community work with ethnic minorities, focusing on an anti-racist critique, has had two constant themes. Firstly, the continued challenge to racism that remains a primary focus for ethnic minority groups, and secondly, the creation of opportunities for ethnic minority groups to develop their own cultural formations.

According to Kelleher, (2018) historically, community development in Ireland has moderated the distribution of power in society and has supported the attainment of significant gains for marginalised communities such as working-class communities and rural communities impacted by poverty and inequality.

During the late 1960s, the community became a central site for the development of a new type of grass-root community organising. This was first seen in areas like Ballyfermot in West Dublin and in Dublin's North Inner City, where the Irish Foundation for Human Development played an important role (Kelleher, 2018). From the mid-1980s onwards, community, equality and anti-poverty movements formed, and fought to win concessions for marginalised communities and to challenge the hegemony of political and economic elites (Kelleher, 2018). Crickley, (1990) reminds us, that Ireland in the 1980's was not a fertile ground for community work.

Despite community action in the 1960s that attempted to mobilise Travellers collectively to gain their rights (Puxon, 1967), it wasn't until the 1980s that a more structured form of community work was introduced to the Traveller community, where the practices used by Traveller activists, community workers and Traveller organisations reflected the principles and values of community work.

Harvey, (2013) claims that a paradigmatic shift in the relationship between Travellers and the Irish state has resulted from the practice of community development and the evolution of the Traveller struggle for human rights, particularly in the latter years of the 20th century. Prior to the 1980s, the state had determined the agenda when it came to working with Travellers, thereby ensuring that the analysis that informed this work corresponded to the dominant state ideology (Harvey, 2013).

Fay, (1990) states that the first community work training course for Travellers, took place in Meath Street, in south inner-city Dublin in the 1980s, at a centre run by the then Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group, which later evolved into Pavee Point (DTEDG, 1992). Though this community work training programme did not mark the first community work interventions with Travellers, previous innovative and collective actions include the community action in Ballyfermot in the 1960s (Puxon, 1967) and correspondingly the establishment of Minceir Misli in the 1980s (Joyce and Farmar, 2000).

According to Fay, (1990) the Dublin Travellers Educational Development Group formed with the primary goal of developing community work approaches with the Traveller community and most importantly, started from the premise that Travellers were an ethnic group. Fay, (1990) claims that community work training was not sufficient on its own, there was a need for further interventions in order to mobilise those who had acquired new skills and awareness to provide a channel and opportunity for these skills to be practised and implemented.

This resulted in the establishment of a number of Traveller organisations during the 1980s and 1990s, that were based on the community development practices and principles of collective action, empowerment and solidarity, and on the understanding that Travellers were an ethnic minority. These groups identified the central problem that the community faced as anti-Traveller racism (Fay,1990).

According to Harvey, (2013) this development succeeded in highlighting racism as the main issue that contributed to the marginalisation of the Traveller community, and community development as a process for creating the conditions to address it. Acton and âO hAodha,(2006) claim that Travellers and Traveller organisations have successfully challenged the racism experienced by Travellers and this process has been enhanced by the support of non-Traveller, anti-racism and human rights organisations and groups.

According to Lentin, (2006) the inroads made by Traveller activism and community work in their challenge to racism, paved the way for Irish approaches to anti-racism which are grounded in the principles of community development. Minceirs Whidden, (2010) states that community work with Travellers has contributed significantly to supporting the Traveller movement and correspondingly to the development of the Traveller struggle in Ireland and, most importantly, in challenging anti-Traveller racism.

However, according to Harvey, (2013) regardless of how a community development approach has supported Travellers to lobby and challenge the state to view Traveller issues from a Traveller perspective and challenge anti-Traveller racism, the assimilationist perspective remains resilient.

Empowerment

Thompson, (2006) asserts that a central tenet of anti-racism has been empowerment that seeks to maximise individual and community power and increase their control as much as possible over their own circumstances, thereby reducing dependency. According to Israel et al., (1994) empowerment can be understood as the capacity to develop an understanding of and control over personal, social, economic and political forces in order to act in the interest of improving life circumstances.

O'Donoghue, (2015) describes empowerment in terms of moving from the individual to the collective, supporting an understanding that, exclusion and discrimination that are faced at an individual level are systemic and experienced by the entire community, with a view to developing a collective analysis that engenders collective action and a commitment to social change.

According to Ledwith,(2011) empowerment, as opposed to self-help, is a process of raising critical consciousness as a means to collective action. Empowerment is a transformative concept, however if applied without critical analysis, it can result in confidence building and self- esteem at a personal level within a paradigm of social pathology, that can result in a focus on personal responsibility for lifting oneself out of poverty, thereby overlooking the structural causes of inequality that created the situation in the first instance (Ledwith, 2011).

Bhattacharyya, (2004) states that the promotion of agency through community development practices requires a focus on critical consciousness and a challenge to the acceptance of unfavourable conditions as destiny or unchangeable. Bhattacharyya argues the need to focus on the structural nature of the causes that created the unfavourable conditions in the first instance, while correspondingly developing strategies to challenge these inequalities.

Such capacity building and empowerment are not, according to Bhattacharyya, the final goal, but rather, a means for developing agency that will facilitate the realisation of social change. while, according to, Freire, (1972) people attain knowledge of the reality of their situation through common reflection and action; through this process they discover themselves as permanent re-creators.

Collective Action

Gamson, (1992) argues that in order to comprehend the processes by which identity, solidarity and consciousness operate in terms of mobilisation for collective action, a link between individual and socio-cultural levels of analysis must be generated, where these levels are linked through both face-to-face encounters and mobilising acts.

According to Ledwith,(2011) the collective action that began in the 1960s and continued through the 1980s and into the 1990s, led to the development of identity politics. McGarry, (2008) suggests that identity politics, along with culture, served as mobilising points for the Roma community across Europe, which could similarly be applied to the mobilisation of the Traveller community in Ireland, particularly from the 1980s onwards.

Community Work Ireland, (2016) argues that both collective action and collective outcomes that seek to create a more just and equal society, necessitate a focus on the potential benefits for the community as a whole, rather than individual gain. Thomas, (1985) defines community action as a strategic approach that supports collective action that challenges existing economic, social and political structures and develops a critical perspective of the status quo with a focus on alternative bases of power and action.

Ledwith and Springett, (2010) note the challenge to collective action in realising its full potential is that it often remains contextualised in the local, immediate and specific, and thereby fails to make critical connections to the root causes of the structural oppression out of which, inequality emanates.

Crickley and McArdle (2009:17-18) argue that community work requires a social analysis which identifies and works towards overall community interests rather than responding only to presented needs and is not reducible to any one form of activity, however meaningful. They describe how practitioners, surface, analyse and address issues of concern in, and with communities (Crickley and McArdle, 2009: 18). Bailie, (2009) states that the development of critical insight allows individuals and groups to develop the necessary tools to engage in collective action for social change.

According to Ledwith, (2011) critical consciousness cannot be realised in the absence of an analysis of hegemony as they exist simultaneously in community and are the basis of critical praxis. Ledwith, (2011) claims that such analysis warrants the inclusion of not just class, gender and race but the whole system of patterns of power and subordination that exists, arguing for the necessity to include Gramsci's concept of hegemony in order to do this.

State Resourcing of Community Work

Resourcing of community work is crucial and the majority of community development projects, including Traveller projects, are funded by the state, which on the one hand is positive, yet, on the other, can pose challenges for community workers and activists.

According to Harvey, (2013) from the 1990s onwards, the state began to recognise community development as an effective mechanism to address local issues, such as poverty and Unemployment, with increasing numbers of national programmes being funded with the main aim of addressing social inclusion. Community development support programmes (CDSP) that were developed on the basis of agreed work plans, provided three-year roll-over funding to a number of community development projects and were designed with a view to addressing specific community needs (Crickley, 1990).

As the first nationally funded programme by the state, the community development support programme aimed to develop a network of community development projects and resource centres, specifically in those communities most affected by high unemployment, poverty and disadvantage, including particular interest groups such as Travellers (Bassett, 2007).

According to Bassett, (2007) research carried out on the CDSP highlighted the reality that the possibility of influencing policy within these programs was limited, due in part to a reluctance by the state to include policy work as a legitimate activity for CDPs, in tandem with an increasing pressure for CDPs to provide services. According to O'Byrne, (2011) state funding can create an impediment to the type of community work that is aspired to and to that which is practised. Community Work Ireland,2016, states, it is important to recognise the rights of communities and groups, including funded organisations, to work autonomously and maintain a critical voice. In a publication by the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, it states (kelly,2010)

> *Community organisations are compromised – by being partners with the state, depending on them for core funding, and at the same time challenging its policies and practices. For obvious reasons and often unconsciously, groups have begun to censor themselves (Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, 2010. pg. 136)*

Ledwith, (2011) suggests that state funding of community work serve to divide radical and pluralist community workers, with the role of community worker being seen as 'working in and against the state'. This creates ongoing tensions within the community work sector, with the state being seen as both employer and oppressor.

Radical Community Work

According to Becker,(1972) while a general consensus exists in terms of the need to bring an end to inequality among community workers and activists, there is disagreement with regard to how this can be achieved. This can result in tension and division among community workers and activists, between those who choose to operate within the established boundaries of political engagement and those who wish to operate outside of them (Baker *et al.*, 2004).

Jones, (1995) argues that means and ends are key aspects in terms of the aims and objectives of a campaign, where groups use strategic thinking and planning to analyse a situation and determine the best course of action to achieving their aims. According to, Baker *et al.*, (2004) radicals can consider moderates as too accommodating or even as having compromised to the extent of having sold out, while moderates can see radicals as utopian and idealistic and deem their actions counterproductive. Haiven and Khasnabish, (2014) argue that radical approaches are borne out of the understanding that social, political, economic and cultural problems are the result of deeply rooted tensions, contradictions, power imbalances and forms of oppression and exploitation that are structurally generated. While moderates welcome opportunities to engage with the state in the expectation of influencing state policy, radicals can often view this as the state co-opting leaders, weakening demands and deflating the energy of protest (Baker *et al.*, 2004).

Jones, (1995) argues that the first principle of means and ends should be that of least contest, implying the use of the least confrontational strategies first and upping the ante only as required, while Alinsky, (1972) claims strategies and tactics are deliberate, conscious acts, whereby those who do not have power can take it away from those who have it. Baker et al., (2004) propose that disruptive tactics demonstrates, the depth of dissatisfaction and grievance and thereby serves a purpose. While, Westoby and Dowling, (2009) suggest there is a need for a balancing of means and ends in community work.

Baker *et al.*, (2004) propose the need for a dual strategy, of working both inside and outside the system as a more effective approach as opposed to a blinkered focus on either approach. The crucial question here is not which approach is right or wrong, but how these conclusions are reached, how activists and community workers deal with such questions and ultimately, achieve their aims.

The complexity of community work has consistently given rise to conflicting demands within the realms of theory, policy and practice.

The role of community work in bridging the gap between the state and the Traveller community, however, remains a unique avenue for strategic engagement. This involves mobilizing Travellers to voice their experiences, devising oppositional strategies when appropriate and fostering collective action. according to, McArdle, (2021), there is a need for community work to continue to engage with the state if the aim of bringing about transformative change is to be realised.

Praxis

Freire, (1993) states that transformative change cannot be achieved with either activism or verbalism, but rather, it is achieved through praxis, reflection and action directed at the structures to be reformed. According to Ledwith and Springett, (2010), it is crucial that critical reflection on action is ongoing, if transformational change is to be realised. Seal, (2016) argues that implicit in the notion of praxis, is the unification of action and theory, resulting in change.

Ledwith and Springett, (2010) claim that critical reflection and transformative action are not separate processes, they are inextricably integrated as a unity of praxis. Freire, (1993) claims that human activity requires action and reflection, this, Freire claims, is praxis. It is transformation of the world and as praxis, requires theory to illuminate it.

Tucker, (1990) argues for a broadened perspective for community work that takes place at local level, noting the need for an analysis of the root causes, the symptoms of which they encounter daily through their work. Tucker maintains that it is crucial that community work practitioners are conscious of the primary focus of praxis, or action and reflection and the continuum between the personal and the political and correspondingly between the individual and the collective, both locally and globally.

Ledwith, (2011) argues that if the key issues and root causes are not named and exposed for what they are, community work is in danger of perpetuating the issues it seeks to address, noting that the potential of critical practice can be endangered by a theory/practice divide or a resistance to praxis that can result in either thoughtless action on the one hand and actionless thought on the other.

Conclusion

The literature presented in this chapter aims to develop a deeper understanding of the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights in Ireland, by situating this struggle in its broader socio- political context, with a view to analysing the structural and sedentarist ideological framework that positioned Travellers as a sub-culture of poverty and therefore, creators of their own exclusion and poverty. A stance that was adopted by the State, it's institutions and agents and by Irish society at large and that was, in the 1980s, labelled correctly for the first time, as anti-Traveller racism by Traveller activists and community workers who were supported by an emerging human rights framework.

This chapter correspondingly provides an analysis of community work practice, with a focus on the principles and values that underpin community work, of human rights, empowerment, participation and collective action.

 This is followed by an examination of the community work that took place with, and by Travellers, from the 1980s onwards, which provides an insight into the role that community work has played in the development of the Traveller struggle in Ireland, in empowering Travellers to engage in collective action to challenge structural inequality and anti-Traveller racism.

This section concludes by highlighting the challenges that community work faces when striving to bring about social change and challenge the structural inequality, and institutional racism experienced by Travellers, as they engage with and at the same time, challenge the state.

Chapter Four: Research Design

Introduction

This chapter provides a rationale for the research design, methodological choices, and implementation process employed in this study. Moreover, it clarifies my stance concerning my values and beliefs, examining how these have shaped my worldview, on the understanding that an individual's beliefs and values significantly influence their comprehension of the social and political reality (Grix, 2010). Additionally, the chapter critically evaluates the methodologies used in the research process, addresses relevant ethical considerations and identifies the limitations of the study. Chapter four concludes with a reflective segment that delves into my role as activist and researcher and its impact on my perception of the world.

Ontological, Epistemological and Philosophical Position

Approaches to social research are founded on different ontological positions, epistemological perspectives and consequential methodology and methods. The values and ideological position that one holds influences how we see and act in the world. This is also true of our approach to research. According to Grix, (2010) all research starts from how a person views the world, which is shaped by the experiences that person brings to the research process.

Different ontological and epistemological positions reflect different values, which lead to different approaches and interpretations of the research, while the methodology we chose is how we transform these principles into practice (Stanley, 2002). Understanding one's own position can help identify different research strategies which may lead to different outcomes (Blaike,2007).

Ontology

According to Grix, (2002), the starting point of all research is ontology, after which one's epistemological and methodological positions should logically follow. An individual's ontological position is their answer to the question, 'what is the nature of the social and political reality to be investigated'? It provides criteria for distinguishing between various types of objects and their perceived relationships (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002). In the social sciences assumptions are made and arguments developed regarding the nature of social reality and the world we live in, or an aspect of social reality, which is most important for the attainment of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). It is only after this question has been asked and answered that one can discuss what it is that we can know about the social and political reality that is thought to exist.

Constructionist theory purports that reality is dependent on social actors and assumes that individuals contribute to social phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012).

A positivist perspective, states that social reality is viewed as external and independent of social actors, research that is carried out is seen to be value free and the researcher is expected to be independent and objective (Delanty, 2005). A realist stance is a perspective where one perceives the existence of reality as external and independent of human consciousness (Delanty,2005).

According to Giddens and Philip,(2014), reality is understood to be socially constructed, subjective, prone to change and may be multiple. From this point of view there is no one truth, as interpretation is at the core of all research, it is critical that we acknowledge the role of our own values, histories and interests in the production of that knowledge (Koch and Harrington, 1998). Giddens, (1982), argues that what counts as relevant in social science is determined by the researched subject's interpretations and by the researcher's interpretation of these interpretations. While social constructionists are more likely than positivists to be interested in investigating qualitative differences in the meanings people give to experiences, positivists are more likely to be interested in identifying stable relationships between things and substantiating these relationships using generalisable quantitative data (Haigh *et al.*, 2019).

Haigh et al., (2019), argues that a constructivist perspective views reality as being constructed through and within human knowledge or discourse, while positivism reduces ontology to Epistemology, or limits reality to what can be empirically known through scientific experiments.

According to critical realism, all social structures possess causal powers and liabilities, and these social structures are activity dependent (Haigh *et al.*, 2019). Bhaskar, (1979) claims social structures include relatively enduring but non-permanent features of the world that often precede and succeed our individual lives, but which human agency can produce or transform over time. Critical realism emerged as a significant philosophical framework in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily due to the groundbreaking contributions of Bhaskar (Fletcher, 2017). One of the key principles in critical realism (CR) is that the nature of reality cannot be oversimplified or reduced to epistemology, which refers to our understanding and knowledge of reality (Fletcher, 2017).

Critical realism claims that human knowledge merely captures a fraction of a deeper and broader reality, a perspective that distinguishes CR from both positivism and constructivism (Fletcher, 2017). Initially conceived as a scientific alternative to positivism and constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), critical realism (CR) incorporates elements from both methodological approaches to inform its understanding of ontology and epistemology. Although it operates as a broad methodological framework for research, CR does not prescribe adherence to any particular set of methods (Brown et al., 2002; Nielsen, 2002).

According to Fletcher, (2017) with critical realist ontology, reality is stratified into three levels. The first level is the empirical level, which represents the realm of events as we perceive and experience them. At this level, events or objects can be measured empirically and are often explained using 'common sense,' though it is essential to acknowledge that these events are always influenced by human experience and interpretation. This level can be considered as the transitive reality where social ideas, meanings, decisions, and actions take place and can have causal effects.

The second level is known as the actual. Here, events occur independent of our experience or interpretation of them. These occurrences, which are true in nature, often differ from what is observed at the empirical level. The actual level is characterized by the absence of the human experiential filter.

Lastly, the third level is referred to as the real. At this level, causal structures, also known as 'causal mechanisms,' exist. These mechanisms are inherent properties within objects or structures that act as causal forces, giving rise to events observed at the empirical level. Understanding and explaining social events through reference to these causal mechanisms is the primary objective of critical realism (Fletcher, 2017).

According to Tinsley, (2022) critical realism offers a framework that supports a comprehensive understanding of both the structural and subjective aspects of human experience. CR addresses the diverse manifestations and tangible impacts of power, as well as the intricate relationship between knowledge systems and the material world. With its capacity to analyse and challenge dominant knowledge paradigms, CR can be complementary to decolonial studies and counter hegemonic projects by aiding in analysing and destabilising hegemonic knowledge systems.

Houston and Swords, (2022), claim that these social structures persist and are reproduced over time through processes of socialization, power dynamics and the influence of hegemonic ideology. However, despite this ongoing reproduction, individuals are not limited to these structures and have the capacity to socially construct their own experiences through discourse and social interactions.

Critical realism posits that the social world consists of both human agency, which encompasses factors such as an agent's capacity for choice, self-regulation and self-control, as well as the influence of social structures. Social structures refer to enduring patterns within social life, including social rules, customs, and predefined roles. To gain a comprehensive understanding of social life, it is crucial to recognise and examine the interplay between these two fundamental domains (Houston and Swords, 2022).

According to Bhaskar, (1989) critical realism argues for an understanding of the relationship between social structures and human agency, that is based on a transformational conception of social activity. According to the transformational understanding of social activity, the existence of social structure is a necessary condition for any human activity, thus society does not exist independently of human agency, rather, the social world is reproduced or transformed in daily life.

It is to these structures of social relations that critical realism directs its attention, both as the explanatory key to understanding social events and trends and as the focus of social activity aimed at the self-emancipation of the exploited and oppressed, claiming that the structures that agents reproduce or transform in their activity are also structures of power which may involve alienation, domination and oppression (Bhaskar, 1989). The oppressed contrary to their oppressor, have a direct material interest in understanding the structural causes of their oppression (Freire, 1972; Bhaskar, 1989).

The ontological position taken in this study is a critical realist position where agency is shaped but not determined by social structures and can consciously or unconsciously shape these social structures (Bhaskar, 1979). The rationale for using critical realism is the link between theory and my personal position, where I believe there are causal structures that impact on people's lives whether we are aware of these or not. However, I also believe that once we become conscious of these structures and understand how they operate, we can change them.

Examples of these structures might be the class system, anti-Traveller racism or gender inequality. As a community worker, researcher and Traveller activist, a key aim of this research is to identify the mechanisms that contribute to anti-Traveller racism in order to challenge and transform them.

Epistemology

According to, Grix, (2010), epistemology, a core branch of philosophy, is concerned with the theory of knowledge, particularly with regard to its methods, validation and the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality. Epistemology is focused on the knowledge-gathering process and is concerned with developing new and better models or theories (Grix, 2010).

Epistemology can be understood as theories of knowledge that justify the knowledge building process that is actively or consciously utilised by the researcher (Carter and Little, 2007).

Epistemology focuses on providing a philosophical grounding that supports decisions around what kind of knowledge is possible and how to determine that it is firstly, legitimate and secondly, adequate (Crotty, 1998). According to Denzin, (2002) social inquiry is shaped by the epistemology of the researcher and his or her underlying assumptions about the process of knowing. Thompson, (2011) claims a critical theoretical stance can help to expose underlying structures of oppression and inequality in society.

Grix, (2010) claims there are two contrasting epistemological positions contained within this approach known as positivism and interpretivism. The former is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality. Whereas interpretivism, is an epistemological position that is predicated upon the view that a strategy is necessary that differentiates between people and the objects of the natural sciences, and accordingly requires the social scientist to find the subjective meaning of social action (Grix, 2010).

Epistemologically, critical realism describes the real world by analysing the experiences of participants, resulting in a hermeneutic aspect to conducting investigations. The knowledge claims resulting from such analysis aim to identify and explain those aspects of reality that exist in order for the experiences that are under investigation to occur (Lawani 2021).

According to Critical Realism, a core objective is explaining social occurrences in terms of causal mechanisms and the potential consequences they have in terms of each of the three layers of reality (Fletcher 2017). Crotty, (1998) claims epistemology is the foundation upon which research is built and guides choices about topics, research questions, theories, methods, analysis and interpretation. It provides a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know, while according to Ledwith and Springett, (2010), epistemology can define not only whose knowledge is dominant but in turn influence ontological truths reinforcing what is normal, right and proper.

As interpretation is central to the research process, it is imperative that the researcher acknowledges how values, histories and interests are at play in the production of knowledge (Koch and Harrington, 1998). According to Gringeri, Barusch and Cambron, (2013), the practice of reflexivity is central to this approach, which focuses on the relationship between the researcher and their work with participants.

My understanding of social reality is based on the belief that we live in an unfair and unequal society where power and structural inequality exist, which in turn perpetuate the racism, oppression and exclusion that members of minority ethnic groups experience, including the Traveller community (Baker et al., 2004).

Research Methods

The choice of research methods is influenced by the ontological and epistemological assumptions and of course by the research question (Grix, 2010). Methods offer researchers a way of gaining insights and gathering information into particular experiences and contexts. Methods can be used in either qualitative or quantitative research (Grix, 2010).

Qualitative Research

Studies employing a quantitative method use subjects that are independent of the context and where the researcher does not interact with the subject of analysis (Grix, 2010). In contrast, qualitative research methods provide a means for exploring and understanding individuals or groups experiences and the meanings ascribed to a social and human problem (Giddens and Philip, 2014). A qualitative approach examines more closely the perceptions and experiences that impact on a person's understanding and behaviour (Smith, Larkin, Flowers, 2009).

Denzin and Lincoln, (2011) propose that qualitative research is a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. A qualitative approach captures an individual's attempt to make meaning of their experiences (McLeod, 2003). A qualitative researcher studies subjects in an attempt to make sense of the interpreted phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The process of qualitative research involves a series of steps, which has a flexible structure and commence with the emerging questions, procedures, data collection, data analysis and inductively building themes, interpreting the meaning of the data and concludes with writing a final report (Creswell, 2014). Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honours an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning and the importance of understanding and explaining the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2007).

Given that the aim of this study was to explore the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights in Ireland from the perspective of those who have been involved in that struggle, a qualitative research method was crucial for understanding the experiences and meaning that participants brought to the study and also to ensure the voice of Traveller activists and community workers remained central to the research process.

Participant Selection

Purposive sampling strategies are non-random ways of ensuring that categories of cases within a sampling universe are represented in the final sample of a project (Robinson, 2014). The rationale for employing a purposive sampling strategy is that the researcher assumes, based on their a-priori theoretical understanding of the topic being studied, that certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured (Robinson, 2014).

Likewise, the small population of the Traveller community in Ireland means that there are a limited number of activists and leaders who have been involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights, and who hold expert knowledge on the subject. Purposive sampling is a commonly used sampling strategy, in this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought after based on pre-selected criteria based on the research question (Robinson, 2014).

Purposive sampling in qualitative research is frequently promoted as a solution for pragmatic constraints of time, resources and access to information and expertise. What makes purposive sampling powerful, is the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study as such cases have the capacity to inform issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Robinson, 2014).

Participants

Participants who were identified by the researcher were those who would best meet the needs of this research study. These participants were both Traveller and settled community workers and activists who had been actively involved in the Travellers struggle for equality and human rights for a number of years and had taken on leadership roles at various times and had acted as representatives for the Traveller community at local or international level.

It was also important to ensure that the newer voices to engage in the struggle were also included. In this regard, a number of people were identified who had been involved during different stages of the Traveller struggle who had represented or spoken out publicly on the issues facing the Traveller community in Ireland. All participants were well known in the wider Traveller movement and many known broadly for representing the community in Irish media.

The participants were also known to the researcher through his work as a Traveller activist and community worker, and through his involvement in various campaigns with many of the participants at different times over the years. Most of these participants had led and shaped many campaigns regarding Travellers rights and brought particular insights, experience and expert knowledge of the situation of Travellers in Ireland and of the Traveller Struggle.

All participants were contacted by email which contained an information sheet (Appendix A). This was followed up by a phone call with participants who had agreed to take part in the study, who were then sent a consent form and an interview protocol (Appendices A and D). All of the individuals who were asked to participate in the study agreed to do so.

Selection Criteria

- Having been employed as a community worker in the struggle for Traveller rights or having been involved as a Traveller activist for five years or more at either at local or national level.

- Having been involved in a position of leadership in developing or leading campaigns as part of the Traveller struggle.

- Having knowledge and experience of the historical causes of racism and exclusion experienced by Travellers in Ireland.

- Having experience of engaging with the state at both local and national level and representing the Traveller community at these levels.

Anonymity

Being a member of the Traveller community myself and as someone who has been involved in the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights for many decades, I was very aware that because of the close-knit nature of the Traveller community and limited number of Traveller activists, community workers and leaders, most people would know each other and there existed a possibility that participants in the study might be identifiable.

At the same time, I was aware that these were issues that all the participants had spoken publicly about on many occasions. In order to ensure that I did no harm, I discussed the issue of anonymity with participants, they entrusted me to protect their identity as best I could. With this in mind, pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants. Likewise, in the findings, any potential identifying material such as particular situations or events, counties, organisations or names were removed.

Demographics

Participants identified themselves as both community workers and community activists. The majority of participants had attended a 3rd level course in community development or similar discipline and the majority of the participants were employed as community development workers. However, some of the participants were unemployed but remained active in campaigning for Traveller rights.

All the participants had been involved at different stages of the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland. While some had been involved from the very early stages of the struggle, others had become involved more recently.

Six participants identified as male, while five identified as female, ensuring a gender balance and the inclusion of voices from both female and male Traveller leaders and community workers in the study. Participant ages ranged from mid-twenties to mid-sixties.

Participants hailed from both urban and rural settings in an attempt to capture variance of experience in these two areas. Taking into consideration that the Traveller struggle began in Dublin, it was felt it would be important to get the views of Traveller leaders and community workers in rural areas who might have a different understanding of these issues.

Participant Profiles

Anthony	Has been involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights for over 20 years. He has been involved at both local and national level, mobilising and representing Travellers. He has a strong sense of social justice and is committed to gaining equal rights for Travellers in Ireland.
Catherine	Has been involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights for the past seven years, both as an activist and as a community worker and has a very strong commitment to achieving gender equality within the Traveller movement and within the wider Traveller community in Ireland.

Davey	Became involved in the Traveller rights struggle through becoming active at a local level through a local Traveller organisation over twenty years ago and has been actively involved since, engaging in many campaigns.
Eddie	Has been involved in the Traveller struggle for equality and human rights for more than three decades and has been involved at local, national and international level representing the Traveller community. He has been employed as a community worker at both local and national level and has worked tirelessly to politicise and mobilise Travellers.
Fran	Has been involved in the struggle for Traveller rights for more than twenty years and has been to the forefront of most of the campaigns for Traveller rights and has inspired many activist and community workers to become involved.
Ger	Has been a key figure at particular times in leading the struggle for Traveller rights in Ireland and has worked as a community worker with Travellers both locally and nationally. She became involved in community development work in her teens focusing on issues of accommodation.
Hannah	Has been a key leading Traveller activist for many decades and has played a crucial role in ensuring that the voice of Traveller women is represented in the wider movement both at local and national level, campaigning for equality for Traveller women.
Ian	Has been actively involved in the struggle for Travellers rights since the early 1980s and has represented Travellers at national and international level and has been instrumental in leading many of the campaigns for Traveller rights.

Julie	Has been involved in supporting Travellers rights since the early 1980s and has worked tirelessly to highlight issues of racism and human rights in relation to Travellers both at national level and international level.
Kevin	Has been a strong advocate for Travellers rights since the 1970s, who initially got involved through youth work and later became very active in many of the campaigns including the Tallaght by-pass campaigns in the early 1980s.
Larry	Has worked as a community worker for over 20 years with the Traveller community, both nationally and locally and bases his involvement with Traveller issues on his commitment to human rights.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using one to one semi-structured interviews with individual participants (Bell, 2007). One to one interviews provide a flexible way of gathering data that is detailed and personal (McLeod, 2003) and correspondingly allows the researcher direct access to the meaning's participants attach to their experiences (McLeod, 2003). This provided an opportunity for the researcher to obtain participants particular experiences and perceptions.

One to one semi-structured interviews are a widely used qualitative data-collection technique (Willig, 2008). This type of interview allows the researcher the opportunity to listen back over the recorded interviews and possibly identify issues or meanings they would not have otherwise picked up on.

This approach provided the focus that was required as it allowed each participant to describe in detail their own experience and perceptions of the Traveller struggle for equality and human Rights. Given that the nature of this research was to explore and capture the experiences of participants who had been involved in this struggle, semi-structured interviews were best suited to meet the needs of this research.

In total, eleven interviews were conducted for this study, lasting from one hour to one and a half hours. All interviews were recorded using a digital handheld recording device with the consent of the interviewee.

The researcher correspondingly wrote a personal memo immediately after each interview finished, on issues, thoughts, perceptions, reflections or feelings that had arisen during the interviews. These memos were used to help the researcher gain a fuller understanding of the issues and meanings that were being discussed and also what was going on for the researcher during the interview process (Appendix H).

Most interviews took place either in participants place of work or in venues that were convenient and accessible. Some interviews took place in venues other than the participants workplace. This was done to ensure the anonymity of participants as the researcher would be well known to most of the Traveller organisations and there was a possibility that they would know he was there to carry out an interview. The geographic locations of these interviews were widespread, with many of the interviews taking place in different parts of the country to ensure that there was a wide geographical spread of participants included.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2017). Once data collection was complete, each interview was transcribed verbatim. When initial transcripts of the recorded interviews were written up, copies were sent to participants to ensure that the participants were happy for the researcher to proceed before analyses of the transcripts began. This gave participants the opportunity to add or remove sections or correct any misinformation in their interviews. None of the participants requested anything to be added or removed and one participant sought clarification. Participants were asked to respond to the researcher within a certain period of time, otherwise the researcher would take it that he could proceed with the analysis of the data. A debriefing form and thank you letter were sent to all participants once all interviews were completed (Appendix E).

According to Clarke and Braun, (2017) good thematic analysis requires complete immersion in the data. Although this was a time consuming and a laborious process, it added greatly to a deeper insight and understanding of the issues and experiences of participants (Appendix G).

The researcher became familiar with the data by actively reading over the transcripts, taking notes of any interesting elements that stood out. Initial codes were then generated inductively, as the coding was not completed using a pre-existing coding frame or to fit any preconceptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Both semantic and latent coding were utilised, with no priority being placed on either.

The list of codes was then assessed for similarities in order to formulate them into coherent themes and to remove any irrelevant codes. Codes were not created based on frequency, but rather on meaningfulness within the data. For example, if a topic only came up with some participants but was considered highly relevant and meaningful by the researcher, it was then included within the analysis, while other codes may have been highly frequent across the participants but may not be considered meaningful in relation to the research. This process produced a number of candidate themes, which were then reviewed to both assess their coherence and examine whether they were reflective of the data.

Ethical Consideration

According to Kvale, (1996) research imposes a duty on researchers to safeguard and protect human dignity throughout the research process. This responsibility requires researchers to consider the ethical implications of their research prior to, during and after their studies are conducted.

The researcher was aware, as a member of the Traveller community, that Travellers are a marginalised group in Irish society, with little experience of research and as such need to have mechanisms in place to enable participants to fully engage in the research process. Ethical approval was sought and granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University. Ethical considerations were discussed with supervisors prior to beginning the process.

An information sheet outlining the aims and objectives of the study was given to all potential participants and discussed with participants (Appendix A) and both written and verbal consent was obtained prior to interviews commencing (Appendix D).

The voluntary nature of participation was emphasised throughout the data collection process and participants understood that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

In the final report, no references were made to individual names or locations that could identify participants and where it was felt that information may compromise anonymity, identifying details were changed. Data was password protected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Amendment Act, 2003. The rights and dignity of all participants were central to carrying out this research and were respected at all stages of the research process.

Limitations

This study is limited in that there were a limited number of participants who took part in the study and therefore does not claim to be representative of the views of all Traveller activists, leaders or community workers who are working with the Traveller community or who were involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights and anti-racism.

Nevertheless, it does represent the views of key activists, leaders and community workers who have been active in the struggle for many years and who are committed to a more equal and just society. It correspondingly contributes to addressing the questions that this research set out to explore based on the experience of these community workers and activists.

Though it does not claim to be representative, this is an important piece of research, as it captures the voices of those directly affected and involved and makes real their experiences. Neither does it claim to represent the views of state agencies, religious bodies, or members of the majority community, however, it does identify and demonstrate how those who hold power, the Irish state, can exclude those who do not.

This study points to the need for further research on these issues in order to develop a deeper understanding from a wider group of stake holders that would also explore mechanisms by which the prominent sedenarist ideology can be challenged.

Reflexivity

As a Traveller man who has experienced racism, discrimination and exclusion from a very young age, right through to adulthood, as someone who has watched my family and the wider Traveller community experience racism, discrimination and exclusion and as someone who has witnessed first-hand the impact and consequences that these experiences have had on me and my extended family and the wider Traveller community, I am left with a deep sense of injustice in relation to what I and other Travellers have had to endure. This deep sense of injustice is what I believe has propelled me to become involved in Traveller activism and challenge the inequality, racism and exclusion that I and members of my community have and continue to experience.

At a personal level, I have a deep understanding of how it feels to be excluded. This experience has given me an insight into how systemic and structurally ingrained in Irish society the racism and exclusion of Travellers has been and continues to be. These lived experiences have shaped my belief, that Irish society is a racist and unequal society in relation to Travellers and from this belief springs my commitment and desire to challenge and ultimately change these structures to create a more equal and inclusive society for all.

As a member of the Traveller community and as someone who has been involved actively in the Traveller struggle in the fight against racism both at local and national level, I bring a lived experience with me to this research, which is yet another layer to this study, a layer that an outsider might not have, a lived experience that researchers at times have tried to capture by living with members of the Traveller community, while carrying out their research (McCarthy, 1994).

I believe it is important to offer an insider perspective, as the voice of the Traveller community is rarely heard and has been historically drowned out by settled voices, particularly when it comes to the written word (âO hAodha, 2006).

This exclusion has been compounded by the educational disadvantage that Travellers have experienced that left them rarely in a position to challenge how the Traveller community were represented. For my own part, I was never given the opportunity to partake in any of the lessons that my settled peers engaged with in primary school despite a hunger for learning and knowledge. My secondary schooling was minimal.

Correspondingly, as a community with an historic oral tradition, this exclusion is felt most acutely when it comes to written descriptions of the community, (Hayes, 2006), where often superficial and ill-informed representations of Travellers have been created and maintained through a subtle series of unequal power relations that have coalesced over time into what Foucault defined as 'a regime of truth' (âO hAodha, 2006).

 I undertook this research with a commitment to ensuring the voice of Traveller activists and community workers who were involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights, equality and anti-racism remained central to the process. I have endeavoured to make visible and highlight the structures that have and continue to contribute to the poverty, oppression and racism that the Traveller community continue to face in Ireland, often on a daily basis, by highlighting the power differentials between Travellers and the majority community and by exposing the forces of hegemony and injustice (Crotty, 1998).

It is my sincere hope that this learning will provide others with insights that will contribute to the realisation of a more just and equal society, not just for Travellers, but for all, particularly those who are oppressed and excluded.

 I believe it is important for members of the Traveller community to see and hear their views reflected in academic studies that have been carried out by members of their community and to challenge the narrative that research is carried out on Travellers by members of the wider community rather than by Travellers themselves.

Being an activist and member of the community, I am also aware that I need to step back and reflect on the issues through a different lens, the lens of an activist/researcher. This capacity as an activist/researcher, to view and analyse issues from different stand points, can be challenging at times, but is one which can enhance and create a greater understanding and depth of analysis.

I am correspondingly aware that I am only one of a handful of Travellers who have advanced to doctoral level studies, who themselves have experienced discrimination and racism and who have a personal experience of these issues and know how it feels to face many of the challenges I have faced as an activist researcher and member of the Irish Traveller community.

I believe that the treatment of Travellers in Ireland is due to institutional anti-Traveller racism, that at times has resulted in the attempted annihilation of Traveller culture by the Irish state. This, I believe is evidenced by the sub-standard conditions that Travellers are forced to live in, the poor health outcomes, the high unemployment, the educational disadvantage, the lack of opportunities and the daily racism that Travellers face.

My involvement for a number of decades, challenging anti-Traveller racism and the denial of human rights and reading the literature related to these areas always seemed to stop short of providing a deeper analysis of the causal mechanisms underpinning anti-Traveller racism, where many community workers, Traveller activists and academics ask the question 'What causes anti- Traveller racism?' This research is an attempt to address this gap in the knowledge base.

Carrying out this study has been an arduous personal journey for me as well as an academic one. Firstly, as someone who has lived in many of the campsites where the Traveller struggle first began, researching this subject brought back many memories of my family and other Traveller families who lived in very poor conditions at the time where exclusion, racism and poverty were commonplace. There was also a sense of freedom and joy that we revelled in at times, particularly the experience and security of living with our extended families.

This study has evoked countless memories of friends, fellow activists and community workers, both Traveller and settled, who stood in solidarity and challenged the conditions, the evictions, the anti-Traveller protests and who supported each other in very difficult and challenging circumstances.

I recalled also the less frequent times when the victory was ours. These memories evoked a sense of fondness, admiration and at times sadness especially for those who are no longer with us, both Traveller and settled, who gave so much of themselves for the cause of Traveller rights.

Carrying out the study at times also raised anxiety for me and challenged my sense of self- worth and ability, where thoughts and feelings that made me question if I was good enough or capable of carrying out this study arose. These thoughts were often accompanied by feelings of fear and doubt and were familiar feelings that I had had in the past, which I now recognise as the effects of internalised oppression and racism, where the internalisation of negative stereotypes from a very young age, undermined my sense of self-worth and self-belief, with the result that I often didn't feel good enough.

Many more questions arose for me during the research process, such as why I wanted to do this study? Am I really doing this for the Traveller community or am I trying to prove to myself that I am as good as any settled person and can carry out this research? Will it make any difference? Or is it just another piece of research carried out by a person who happens to be a Traveller? Will I be judged by others, particularly members of my own community? At times, it felt like I was walking a line between several different identities, an activist, a researcher and a member of the Traveller community who has stepped outside of the stereotypical image of what a Traveller man should be and as someone who challenged the perceived and accepted norms about Traveller men that are held both by members of the majority community and are also held by some members of the Traveller community.

When these thoughts, feelings and questions arose for me, I had to reflect and remind myself that this study was important to me on a personal and political level and that it was an important study for the wider Traveller community and academia. This self-reflection helped ground me and give me the confidence to continue.

Only by challenging and breaking free of the stereotypes that wider society hold of Travellers and that we as Travellers then internalise and hold of ourselves, stereotypes that impose limitations on what we believe we can do or what we expect of ourselves and others, can we become agents of change. This has been part of the challenge for me as I am sure it has for many Traveller activists.

Becoming a researcher feels like yet another stage or milestone in this journey. During this research process there were also tragedies and challenges that impacted members of the Traveller community and my own extended family, including the tragedies in Carrickmines and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which made me question was doing this research the best place to put my energy for change. It was only with the support and encouragement of family, friends and supervisors that I found the determination to continue.

My hope is that this research will lead to a better understanding and analysis of the persistence of anti-Traveller racism in Ireland and in turn support Traveller and settled community workers and activists to develop interventions that will bring about change. The research process has offered me the opportunity to reflect on times of celebration and success when the victory was ours and also to reflect on the many times that we didn't achieve what we set out to achieve but were determined to continue the journey regardless.

In short, this has been a personal and political journey, as well as a research journey which brings to mind and was made manifest for me during the process of this research, that the personal is indeed political (Moane, 2011).

The metaphor of the road less travelled reflects my own journey as a Traveller, as an activist, community worker and as a researcher in carrying out this study, as well as the many other Travellers and settled activists and community workers who have embarked on this journey over the decades to bring about human rights and equality for Travellers in Ireland. It has been a privilege and an honour to share this journey with them.

Conclusion

This chapter comprehensively outlines the rationale behind the research design, methodological choices, and the implementation process of the study. It elucidates how my personal values and beliefs have profoundly influenced and shaped the entire research process. Furthermore, this chapter critically evaluates the methodologies employed in conducting the research, addressing the ethical considerations that were integral to the study's integrity, and highlights the limitations encountered within this research endeavour.

Chapter Five: Findings

Introduction

The focus of this study is an exploration of Traveller resistance and the struggle for human rights in Ireland. This chapter presents the findings from interviews with research participants who have been actively involved in this struggle over a number of decades. Traveller and settled community workers and activists refused to accept the poor conditions, the exclusion, racism and inequality that Travellers in Ireland were experiencing and began the journey to organise themselves and act collectively to address this situation.

This chapter will explore key themes and sub themes in the findings and is divided into three sections, each representing a major theme that emerged. The major themes are institutionalised racism, the emergence of Traveller resistance and the role of community work.

Each section is broken down further into sub-themes. In section one participants discuss the Commission on Itinerancy and the implications of its subsequent report in reinforcing the racism that Travellers faced and its implications for Traveller culture. Included in this section is an examination of the impact of this racism on Travellers, its intergenerational reach that leads to negative stereotypes becoming internalised and the consequent implications for Traveller mental health and well-being.

In section two we learn how developing ideologies and a rights-based approach deepened participants understanding of the systemic nature of the racism Travellers experienced and motivated their engagement with Traveller activism. We learn how community development provided a framework for Traveller activism, though participants were critical of the lack of Traveller leadership and organisational structures, claiming the need for Traveller only spaces and for a more inclusive approach that recognises the diversity within the community.

The final section provides a detailed analysis of community work and how the initial training programmes marked a new departure in Traveller activism. though participants are critical, claiming that state funding is driving a service provision model that fails to embrace the core principles of community development work.

Participants discuss the need for reflection on current community work practice and on the role of settled allies within the Traveller struggle, with some citing concern regarding the potential for an ethnic divide. Participants agree here on the need for collective action, a more radical approach and spoke of their pride in the Traveller struggle.

Section One – Institutionalised Racism
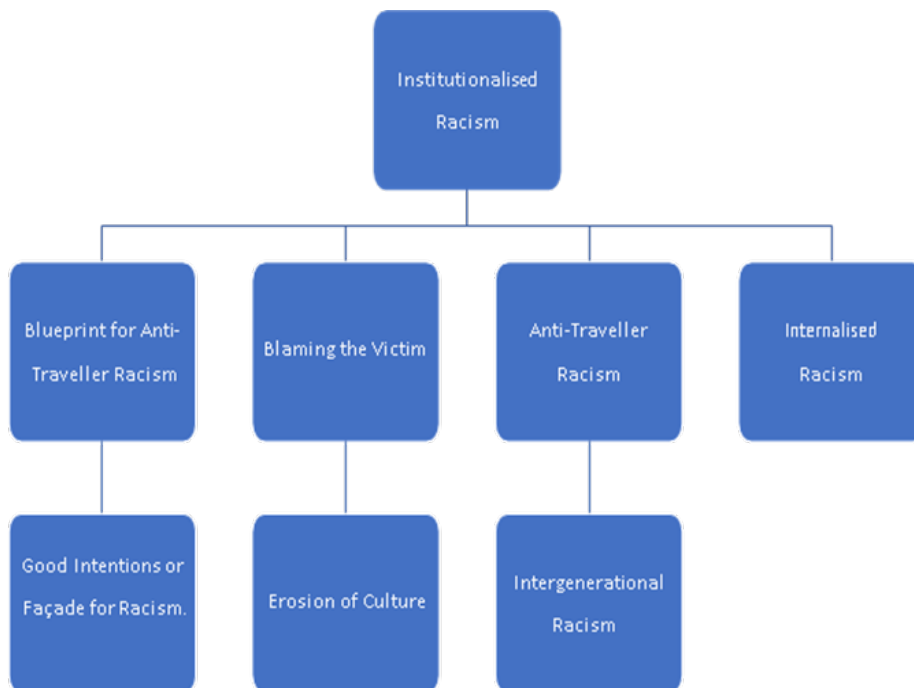
Introduction

This section of the findings examines the institutional policies developed by the state through the Commission on Itinerancy, which according to participants was the blueprint for anti-Traveller racism.

Participants also offered various perceptions on those involved in the commission, and the charitable model. The research reveals they are unified in their vilification of the Commission's Report, and its impact on the community, and the profound erosion of Traveller culture that followed. In examining the theme of structural and institutionalised racism in this first section, the sub theme of victim blaming arises where Travellers were blamed for the racism they experienced. This section correspondingly explores the deep impact that racism has had on individuals and the wider Traveller community. Including a discussion on the intergenerational nature of racism and how this came to be accepted as the norm and in many instances, became internalised, with devastating consequences in terms of Traveller mental health and well-being.

Anti-Traveller Racism

Community workers and activists coming to recognise that what Travellers were experiencing was racism, marks a critical juncture in their journey. Understanding that Travellers experienced racism at many different levels, at both personal and institutional levels was a key factor in developing an analysis of the Traveller situation. The participants in the study provide rich and varied perspectives on the structural and institutionalised racism that Travellers faced in Irish Society.

Davey, Hannah and Julie spoke candidly about their experiences of racism, with Davey highlighting how the systems and structures in society are designed for the majority settled community by the majority settled community, creating barriers for Travellers, and reminding Travellers they are not welcome,

> *"… the system around us is catered for the settled so no matter where we go, we see the boulders, we see the barriers. They are forcing us to feel ashamed … it goes into the sub- conscious …" (Davey).*

This racism and exclusion is further compounded by the hostility and hatred that Travellers face in wider society, as noted by Hannah, who speaks of her experience of anti-Traveller marches during the 1980s, noting the media's role in perpetuating negative stereotypes and further marginalising the community,

"…how visceral and how vocal [they] were in their hatred … and how … the media fed that … To see the rawness of it out on the street is a whole other thing … you were witnessing marches on the street to stop halting sites being [built]…It took … the Parish Priest to stand in the pulpit and call for calm and ask people to be responsible … and to stop this" (Hannah).

Julie was particularly disturbed by the reaction of local settled communities to Travellers, describing the lack of empathy shown by the settled community in relation to the poor conditions that Travellers were being forced to live in,

"…I was horrified by the conditions that Travellers were living in … but … what really upset me was the reaction of the local community … those marches, what I saw…" (Julie).

Hannah speaks again of the open hostility she experienced during meetings between local Travellers and the wider settled community,

"…they were really, really hostile spaces … the absolute hatred that people spoke and how they spoke about Travellers (Hannah).

Participant narratives here provide an insight into both the experience of exclusion and feeling unwelcome but similarly not only the outright lack of empathy for the dire conditions that Travellers were being forced to live in, but correspondingly the outright hatred and racism that Travellers were faced with.

A Blueprint for Anti-Traveller Racism

With regard to the Commission on Itinerancy in 1963, participants were in agreement that the commission was a significant catalyst for drastic change in the Irish state's response to the Traveller community and the racism that Travellers face in Ireland. This period and the resulting report produced by the Commission was viewed by participants as a critical juncture in which the State institutionalised racism, and the oppression of Travellers and established a framework for assimilation, absorption, and ultimately the attempted eradication of Traveller culture in Ireland.

This critical juncture marked a shift where a sedentarist mindset and ideology became institutionalised, perpetuating the view that Traveller culture and way of life was a problem that needed to be eradicated, resulting in the systematic erosion of Traveller culture and instigating a crisis within the community,

> *"… that document set … the course of action, the template, the blue-print …. we are talking … educationally, … the judicial system, … the provision of accommodation, every single institution, all arms of the state were … told their primary goal is assimilation … You engage with the idea of coercing … and the only way [Travellers] could access these services … was by agreeing to abide by the rules and regulations of the majority settled system that was designed by the majority for the majority…" (Anthony),*

> *"It institutionalised [racism towards] the Traveller community … [it] created inequalities … " (Catherine).*

Participants discuss how a sedentarist ideology and mindset that was used by the state was critical in terms of how Travellers were perceived by wider society, where Travellers were identified as a subculture of poverty, a theory that viewed Travellers as failed members of the settled community who needed to be rehabilitated, a people who essentially needed to be fixed and a culture that needed to be eradicated,

> *"[The state] more or less seen Travellers as inadequate and dropouts and that then began to be perpetuated …in 1963 in the report on Itinerancy" (Eddie),*

> *"… our way of life, our culture, our language, our history, our very existence … dismissed …." (Anthony).*

> *"I'm less forgiving of the academics and others from the 60's onwards who really argued against the rights of Travellers…who used debates that weren't helpful" (Julie)*

Participant narratives indicate that the sedentarist mindset, which viewed Travellers as a subculture of poverty, as failed settled people and as the root cause of their own problems was used by the state to justify policies and legislation that sought to erode Traveller culture and identity and justify assimilation and absorption.

Erosion of a Culture

According to participants, the impact of the 1963 Commission on Itinerancy report in subsequent years has been devastating for individuals, families and the wider Traveller community, where the actions and policies that came about as a consequence of the commission's report have caused huge levels of harm and suffering for the community with devastating consequences, so much so, that Anthony struggles to verbalise this impact,

> *" And we saw what has happened [as a result]. The destruction of the families … in Dublin in the 60s and 70s … whole families becoming dysfunctional because their whole (pause), what happened to us (pause) … I mean what took place in [those] 50 years and in fact the first 10 years from 63 to 73 …(pause)" (Anthony).*

> *"So that damage …, the addiction, the suicide rate, the mental health issues, the violence, the internal violence, the self-destruct button, Traveller on Traveller violence, it's all a direct consequence of how the State first began to engage with Travellers back in 63" (Anthony)*

According to Kevin, the attempted erosion of Traveller culture by the state as a result of the commission's report has resulted in specific sites of cultural loss for the Traveller community,

> *"…the Traveller men they had the horses… showing horses, dressing them, swopping them, putting them in foal … all of that sort of stuff. Suddenly, all of that is pulled away from them" (Kevin).*

While Anthony describes the devastating impact of the report and subsequent policies on the wider community, Kevin focuses on the lived reality of this, the direct impact of these policies and the tangible loss to individual Travellers in terms of cultural denial.

The data highlights the impact of the 1963 Commission on Itinerancy Report and its subsequent impact on the Traveller community in Ireland, where the eradication of Traveller culture was the main aim of all institutions and arms of the state. This was meant to be the final solution.

Blaming the Victim

The experiences shared by interviewees demonstrate how blame for the racism that Travellers experienced was projected onto the Traveller community themselves, rather than the state or wider Irish society taking responsibility for the policies and practices that served to exclude and oppress the community. Participants argue that anti-Traveller racism is entrenched in Irish society and is often overlooked, even by those who consider themselves to be anti-racist,

> *"…you know so the analysis still in [county] was if a Traveller experienced discrimination, they brought it on themselves … they experienced discrimination because they caused trouble" (Ger),*

> *"..when we didn't respond then we became the dirty filthy knacker and … it became a formalised structure where racism and prejudice and discrimination could [exist] because those in Dail Eireann… were saying to Joe Soap on the street … 'its fine, these people are their own worst enemies so therefore treat them [accordingly'" (Anthony),*

> *"Putting the issue of racism on the Irish agenda was very difficult, the concept [that] what Travellers were experiencing was racism was resisted by some of the development groups, even the Anti-Apartheid Movement …" (Julie).*

Ger describes two counts of how she and her family attempted to conform to settled society's expectations. For her, sitting her leaving certificate and for her family, moving away from the nomadic Traveller lifestyle and living in a house. However, this did not protect them from racism and discrimination, highlighting the structural and institutionalised nature of anti-Traveller racism and how it persists despite some Travellers efforts to integrate into wider society,

> *"… I went to school, I got educated and got my degree … ticked all the boxes, lived in a house, gave up … nomadism… We were raised on a promise that if you do all these things your life will be better and you won't experience discrimination… but I did …"* (Ger).

We learn also of the personal impact of this racism, as Ger describes the humiliation of being stopped from entering a premises with her classmates as they celebrated their leaving certificate. A rite of passage taken for granted by so many settled Irish students.

> *"I was doing my leaving cert and I was stopped on a night out with my friends and I didn't drink or anything …" (Ger).*

Participant narratives describe how entrenched the racism was, with the states treatment of the community providing justification for wider society to follow suit.

Good Intentions or a Facade for Racism

Despite reaching a consensus that the state institutionalised racism through the Commission on Itinerancy in 1963, participants express varying interpretations regarding the intentions behind the Commission's report. While Davey contends that the report had no harmful intentions,

> *"…the 1963 report did not set out with bad intentions. They actually thought they were doing us a huge favour [but] it had dire consequences and it still does today" (Davey).*

Anthony posits that its benevolent appearance masked an underlying agenda of institutional racism and discrimination towards the Traveller community.

> *"… it was designed by them so that oppression, while on one hand looked like a …charitable [act], … 'you will get this, you will receive this … and in return …you must … give up your ways and your life style and your nomadism' and just take you into …some location where you would be stationary, sedentary and under the gaze of the system" (Anthony),*

While participants differ in their opinions of the intentions of those involved in the report, particularly the state, they are in agreement that the Commissions Report had dire consequences for the community.

Intergenerational Racism

Interview participants spoke at length about the impact of institutional racism on the community, noting the impact that this had on the lives of Travellers. The data reveals the intergenerational nature of racism and discrimination that Travellers experience and how for some, this came to be accepted as the norm. The experiences of Ian and Ger indicate how racism and discrimination are deeply ingrained in the lives of Travellers from a very young age, with Ian noting for him racism and discrimination were simply accepted as part of being a Traveller,

> *"I suppose like most Travellers from the moment you start school you realise that you are different… I was put into segregated education … until my mother realising it and taking me out … I saw first-hand, … my mother having to fight for access to education … and …that was my first witnessing, knowing that there is something different about us" (Ger).*

> *"…it's just part of things being normalised you know discrimination, poor living conditions, high unemployment you don't question it because its inter-generational … your parents go through that and your grandparents, it becomes intergenerational and then it's kind of… normalised and you don't question it…" (Ian).*

Narratives here indicate the depth of the racism that the community face and how they are marked from the time they are born as different, demonstrating how difficult it can be to recognise the racism for what it is and how this can come to be accepted as part of being a Traveller, or as Ian says, 'the norm'.

Internalised Racism

The impact of racism and discrimination is also evident in the personal experiences of the participants, with many acknowledging feelings of shame due to internalised racism. Davey speaks of an underlying sense of shame he felt as a Traveller activist, while Fran correspondingly notes how oppression can impact self-esteem and self-belief and how this can impact on one's sense of agency and hope for the future. This internalisation is also reflected in Julie's observation of young Travellers denying their identity,

> *"… for me who is a Traveller activist, I carried around a certain degree, subconsciously, of shame of who I was, regardless of all of what I knew.… I was made to feel ashamed and that went on for a very long time … (Davey),*

> *"…with oppression you actually don't believe in your capabilities … there is always a question around how far you can go… and I remember somebody saying one day 'we're not talking about the black movement, we're talking about the Traveller movement, [change] can't happen' … (Fran),*

> *"Discrimination … if you look to some of the younger educated Travellers … [they] do not identify themselves really as Traveller…"(Julie).*

Internalised racism is found here to be a powerful force in preventing Travellers reaching their full potential, or alternatively, pushing them to deny their Traveller identity.

Conclusion

The data in section one indicates that the aim of the Irish state was the assimilation and absorption of Travellers into the settled community through the work of the Itinerant Settlement Committees. These committees were perceived by some as coming from a chartable perspective and a desire to end poverty for Travellers, for others, they represented a façade that sought to disguise the institutionalised racism perpetrated against the Traveller community by the Irish state.

Intentionally or unintentionally, participants agree that those involved in the committees were colluding with the state in the denial of Traveller ethnicity and the erosion of Traveller culture and supporting the states programme of assimilation, absorption with the ultimate goal of eradication of the Irish Traveller community.

Participant narratives highlight that anti-Traveller racism happens at many levels, personal, institutional and structural and that the historic, intergenerational and pervasive nature of the racism that Travellers experience became so ingrained within Irish society that it was no longer recognised as for what it really was.

State and institutional racism provided the justification for racism from wider society at large, as participant narratives indicate by the levels of hatred expressed towards the community during the 1980s.

The resistance to acknowledge that Travellers were experiencing racism by some academics further reinforced resistance to getting anti-Traveller racism put on the political agenda and addressing the issue. The extent of this denial can be fully appreciated by the fact that some anti-racism agencies similarly failed to acknowledge anti-Traveller racism.

Though this failure to acknowledge and name anti-Traveller racism was not limited to those outside the community, it is also evident, that some Travellers viewed their experiences of racism, exclusion and oppression as the norm.

While there are explicit and tangible consequences to the racism and discrimination that Travellers experience. We learn here from the participants of the more subtle and nuanced impact of racism and discrimination at a personal level, how it implicates self-esteem and hope for the future and how racism and oppression become internalised and normalised which can undermine one's sense of agency.

This outright racism and discrimination has been challenged through the work of Traveller activists and community workers, though the less evident and more nuanced effects of racism such as internalised shame and low self-esteem persist. According to participants, this contributes to the high suicide rates, poor mental health, poor educational attainment etc, indicating an urgent need for meaningful action.

Section Two – Traveller Activism and The Road to Resistance
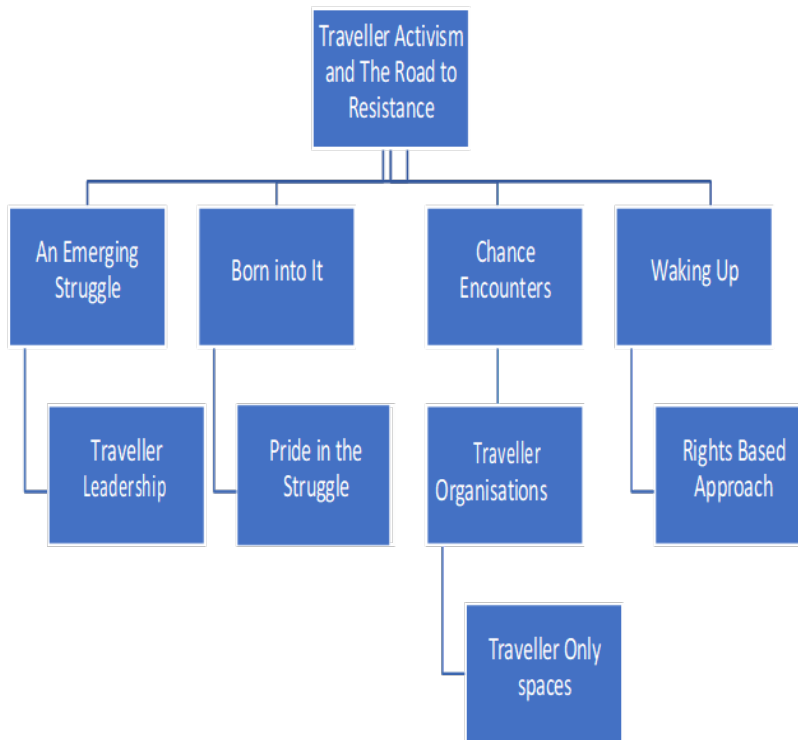
Introduction

In this section we learn from participants how the 1960's Traveller rights campaigns, while short lived, paved the way for the emergence of the Traveller movement in the 1980s. We learn how a rights-based approach replaced and challenged the charitable model which combined with consciousness raising and collective action eventually led to the development of the Traveller movement. Participant narratives indicate how the Traveller struggle for human rights campaign began and how its emergence inspired others to become involved.

An Emerging Struggle

The data suggests that the Traveller community's struggle has been ongoing for decades if not centuries, with some participants noting that the struggle began in the 12th century,

"… it goes back to the clan system when the British conquest came into play … and we remained in that clan system so we [were] constantly in [that] struggle..."
(Eddie).

While others pinpoint the commencement of the Traveller struggle to specific junctures in Irish history,

"… there's … been a struggle since … the foundation of the state, …" (Anthony).

Davey notes the changes that came with the foundation of the state and their implications for the community,

"…Ireland …it went from the rural to the urban, … but in this … [transition], [one] particular group, tinkers, Travellers, [suffered most]…." (Davey)

From the 1960s Traveller activists alongside settled allies, began to challenge the assimilationist policies and denial of human rights, which according to participants, marked the beginning of Traveller resistance, which continues to the present day,

"From the 60s it was a formalized struggle, the first time that … there were actually Travellers who came together with the support, ironically, of an English man"
(Davey).

According to Eddie, Travellers were initially reluctant to become involved, citing anxiety and low self- esteem as the reasons,

"There was very few Travellers involved because there was a huge amount of fear… and … there was a huge amount of oppression and internalised oppression at that time [that] still exists to this day" (Eddie).

Participant narratives indicate that while the Traveller struggle pre-dates the 1960's, with some claiming it goes back centuries, however the first attempts to mobilise Travellers collectively manifested during this period, and while the initial Travellers rights campaign of 1960s was short-lived, it was pivotal in terms of Traveller history and the development of the Traveller struggle for human rights. It represented the beginning of a formalised political struggle and while Traveller resistance started in the 1960's, most participants located their engagement in the Traveller struggle from the 1980s onwards.

Born into It - Becoming Involved

The stories of Anthony and Eddie, both Traveller men who have been involved in the Traveller struggle for many years, point to the fact that for many Travellers, the struggle started from the time they are born,

> *"The fact that I was born into it …I am connected by experiences … [S]o I was already born with a label … you feel your different …" (Eddie).*

For Anthony, it was a pivotal moment in his childhood that influenced his active involvement in later years. Although he spent many years concealing his identity, something he saw in the early stages of the movement back in his childhood, had changed him. He always believed he was going to come back and get involved,

> *"… I spent years, not denying but camouflaging who I was, tweaking my accent, … and changing it and on one hand it was very good because I got work … and [an] education … I could go anywhere I wanted, no one knew I was a Traveller …. and then … whatever I saw with Nan [Joyce] and the movement back then, I always said I was going to come back, I was going to get involved … and I did… I was only a kid but that's something that changed me …" (Anthony).*

Both stories highlight the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping their involvement. Eddie acknowledges that from early childhood, he was aware that he was different.

For Anthony, who speaks candidly about his internalised oppression and his desire to hide his identity, his childhood experience of seeing his community represented with pride and dignity on the national airwaves, highlights the importance of positive role models and similarly indicates both the impact and reach of those early attempts at Traveller resistance.

Chance Encounters

For some participants, becoming involved in the Traveller struggle was due to chance encounters that resulted in participants becoming more aware of the issues facing Travellers and developing an analysis of the situation. This sub-theme highlights the importance of raising awareness and politicisation in motivating individuals to become involved in activism and collective action. It correspondingly highlights the importance of outsiders and settled community workers involvement in Traveller resistance. As indicated by Ian, he had taken his experiences of exclusion and racism for granted, though a combination of boredom, unemployment and a chance encounter with a member of the settled community led to his involvement,

> *"…I had grown up thinking that this is the norm …. You don't have the skills or the analysis to be able to take a step back and critically reflect and analyse the situation … it becomes normalised and you don't question it and it took a person outside of our community… to say … this is not normal. (Ian).*

> *"There was very few if any opportunities in terms of youth work or training or employment … and then a bit of boredom and curiosity and then also, to be quite honest with you, a chance to see if we could get a few quid out of this and make some money…" (Ian).*

For Fran, a Traveller woman and activist for many years, it was in a similar vein to Ian, coincidental that she became involved, as it wasn't her intention initially, again highlighting the importance of settled community workers involvement in the Traveller struggle,

> *"I suppose … I didn't want to get involved but I thought it was ridiculous … the amount of sitting down that settled people did and spoke about us constantly …and I went along because I was getting a few quid …but the more I … listened the more I was getting tormented and annoyed and so I started asking questions… and started to see what … [it] was all about" (Fran) .*

Both Fran and Ian's narratives point to the significant role that settled community workers played in the early days of Traveller activism, drawing Travellers in who were initially sceptical, yet who went on, through the process of politicisation, to become significantly involved and influential in the movement in the years to follow.

Waking Up

As Ian notes in the previous section, he was unaware of how racism was impinging on his life and his opportunities. Similarly for Ger, it was a pivotal experience in her late teens, realising that her experiences weren't isolated to her personally, or her families' experiences, that marked a key turning point that led her to becoming more active in the Traveller struggle,

> *"…so that was … a major thing for me … realising that there's different things going on in different parts of the country, … other Travellers are experiencing different things than we were experiencing … but actually there's discrimination everywhere you look … if you are awake and you're willing to see it" (Ger).*

Eddie describes his involvement in the struggle as sparked by an experience of racism and discrimination towards him and his family, when he along with family members were refused service on the basis that they were Travellers,

> *"I will never forget what happened, the (bar)man turned around and he said 'hold on for a minute, we don't serve your type of people …and I remember walking out of that pub, and I said 'I will be back to you', now I didn't threaten in the way I said it, but the day after that I then started to get involved in what was happening" (Eddie).*

For Larry, a settled community worker, his awareness of the racism experienced by Travellers began when he was studying community development and had a placement in a Traveller organisation. This experience was eye-opening for Larry, as he had previously only encountered negative stereotypes of Travellers.

He was shocked by the conditions that Travellers lived in and was left wondering how such a situation could arise, which highlights the importance of direct engagement between settled community workers and the Traveller community,

> *" … to go out onto a site for the first time was a huge learning curve for me and I remember … it was just appalling to see so many people living in such overcrowded spaces and [asking] why this was happening? Why?" (Larry).*

Catherine, a young Traveller woman, believes her involvement was borne out of her struggle with her own identity as a young Traveller woman and her struggle to challenge the internalised negative stereotypes she encountered. Though Catherine also notes how this drove her passion and drive for gender equality and change,

> *"…I would have had very big struggles as being a Traveller woman thinking I wasn't good enough for society…" (Catherine),*

> *"… so I just became an activist through the passion of wanting change… especially for young women in the Traveller community…" (Catherine)*

For Julie, a long term settled community worker, her involvement in Traveller activism was prompted by her analysis of the racism that Travellers were experiencing. She recognized that naming the racism that Travellers were experiencing was an important step in addressing it,

> *"… I was interested in getting involved from a community work perspective and also from a perspective of naming that what Travellers were experiencing at the time was racism …" (Julie).*

For many participants, coming to see beyond their own familial experience to understand that what was happening to Travellers at a wider level, or seeing for the first time the appalling living conditions of Travellers, or recognising that what Travellers were experiencing was rooted in systemic racism, all proved motivating factors for participants becoming involved in the Traveller struggle.

For Catherine, her own struggle as a young Traveller woman prompted her to activism to try pave an easier path for younger Travellers, particularly younger Traveller women of future generations, indicating that a shift in awareness for all those who became involved, proved a significant motivating factor.

The Seeds of Change

To have Travellers come together collectively and voice their experiences as a denial of human rights and racism, inspired many Travellers to become involved in the struggle and to believe that change was possible. According to Eddie, a grassroots Traveller rights organisation was for him, where it all started,

> *"It was the seed that started a lot of stuff …it was the beginning of something for a lot of Travellers, to have a group of Travellers to come together and even the name Minceir Misli – Traveller movement, you know, it took a while for people to cop on to what it was, even for Travellers to cop on to what was going on here" (Eddie).*

The involvement of Travellers in Traveller resistance was initially limited to just a few due to fear, racism and internalised oppression as stated earlier. However, increased visibility led to an increase in activism and small successes encouraged Traveller activists to continue their efforts,

> *"Travellers were starting to have a voice, not a big voice and not a huge impact voice, but nevertheless a voice" (Eddie),*

> *"The key moment for me was winning the Rosella McDonald case, that was a key moment, that put down a marker" (Kevin).*

The data highlights that Travellers and settled activists and community workers challenged the racism, discrimination and resisted assimilationist policies through a formalised political struggle for human rights that began in the 1960s, which represented a pivotal moment in Traveller history, as it inspired many Travellers and non-Travellers to become involved in the struggle and most importantly, to believe that change was possible.

Rights Based Approach

The struggle for Travellers' rights involved a change in the analysis of the Traveller situation from a charitable approach that viewed Travellers as a people that needed to be saved or fixed to a human rights-based approach that afforded Travellers the respect and dignity they rightly deserved. Julie, Larry and Kevin speak of this new approach that was developing, which differed greatly from the charitable model of the previous decades,

> *"A different way of thinking was beginning to emerge which wasn't coming from the religious or a charity perspective, a challenge to traditional social services"* (Julie),

> *"…[we began using the] analysis of a rights-based approach versus a different type of approach … [though] some people felt uncomfortable with that, … a different analysis to say look, if we're going to bring about change for Travellers we're going to need to have a different set of guiding values and principles…"* (Larry).

This new approach soon filtered down through the organisations into the community, where Travellers began to challenge the treatment they were being subjected to,

> *"…when the Dublin Corporation would come into evict, the Travellers would say hold on here now this is my understanding of my rights"* (Kevin).

The development of a human rights-based approached empowered Travellers to challenge the unacceptable treatment they were being subjected to and gave hope to the community, by highlighting that they were not the problem, rather, how they were being treated was what was at issue.

Traveller Leadership

Participants shared a variety of views on the issue of leadership, acknowledging that Traveller leadership is crucial for the future development of the Traveller struggle and for the Traveller community securing equality and human rights in Ireland.

However, there were also concerns expressed regarding how Traveller leaders are appointed or selected, with participants stating that there is a need for a more democratic and inclusive process for selecting and appointing leaders and for determining how long they stay in leadership or representative roles.

Participants believe the community should have the opportunity to elect or select their own leaders and highlight the fact that some Traveller leaders are appointed due to being employed in a Traveller organisation, which does not necessarily make them leaders in the community, neither, however, does this make them any less effective as a leader,

> *"I think this is part of the issue, I think [leaders] have been appointed in many cases within employment rather than selected or elected by their own community, so they are not necessarily leaders of their community, they are people in positions of power, they are in leadership within organisations so that gives them a powerful position …* (Larry).

The data similarly indicates that there are individuals who have assumed leadership roles but who are not part of any organisation or group and who therefore aren't accountable to anyone,

> *"…[but] there are other people who are … doing great work but they are not in that [organisational] space so therefore they don't get [that profile], so they are often seen as the leaders but they haven't been given a leadership role … they have assumed a leadership role and … they have assumed it for the betterment of their community … they seek to just be a voice for that community… so there is a difference…"* (Larry),

> *"…but some of them Travellers are on the border line of the movement in terms of … they haven't been fostered by a Traveller organization. … (Davy).*

Davey comments that an important aspect of the movement going forward is how leadership within the movement is managed and notes the need to create a transparent system that is not over identified with individuals and avoids power struggles when change is needed,

"…create a fair…[system], rotate [roles]. You constantly rotate them so it doesn't become complacent and they don't become about the individual or it doesn't become a power struggle …" (Davey)

What the data highlights is the need for an agreed and transparent process to elect or select Traveller leaders to represent the community. This highlights the growth of the Traveller movement and the increased participation of Travellers and also the diversity of Traveler voices that have emerged from within the community.

Participants also expressed the need for political representation in the Dail and the Seanad to give a voice to Travellers, thereby ensuring that the needs of Travellers are being represented in the broader political landscape,

"…as Travellers we need to elect our leaders or we need to have an opportunity …to elect them within the Dail…" (Anthony)

Participant narratives highlight the contentions involved in the issue of Traveller leadership, with some suggesting fair and equitable ways to elect leaders within the organisational structures, while others point to the fact that leadership exists outside of the organisational structures also, whereby such leaders have an added freedom of not being beholden to anyone but the community.

We learn also from participants of the marginalisation of the Traveller community in the national political arena and the need for their voices to be heard and represented. This suggests a need for a Traveller constituency or a Traveller panel similar to the university panels in the Seanad that would ensure that the Traveller voice is represented at the level of policy and decision making.

Traveller Only Spaces

Participants expressed how being in Traveller-only spaces allows them to be themselves, to let loose and relax as opposed to mixed spaces, where some participants note that the presence of non-Travellers can be inhibitive and be counter-productive with Travellers feeling a need to 'perform' or dumb-down the way they express themselves. The data suggests that Traveller-only spaces are crucial for preserving Traveller culture and identity.

Eddie speaks of what it means to be in Traveller only spaces and notes the need for and the cultural implications of such spaces,

> *"…if you take Minceir Whiden … a Traveller only … forum and I …see us conduct ourselves in mannerisms that is completely different then when we are in the presence of non-Travellers, … we are far more articulate or intelligent than the settled counterparts, because I believe they (settled people) are more educated by the books where we are educated by life experiences and there is no substitute for that but yeah, we behave and conduct ourselves slightly different, more Traveller like and when we are in the presence of settled we are adapting to them to make them feel comfortable" (Eddie).*

For Davey, the constraints of having to behave in a certain unfamiliar way can create tension and unease for Travellers, and uses the example of weddings and funerals as insightful metaphors, capturing well the solemnity that Travellers feel the need to adopt in the presence of non-Travellers,

> *"… if you go to a wedding you are happy, you are celebrating, if you go to a funeral you are sad and you have to conduct yourself in a different manner, so for me with so many settled people involved … it feels like we are at a funeral the whole time because we have to conduct ourselves and we can't celebrate who we really are… (Davey)*

For Davey the majority settled community can influence the way Traveller activists communicate and engage with other Travellers and this can distance Traveller activists from their own community, because they become accustomed to relating in a more settled manner,

> "… our vocabulary has gone up some bit so we will sound almost foreign to [our fellow Travellers], we will sound more like settled people to them … we feel like we are talking down to fellow Travellers rather than talking with them. (Davey).

The data points to the fact that Traveller-only spaces are critical for preserving Traveller culture and identity. Participants emphasise the importance of having their own spaces, where they can communicate in a more culturally appropriate way and where they feel more relaxed which is conducive to better analysis, decision making and outcomes. Participants mention how they become accustomed to relating in a more settled manner, which can lead to Traveller activists and community workers becoming distanced from their own community, whom they serve and represent.

The use of weddings and funerals as metaphors, where the need to behave in a formal fashion that doesn't always allow for celebration of Traveller culture captures well the extent to which Travellers feel they must adopt to settled cultural norms in mixed situations. It correspondingly reflects a cultural hierarchy, whereby Travellers adopt to the cultural norms of wider society rather than the other way around.

Lastly, this also demonstrates a marked cultural difference, whereby Travellers adopt a less solemn, formal and serious approach to resolving issues. Overall, the data highlights the importance of Traveller-only spaces as cultural spaces as well as political spaces where decisions that will affect the communities' future can be made in a culturally appropriate and culturally supportive manner that reflects the communities needs and wants.

Traveller Organisations

The data highlights a concern among some participants about the lack of an overall collective movement within the Traveller community.

Larry, in particular expresses his frustration with the current organisational structures and the impact they have on creating a more collective movement, noting the difficulty in becoming involved in the Traveller struggle if you are not part of a Traveller organisation,

> *"…for me the struggle was to try and step outside of the organisational piece and say well what if I am not involved in an organisation, am I part of a movement? … If I am outside of that how do I engage …[because] I don't feel that I can sign up to a set of principles and take a stand like many white people did with the blacks in America" (Larry).*

Davey echoes Larry's sentiment and emphasizes the need to move beyond the organisational structures to address the concerns of Travellers who are not involved in these organisations.

> *"You see now in [locality], Travellers who have nothing to do with Traveller organisations are angry, so obviously we have missed something [because] they have now got to the point where **they** (emphasis in recording) are going to take direct action…" (Davey),*

While Julie notes the difficulty in developing relationships with Travellers who do not engage with organisations, emphasising the need for a more collective movement that goes beyond organisational structures,

> *"… I think we 're still struggling to do what the Traveller pilgrimage [tried] to do… to develop relations with a whole variety of Travellers who wouldn't come near [an organisation], it was all about building a solidarity and a movement that wasn't an organisation …" (Julie).*

The data suggests a desire for a more unified collective approach to addressing the challenges faced by the Traveller community, with a recognition that the current organisational structures may not be adequate in creating a more collective movement. The data correspondingly points to the need for the Traveller movement to develop pathways for involving both settled and Travellers who are not part of Traveller organisations.

Diverse Voices

The findings highlight the complexity and diversity of voices within the Traveller struggle. These different views and voices can lead to tensions and according to participants, has the potential to undermine solidarity.

One of the key issues highlighted by participants was the existence of splits and fragmentation, which can be caused by different political views, approaches, strategies and tactics that different organisations, Traveller leaders and community workers adopt,

> *"… if …you look at the history of the Traveller movement … there has been splits and fragmentation over the years, … its … almost inevitable. You start off with good intentions, but then certain individuals feel I didn't buy into this … or it's not militant … or direct enough…" (Ian).*

Ian goes on to discuss an iconic image, that he considers a visual representation of an early split within the movement between those that were involved in the 1960s campaigns, where Joe Donahue is photographed, holding a placard stating,

> *"Grattan Puxtan doesn't represent us" (Ian, Appendix M)*

A further important issue highlighted by participants is how the movement is perceived both internally and externally. Some participants expressed concern about who is making the decisions on behalf of the movement and how these decisions are reached. Additionally, participants noted that while the vision is similar across the board, the processes differ greatly,

> *"…some might say that there is not a piece of paper between their policies and in the way they work and their vision for Travellers, [but] there is a huge difference in the way they operate and I think that creates its own tensions" (Larry).*

Despite the tensions, some participants also see this diversity as a strength that needs to be managed in an inclusive way to avoid division. They argue that although different groups and individuals may have different approaches, the ultimate aims and objectives of the Traveller struggle are the same and it is essential to find common ground to work together,

> *"…we are not all going to share ..the same political views or have the same philosophy … on how the issues should be addressed and … that's ok … that has to be managed because … you don't want… fragmentation within the movement … because at the end of the day … the aims and the objectives are the same. Where there is a disagreement it's about how to get there(Ian).*

The data suggests that managing the diversity of voices within the Traveller movement is essential to achieving shared goals and avoiding fragmentation. This requires a transparent process for decision making and finding common ground despite differences in approaches and tactics. It also highlights the need for a more shared sense of ownership and communication within the community to raise awareness and critical consciousness among Travellers about the struggle and promote participation in the movement in order to bring about change.

Pride in the Struggle

Even though there was a diversity of views, all participants in the study spoke with pride about Traveller resistance, particularly from the 1960s and 1980s,

> *"…I do believe the struggle is every bit as up there with Irish independence, the black movement in America, the [First Nations] movement in America and any other great struggles around the world …" (Anthony).*

They noted the unity, solidarity and togetherness that existed within the wider Traveller movement. The use of collective actions such as pilgrimage and protest were highlighted as ways of bringing Travellers together, reminiscent of the cultural practices that the nomadic tradition facilitated.
These events served to rekindle relationships and re-connect with fellow Travellers, community workers and activists. A practice that fostered unity, solidarity and collective strength and that was in keeping with the cultural practices of the community,

> *"… there was a togetherness in it for me. I just thought 'this is fucking fascinating' you know, something that I hold with an awful lot of pride …" (Fran)*

"… I think …the pilgrimage, …the walks and the fire and bringing all the old distant Travellers together from different old towns that might never see one another and you know listening,…[that] was really going about a real movement … there was no withholding of power, it was shared, [they] shared all the power, … [they] didn't see [themselves] as superior or whatever…" (Fran).

As is evident from Frans words above, these events correspondingly generated a sense of pride in Traveller culture and unity and demonstrate the need for culturally appropriate collective actions in order to engage Travellers on the periphery and to instil a sense of pride in Traveller culture and most importantly, bring Travellers into the movement.

Conclusion

The data in section two describes the personal experiences and pivotal moments that have influenced the involvement of individuals, both Traveller and settled, to become active in the Traveller struggle.

A common theme emerging from the data was the racism that Travellers were experiencing both at a personal and systemic level and the awareness that consciousness raising and politicisation contributed to participants becoming involved in the Traveller struggle and challenging this situation. These findings highlight the importance of childhood experience, empathy, solidarity, politicisation and positive role models, all of which proved motivating factors in the involvement of the participants interviewed.

The development of a rights-based approach to challenge the charitable model, was a welcome change while raised awareness as to the dire conditions, the pervasiveness of the mis-treatment of Travellers and the reality that what Travellers were facing was in fact racism, were additional motivating factors.

The role of Traveller leadership and the role of Traveller organisations indicates that there are issues that need to be addressed, such as how Traveller leaders are elected and how organisations reach out into the community to Travellers on the periphery, with the need for a process whereby settled allies that are not connected to formal structures, have a way to show their support for and solidarity with the Traveller community.

Finally, Catherine highlights that once you become aware of the issues impacting on the Traveller community, there is no turning back. This suggests that critical awareness of the systemic racism and exclusion faced by Travellers is a common theme among those who became involved in the Traveller struggle for human rights and correspondingly, how difficult this journey can be,

> *"It's really hard being a Traveller activist … I know I can … do something else and block [the reality out], but when your eyes is open…. you can never go back to sleep"* (Catherine).

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Section Three - Community Work - A Time of Conflict and Hope
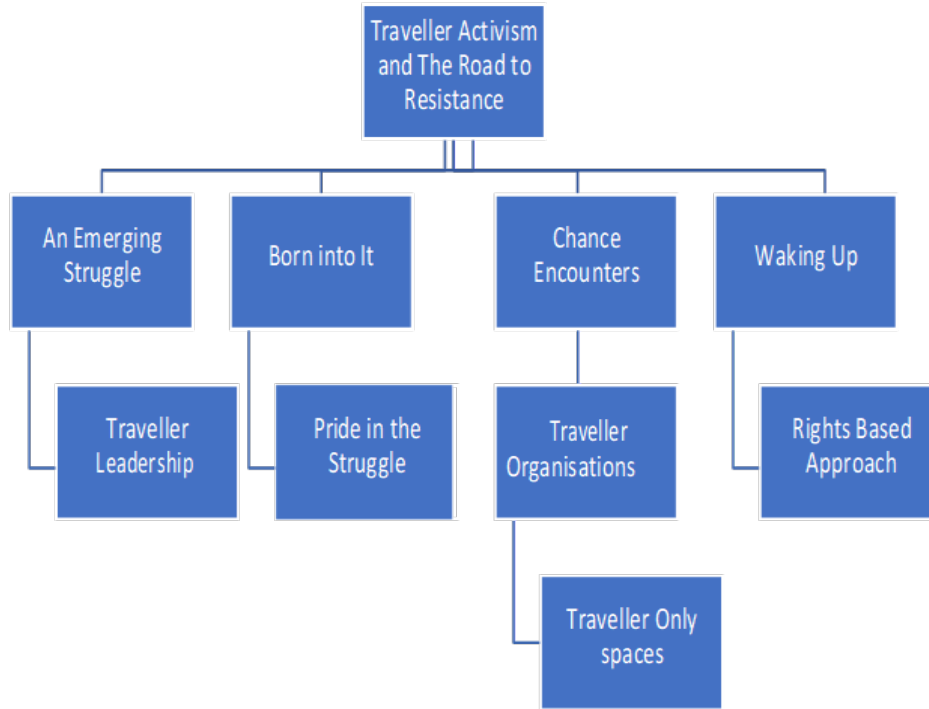
Introduction

Several participants articulated the perspective that the introduction of community work in the 1980s was a pivotal factor in the advancement of Traveller human rights in Ireland, leading to substantial sociopolitical change. This phenomenon is notably associated with the emergence of increased Traveller involvement and political action, prompted by the inception of initial training programs in community work specifically for members of the Traveller community.

According to participants, the implementation of community work established a framework firmly rooted in the values and principles of equality, participation, empowerment and collective action. This framework, in turn, has served as a robust cornerstone facilitating the evolution of the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland today.

The data presented in this section highlights the positive influence that community work has had on the development of the Traveller struggle, as numerous participants readily recognise its pivotal contribution not only in being a catalyst for transformative change, but also in providing a structured analytical framework. Additionally, community work has proven instrumental in empowering Travellers to actively participate in collective action and to advocate for their own interests.

A Time of Change

Participants spoke of the constructive influence of community work within the Traveller struggle, as a considerable number of respondents emphasise its central role in not only shaping change but also in establishing a structure for analysis. Furthermore, community work is acknowledged for its capacity to empower Travellers, facilitating their active involvement in collective actions and self-representation,

> *"…it has been pivotal … it gave … a framework .. to see the bigger picture, it gave … an analysis, to try and include the community and bring the community with you, … It gave us structure [and] coherency …" (Ian),*

> *"The introduction of community work … helped to shape change in a much more positive way" (Eddie).*

Julie highlights how community work, contrary to the approach and analysis that underpinned the Itinerant Settlement Committees, focused on empowering Travellers,

> *"If you create the conditions people can do their own analysis and people will see the structural inequalities that they face" (Julie).*

According to Eddie, community work helped create the conditions for Travellers to question the taken for granted, particularly the racism and discrimination that the community experienced,

> *"I would have never thought about prejudice or racism or discrimination. It never entered my head" (Eddie).*

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The data highlights the crucial role community development work has played in facilitating Traveller empowerment and promoting self-representation. This marked a critical juncture in the development of Traveller resistance and the Traveller struggle. The introduction of community work marks a decisive phase in the evolution of Traveller resistance and the broader Traveller struggle for human rights.

Community Work Training

The data points to the significant role that community work training has played in supporting the Traveller community to respond to institutional racism and discrimination. Participants spoke positively about the transformative impact of the first community development training programs and consequent third level courses that enabled the community to develop a new set of skills and knowledge,

> *"…the first programme and the … second programmes …were very important because if you look around … that first group … that [was a] transformational time … something happened you know … people got a different set of ideas into their heads about who they are … and their capacity to articulate and to be proud of who they are was raised and was opened up … (Julie),*

> *"Community development, politicisation, these were all words we never used, never knew what they even meant, but … going through a whole process of learning… I think that was a key time for me …" (Eddie).*

Maynooth University was also highlighted as an important space for Travellers to engage in community work training and develop their skills and awareness, leading to both personal and social transformation,

> *"… and I think the same thing to an extent happened through the Travellers that came on the programme to Maynooth…it was really important that Travellers had their spaces in third level education … and for that to happen you needed to have Travellers coming into third level education who … identified themselves as Travellers and spoke of themselves as Travellers before, after and during third level education…Maynooth …had to be a space where people felt, in as far as you could… that they were welcome and that they had a right to be there and I think that has been important (Julie).*

Community work courses in Maynooth have also played a role in educating both Travellers and settled community workers as to the situation of the Traveller community in Ireland,

> *"In Maynooth, Travellers are central to the discussions that takes place, so community work has had a role in informing others, non-Travellers, about the Traveller issues" (Larry).*

However, not all participants viewed community work training as a positive. Fran felt that becoming a professional community worker involved conforming to a set of rules and expectations, leading to a loss of freedom that she had as a community activist.

While Davey believes that community development training needs to be more Traveller-specific and develop a cultural lens to provide a deeper understanding of the issues impacting on the community,

> *"We were kind of community activists and I think when we went into college then and became professional you had to play the game" (Fran).*

> *"community development training] needs to be Traveller friendly, it needs to be more in tune with Travellers not just the textbook stuff. I mean a better, deeper understanding of not just the community development but looking outside of that" (Davey).*

'

This section of the data emphasises the crucial role community work has played in empowering Travellers to bring about change, however, there are differing perspectives on the effectiveness of these courses with suggestions of a more culturally specific approach from one participant and insight into the constraints that come with becoming a professional community worker as opposed to a Traveller activist.

Collective Action

Collective action is one of the key principles of community work and was identified as crucial in mobilising the Traveller community to participate in the Traveller struggle.

Larry acknowledges how important it has been in mobilising Travellers collectively and raising awareness of the discrimination and racism that Travellers experience,

> *"…I think … standing collectively around key issues … opposing things like evictions …,highlighting discrimination, highlighting the treatment of Travellers, we've done that quite well, we've done that effectively…." (Larry)*

However, some participants argue that there has been a decrease in collective action over the last 30 years.

The data suggests that despite the best efforts of community workers and activists to mobilise the Traveller community to take collective action, there have been obstacles and challenges that have prevented sustained mobilisation over the years and systemic barriers that have prevented transformative change from taking place,

> *"..so even around … mobilisation, I don't actually think we came that far in the last 30 years to be honest". (Catherine)*

> *"…,the achievement of having 5,000 people on the streets [even though it] was not enough… because … we didn't get the required outcome (Larry).*

According to Eddie, the struggle was more radical in earlier years and claims academic influence has resulted in the de-radicalisation of the movement,

> *"I think the struggle was more prominent, … stronger back in the early days. … all those people in the early days were more radical, more in your face … I feel personally when academics come into it … once their role starts influencing the militants as such, the minority, they influence it with a very settled or non-Traveller ideology…" (Eddie).*

The data suggests that while efforts to mobilise the Traveller community towards collective action have been successful, they haven't achieved the desired outcomes. Some participants claimed that the Traveller struggle has become less radical and that collective action has become less frequent over the past three decades, pointing to the structural barriers that impact effectiveness of such efforts to realise change.

Strategies and Tactics

The data presented describes a view among participants that the current strategies employed by Traveller and settled community workers and activist are not producing the desired outcomes.

Participants express frustration and anger at the lack of progress and change for the Traveller community despite years of activism, community work, protests, demonstrations and other direct actions,

> *"We don't have the outcomes that we want after so many years, I feel we need to do something different. Have I got the answers for what we need to do, no. I am still working my way through that, but I know one thing - that all we're doing now … is putting a lid on a pressure cooker while our people are imploding all around us"* (Ger),

> *"…despite the fact we have had 18 years of the NTACC and we are now in the 5th round of the five year Traveller accommodation programmes I actually do believe …it's worse… local authorities are failing, they are failing and …I can understand peoples anger and frustration …"*
> (Fran).

Participants suggest that it is time to do something different and highlight the failure of the state to provide adequate facilities and services for Travellers as a major obstacle.

A further issue on which participants agreed and one that garnered many heated and impassioned responses, was the need for change in strategies and tactics,

> " … It's time to say we have always done it this way and has it worked? No. So how can we do it differently?" (Catherine).

> "… it's not that we have been doing it wrong but that hasn't led to the changes that we thought we were going to [get]" (Larry)

> "We have had protests, we have had demonstration's, we have had boycotts, we have had walk outs, so when I think about it, I really fail to see what else we could have done or how we might have done something differently, so I rather see it as the state failing Travellers, not Traveller organisations failing Travellers" (Ian).

Participants described the anger and frustration of the wider Traveller community and particularly younger Traveller men at their situation, including a lack of access to employment, accommodation, and lack of opportunity. Overall, the data suggests a need for new approaches and renewed emphasis on community work to support the ongoing struggle for change,

> "… they are saying they can't read and write … 'where would I get a job?'… I had a Traveller coming to me and he said … he doesn't like being a Traveller because he can't go in for a drink and he can't [do anything] … What has changed…?" (Kevin),

> "…[young Traveller men] are angry. They don't even know why they are angry but they are angry" (Anthony).

Participant narratives speak of the frustration and anger regarding the lack of progress and change for the community despite decades of activism, community development, protests and demonstrations.

Community Work or Service Provision – Taking our Eye off the Ball

Participants suggest that the focus of community development work has shifted towards engaging with policy makers and the state rather than mobilising the community, which according to participants may have been misguided. Some Participants expressed concern about the shift towards a service provision model and the impact this has had on community work practice with Travellers. However, participants also note that an organisations survival is dependent on state funding, which has the potential to silence the community's voice and lead to a compromise of community work's core principles,

> *"…… we took our eye off the ball, we allowed our local projects to become service providers, to become health projects … and there is a massive need for it, but it should never have taken the place of a human rights community development projects"* (Ger).

Larry makes a pertinent point about the capacity of funding to misdirect focus, with projects focusing on the funders rather than the community, noting that the community is where the drive for change will take place,

> *"…our main target … has been on the policy makers, the state, … because they're the ones we believed have the power … [but] maybe the focus has been misguided, … because the ones that will bring about the difference and change are [the Travellers on the ground], when the people want the change … they'll bring that change about"* (Larry).

The data suggests that there is a perception among some participants that the practice of community work has changed and that there is a widening gap between the principles and practice and the actual implementation of community work. Some participants feel that the core values of community work, such as collective action, effecting social change and empowering the community are not being adequately promoted or practiced and that it is failing to translate the needs of the community into meaningful collective action,

> *"…those core values [that] are community development and its inherent principles*

around collective action, … effecting social change, policy change, … mobilising the community, empowering the community, giving a voice to the community … Traveller leadership…, we have to ask ourselves … are we doing enough to promote that … I think we need to revisit that. My own opinion is I don't think we have…. I think we have taken our eye off the ball" (Ian).

Larry correspondingly refers to the past consequences for Traveller organisations who were funded by the state and challenged the state practice,

"…so if you think about the Citizen Traveller campaign … and the posters and how that [funding was] suddenly pulled [and] if you think about [name] and the [specific incident] and how [Traveller organisation] were told that their funding could be under jeopardy…" (Larry).

Ger highlights how Traveller projects are dependent on funding for their survival on the one hand while on the other claims that state funding can compromise Traveller organisations and has the capacity to silence the Traveller voice,

"…people are chasing the funding for their survival… we're feeding into a system where we're keeping Travellers voices quite so that we can help them on one hand and oppress them on another" (Ger).

"…if you are funded by the state … your hands are tied to a certain extent … " (Fran).

Ger asks a pertinent question about where the responsibility for providing adequate services for Travellers lies and questions why it has become the responsibility of the community to provide these services and not the state who are responsible for creating the conditions that Travellers experience in the first place,

"… why have the community development projects become that, why did we think we were responsible for health, education you know…" (Ger)

These views suggest that there are challenges in the implementation of community work with Travellers and that there is a need to revisit and reinforce the principles and values that underpin the community work approach. Additionally, the data highlights the importance of ensuring that community work practice is grounded in theory and ensuring that the needs and concerns of the community are translated into effective collective action.

Participants suggest that it is the state that is failing Travellers and not community work or Traveller organisations, with the State's failure to provide adequate facilities for Travellers deemed to be one of the major obstacles facing the community, with some participants suggesting that government funding is driving community work towards a service provision model, which is not in line with the core values of community work.

Additionally, participants note that funding constraints can compromise organisations' ability to engage in direct action or challenge government policy effectively, with some participants raising relevant questions as to why community development projects have become responsible for the delivery of services rather than the state, suggesting community work is being sub-contracted by the state to fill the gap that has been created by the state and a failure on the part of the State to adequately address the needs of the community.

The data suggests there is a need for a change in strategies with a renewed emphasis on community work with an increased and sharpened focus on the state in terms of its responsibility for addressing the issues facing Travellers.

Additionally, participant narratives point to the need for greater collaboration between Traveller leaders, community workers and the wider Traveller community to ensure that the needs and concerns of the community are translated into effective collective action.

Ultimately, by addressing these challenges and reinforcing the principles and values of community development, it is possible to strengthen the practice and better meet the needs of the communities it serves.

Reflective Spaces

A further theme that the data highlights is the need to reflect on current community work practice and while participants acknowledge that community work has played a significant role in supporting the emergence of the Traveller struggle, many of the participants feel that there has not been enough discussion and reflection on what good community work practices look like.

In this regard, the creation of reflective spaces was seen to be a critical factor in the implementation and improvement in community work practices with Travellers. This would be beneficial to community workers and activists in addressing issues and building solidarity,

> *"…[Reflective spaces] haven't been created by the educational institutions …they … haven't been created by ourselves and they haven't been created by the movement that we set up … I think community work has played a vital role in getting us to a point but now we need to look at it again and say does the practice need to change, are we still doing it as well as we used to…" (Larry).*

The data highlights the necessity for a comprehensive evaluation of existing community work practices. While participants acknowledge the substantial role community work has played in supporting the emergence of the Traveller struggle, a prevailing sentiment is that insufficient dialogue and reflection have taken place regarding the strengths and weaknesses of effective community work practices with Travellers. The establishment of spaces for reflection is deemed integral to the successful execution and enhancement of community work strategies and tactics.

The findings suggest a pressing demand for the creation of forums where Traveller and settled community workers and activists can engage in deliberation and contemplation concerning the ongoing community work endeavours among Travellers. Such spaces would offer valuable opportunities for addressing pertinent issues and cultivating a sense of unity,

> *"There now needs to be spaces where Traveller community workers and activists … discuss and reflect on the community work that is taking place with Travellers, this would be very beneficial to the workers addressing the issues and building solidarity" (Fran).*

Ian further acknowledges the need for review of the prevailing methodologies and the exploration of diverse avenues to reassess current practice to see if it is effective. He posits that the overarching Traveller movement must actively facilitate the establishment of forums dedicated to discussion and reflection, aimed at enhancing the practice of community work with Travellers,

> *"… the collective movement just needs to reflect and begin to think and talk about how we reclaim this because I think it is being lost" (Ian).*

Participants express a belief that while community development has played a pivotal role in supporting the Traveller movement, however the failure to reflect and review practice, has weakened its impact.

In summary, the data indicates that there is a call for the collective Traveller movement to create the space to reflect and discuss how to improve and reclaim the core values and principles of community work practices. Participants suggest that creating these reflective spaces and environments for discussion and reflection can aid in addressing issues facing the Traveller community and in building solidarity among community workers and activists.

The Role of Non-Travellers

A key theme to emerge in the findings was the role that non-Traveller activists and community workers have played and continue to play in the Traveller struggle for human rights. The data indicates that while settled allies and community workers play a vital role and have made many positive contributions to the development of the Traveller struggle, there are problematic power dynamics. These dynamics of power can impact on relationships between Traveller and non-Traveller activists and community workers and can serve to disempower Travellers and undermine solidarity, resulting in division within Traveller organisations and the wider Traveller movement.

Participants noted that settled community workers do not experience the struggle in the same way that Travellers do and cannot therefore fully comprehend or express what Travellers have and continue to experience. They argue that settled community workers can step out of the struggle anytime they wish, highlighting the presence and role of settled privilege,

> "…no activist from the settled community can ever be a Traveller activist … they can never experience what we have experienced, even what we feel and you …would do well to even put that into words, let alone express or feel it. That's the difference" (Davey).

> "A lot of the country people who work with us work really hard and are so supportive and are brilliant people but they go home and they have another life. You go home and you're still in this life and that's difficult because your whole life, what happens, it's part of this struggle" (Eddie).

Larry as a non-Traveller community worker, acknowledges this difference and articulates the perspective of non-Travellers working within the Traveller movement and questions the lack of progress in terms of Traveller leadership within some organisations,

"… if you have given a lot… to this cause and the struggle but never… as much as a person that's living that struggle because you can always step out of it, but you know you have given a lot and suddenly you are thinking, well I shouldn't be in this role any more, I am in a paid role and it's not appropriate that I am in this paid role but … you know, if after 25 years there isn't a Traveller in a position to take on that role, what have you been doing for the last 25 years …?" (Larry).

Fran claims that Travellers often give up their power to non-Travellers and that settled community workers often hold more power than Travellers within organisational structures,

"..Travellers …think the settled people are superior to them and no matter what a settled person says to them … they think they are… right…[but] they can't be right all the time… Travellers automatically think because somebody is an expert in such and such an area that he or she is right, that's not true and the Travellers actually give over their authority and power to settled people" (Fran).

Davey discusses the need for Travellers to be in positions of power that are currently held by settled workers but acknowledges that speaking about these issues can create tension and have negative consequences. Larry also believes that it is important to question the positions settled workers hold within Traveller organisations,

"… I do think that it's appropriate that people ask questions [like] … What are you doing to support Travellers, …but also asking … why are you in that role? No matter what it is …." (Larry).

"…when I started questioning that I found myself being pushed out further and further and knew I was never going to get employment…" (Davey).

"…the movement has to be led by the people … who are most effected by the issues, …because there's still issues of power and influence and … I think it's appropriate that we are not always involved so our role as non-Travellers in the movement is quite different and changing all the time and I think that's appropriate…" (Larry).

This section of the data suggests that there are complex dynamics in relationships between Traveller and settled community workers and activists within the movement, with power dynamics that need to be addressed. Travellers themselves need to be in positions of power, but settled allies can still make a valuable contribution to the cause. The findings suggest a key to creating a more equitable power balance is one that acknowledges the different experiences and perspectives of both settled and Traveller community workers and activists and one that acknowledges settled privilege.

Solidarity or Ethnic Divide

Some participants felt that the changes being demanded by the community are too radical. A question was also raised in relation to the length of time that some non-Traveller community workers have remained in leadership roles,

> *"…because the change that's needed is probably too radical for some of us to go along with, it is too much of a change and there's a friction and that friction is quite, is quite evident I think in some of the language that's been used, in some of the social (media) sites" (Larry),*

> *"… there does seem to be a backlash towards the people that are too long in the job, so if you are too long in that job you should be gone out of that job, you know you don't have a role any more…" (Larry).*

A further concern was expressed in relation to the criticism of such individuals by some Traveller activists and community workers. Concern that their life's work and dedication to the cause may be overlooked or forgotten and the potential for such criticisms to generate unease and create division between Traveller and non-Traveller community workers and activists, undermining solidarity and progress,

> *"… I just have a real concern with this increasing possibility of an ethnic divide and … I am not saying there aren't issues, …there are issues but it's being framed in a very negative way and in a way that's actually quite insulting" (Ian).*

Davey suggests a possible solution is time-bound contracts for non-Travellers in leadership roles and the inclusion of succession planning as part of their contract,

"There should be a period of time particularly for non-Travellers … a set time and part of their work criteria should be empowering Travellers into them positions and roles…(Davey)

Larry gives his perspective and highlights the difficulties some non-Travellers experience who are working in Traveller organisations and raises again the question of non-Travellers who wish to support Travellers but are outside the organisational structure,

" … it can be difficult, I mean it can be a quite difficult space for a non-Traveller at this time, in this space within the movement…" (Larry).

"Is there any where for me to sign up to be a supporter of the Traveller movement? As a non- Traveller?" (Larry).

For Ian, part of looking to the future involves acknowledging the contribution that non- Travellers have made to the Traveller struggle in the past,

"… and I think you know if we ever get to the stage of creating that process where we can reflect and then look at the vision for the movement, I think that needs to be part of that debate as well you know, the role of settled people and I think it's important that we do acknowledge and that we do respect the significant role that has been played by settled people going back… right up to the present day situation… in supporting Travellers rights" (Ian).

Despite the sensitivity of the topic, participants spoke openly and unanimously agree that it is necessary to address the issue of non-Traveller involvement in the Traveller movement and the relationship between settled and Traveller community workers and activists.

The data highlights some of the challenges that Traveller and settled community workers and activists face, working collectively in Traveller organisations. While acknowledging the tension and the need for change, there was a concern about the manner in which these issues are being framed at present and the potential for an ethnic divide between the Traveller and non- Traveller activists and community workers that could fragment the movement going forward. The data correspondingly highlights the difficulties experienced by non-Travellers working

in Traveller organisations, suggesting there is a back lash towards non-Travellers and identifies the challenge for non-Travellers who wish to support the cause who are outside of the organisational structure. However, there was unanimity in relation to the growing need for Travellers to lead the movement.

Overall, participant responses indicate a pressing need to name, acknowledge and address these issues in order to avoid further conflict and division within the movement. They suggest that this can be done through a careful and sensitive reflective process that acknowledges the contributions of non-Travellers while clearly defining their role.

Although some participants expressed concerns about the dynamics between Traveller and non-Traveller workers, all agreed that this is a crucial topic that needs to be approached with sensitivity, respect, and recognition of the support, hard work, and commitment demonstrated by non-Travellers to the struggle to date.

Collective Vision – A Hunger for Change

The data presents various perspectives on the future of the Traveller movement with some participants acknowledging a desire for bigger change and a hunger for something more, while others frame this as the need for a more radical approach to effect change,

> "……there's a space for some new thinking and new strategies to emerge that are a bit more radical … we have to do something a bit different because what we're doing is clearly not working (Larry),
>
> "I think that there is a hunger and appetite for something more. I think the strategy in the past was very much about working collectively to bring about educational change and reform …but I do see a new emerging thread that is hungry for bigger change and it's exciting to be part of that and it's scary … is it going to lead to bigger conflicts or is it going to lead to change?" (Julie).

Participants refer to the need for reflection on the history of the Traveller struggle and for the development of a collective vision with national Traveller organisations leading an inclusive process to achieve this and correspondingly collaborating with other social movements for support and solidarity,

> *"Well, I think what we need to do is … create … a collective vision for the movement. …I think there is two bits to this question and one is around a reflective bit. Okay you know looking at the history of the Traveller movement how that has evolved, what were the tools that allowed us to get to where we are, okay and then what is the approach and what are the tools that will allow us to develop the movement even further so it's both reflective and visionary looking forward" (Ian),*

> *"I don't see it as a single movement, I see it as a movement made up of other struggles and that we align ourselves, very clever, very smart, with other movements … I think it will happen… I mean if you brought the whole lot together it would be such a powerful thing" (Fran).*

Davey advocates for socio-political systemic change that addresses structural inequality. Larry likewise highlights the need for radical reform of the current social structures,

> *"…it's about creating a new system, making the capitalist system obsolete and you can only do that by creating a better system, socialist system in theory seems to be a better way forward, capitalism… is very individualistic, it's about profit" (Davy)*

> *"… I think that in order for … Irish society to have equality and equality of outcomes and equality of opportunities for everybody we need a radical reform of the way in which our society is structured.…" (Larry).*

Participants voice a desire and hunger for change, focusing on firstly a reflective process and secondly on alignment with other social movements which would support a challenge to the social structures such as capitalism that both Davey and Larry claim are drivers of social inequality.

Ethnic Pride

Participants acknowledged a growing sense of Traveller pride and celebration of their culture and heritage, with some linking this to the attainment of ethnic status and being finally recognised by the Irish state as an ethnic group,

> *"I am glad to have been around and to have been involved and engaged when the whole ethnic question has been clarified. I am glad… that a lot of older Travellers … managed to live and witness that….I think it's a wonderful achievement … because there is no going back.…" (Anthony),*

> *"I think … ethnicity… for me, I was … really proud …you know that we actually got it over the line and that was fantastic" (Fran),*

> *"I think probably one of the biggest changes that's going to happen is going to be within the Travellers themselves. I think Travellers are going to get more proud of the fact that they are Travellers" (Eddie),*

> *"… I think we are going to become a much prouder [people] with the actual ethnicity recognition" (Anthony).*

However, Davey's mixed emotions reveal the complex relationship that Travellers have with the state, recognising ethnicity on the one hand and as the oppressors who denied their ethnic status and perpetuated institutional racism on the other,

> *"… I had a lot of different emotions and of course I could celebrate the fact in some ways, it's nice to be recognised. It means two things to me …. One is that sense of achievement that sense [that] my birth right has been recognised … this is who I am, now my identity is real, I can be proud of that, I am honoured by it…" (Davey)*

> *"…the other side of it is all we had to go through just to get it … all of that for what? Just so we could be recognised when it should be a very simple matter in the very first place … I was angry at [that so] I didn't applaud it. I didn't stand up …my anger was so much and the hurt was so much it stopped me, because I wanted to stand up, I wanted it" (Davey).*

Fran also cited mixed emotions with regard to state recognition, noting how Traveller men she worked with were not so moved, enquiring if the granting of ethnicity meant a state apology,

> *"… it's about time. We need an apology now you know and that's what the men was saying that would make a lot of sense if they apologised for the way they treated us …" (Fran).*

While acknowledging that the movement has had some success in battling against discrimination and racism and gaining recognition, according to Larry, the enormity of the battle requires significant and continued effort in order to realise positive change,

> " … [it] has been successful because it is battling against a tide of discrimination and racism that we are only beginning to unpick and unpeel, it's so multi layered and so deep rooted in our society that it's going to take a lot longer or something significant to shift it and …. I think without the movement being there to do that, I think Travellers would have suffered a lot worse (Larry).

The data also highlights an acknowledgement of the hard work and activism of the forebearers of the Traveller movement that has resulted in a much stronger Traveller voice as highlighted by Larry above and Fran below,

> "We were a people with no voice at all and now we are getting educated more and more. Our young people are thinking about different areas of going into, it was other Travellers that built that up. Other Travellers and that, you have to say, is fantastic" (Fran)

The data reveals diverse perspectives on the future of the Traveller movement. However, there is a unified voice on the need for change in strategies and tactics and a greater ambition for progress. Many call for a more radical approach to effect change, while at the same time building solidarity with other causes and Travellers on the ground, suggesting a move beyond the confines of single issue campaigning. Finally, Fran provides some practical advice, emphasising the importance of taking action,

> ".. we need to get up off our own arses and do it ourselves because no one else is doing it for us…(Fran).

The data shows that participants have a strong sense of determination, optimism and hope for the future with regard to the Traveller struggle in Ireland. Participants words here point to the complexity and sensitivity of the Traveller struggle and the range of emotions that participants feel towards the State.

While there is a sense of progress and achievement in the recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group, there are also feelings of hurt and a recognition of the suffering that had to be endured by Travellers and the ongoing inequalities and racism that Travellers continue to face in Irish society in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The findings chapter reflects a diversity of voices and perspectives within the Traveller struggle for human rights, equality and social justice. Divided into three sections, we first learn of the participants perspectives on institutionalised racism, followed in section two by their views on activism and becoming involved in Traveller resistance, while in section three we learn of participants views on community development work in terms of the Traveller struggle.

The findings highlight the pervasive, inter-generational and systemic nature of anti-Traveller racism and its impact on the community in terms of self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. We learn also of the resilience of the community, who despite the incredible challenges they faced in terms of racism, exclusion and dire poverty, mobilised and began to challenge the endemic anti-Traveller stance of the Irish state.

In the final section of the findings, we learn of community development as a catalyst for change through the provision of an analytical framework based on a human rights agenda that challenged the racist and sedentarist ideologies that posited Travellers as responsible for their own situation and challenged the state with the reality of the institutionalised anti-Traveller racism the community had endured for decades.

Participant responses highlight the pivotal role that community work played in mobilising Travellers, however the data correspondingly points to some of the inherent weaknesses in the current model of community work practice, exacerbated by state funding and a drive toward service provision. We learn from participants, that despite some success in combating racism and mobilising Travelers collectively, the structural and institutional obstacles and barriers continue to present an enormous challenge in the battle against anti-Traveller racism which requires significant and continued effort in order to realise positive change.

The findings highlight the complexity and diversity of voices within the Traveller struggle that can at times, lead to tensions with the potential to undermine solidarity and create fragmentation. Managing this complexity and diversity is one of the key challenges that the Traveller movement faces as it develops and expands. Power differentials between Traveller and non-Traveller workers within Traveller organisations proved another contentious issue, with the need for Travellers to take on leadership roles cited as a valid solution.

In the concluding segment of the findings, we learn of a hunger for bigger change and an eagerness for a deeper sense of collective unity. While certain individuals framed this aspiration as a call for a more radical approach to instigate change, others acknowledged the importance of fostering unity with parallel causes and with grassroots Traveller communities disconnected from formal organisations, while some participants proposed the need to transcend the confines of established organisational frameworks in order to create a more collective forum.

The data demonstrates the necessity for collective reflection of the historical development of Traveller resistance in Ireland. Additionally, it highlights the imperative to formulate a shared vision through a collective endeavour, wherein national Traveller organisations spearhead an inclusive process toward realising this common objective. Many participants expressed a sense of pride in being Travellers, with some linking this to the recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group. The findings conclude with an expression of hope, that Travellers would never lose their sense of identity and would continue to be proud of their culture and community.

Chapter Six: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study aimed to comprehensively examine the struggle for human rights among the Traveller community in Ireland. To achieve this, a qualitative methodology framework was employed to elucidate the perspectives and experiences of activists and community workers who have been involved with the Traveller struggle at various stages. The overarching objectives of this research were threefold:

1. The primary objective was to delve deeply into the multifaceted aspects of the Traveller community's struggle for human rights. By conducting in-depth interviews and collecting qualitative data, this study sought to gain an understanding of the challenges, aspirations, and motivations driving this struggle.

2. this research endeavoured to explore the contributing factors to anti-Traveller racism. Through qualitative analysis, it aimed to identify the societal, historical, and systemic factors that perpetuate racism against the Traveller community. Moreover, it sought to examine how this racism impacts on various aspects of Traveller lives.

3. A further key objective of this study was to identify the role that community work has played in the Traveller community's struggle for human rights. By examining the principles, values, strategies and tactics of community work this research sought to make visible the impact of community work in advancing the rights of Travellers.

To accomplish these objectives, a qualitative research method was employed. By engaging with a diverse group of individual Traveller activists, leaders and community workers from the Traveller and settled community, This study sought to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex issues surrounding the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland.

Additionally, it aimed to provide recommendations to combat anti-Traveller racism and promote social justice and equality. By applying relevant concepts from the literature to the data and considering the unique context in Ireland, this analysis sheds light on key insights regarding the emergence and ongoing struggle for human rights and equality by the Traveller community in Ireland.

This chapter will discuss the key themes that have emerged from the study and what the implications of these are for the Traveller struggle and the wider Traveller community.

This chapter commences with a discussion of institutionalised oppression, sedentarist ideology and anti-Traveller racism. Section two analyses Traveller mobilisation, Traveller leadership and Traveller engagement with the state, while the third section explores community work and the role of non-Travellers in the Traveller struggle for human rights.

Section One - Institutionalised Oppression

The findings from this study indicate that the Irish state played an active role in institutionalizing oppression, racism and the denial of human rights to Travelers, where Traveller nomadic traditions and culture were criminalised as part of a targeted effort by the Irish state to erode Traveller culture and identity over a prolonged period of time. This approach proved detrimental with devastating consequences for the Traveller community, the effects of which are being experienced throughout the community today as a full-blown crisis.

Using, Young's (2011) conceptual framework, highlights that the oppression experienced by Travellers in Ireland extends beyond economic exploitation, encompassing widespread marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream society in Ireland. This systemic marginalisation manifests in various forms, including entrenched anti-Traveller racism and structural inequalities that prevent their inclusion in Irish society.

The study reveals that the Irish state engaged in a systemic effort to eradicate Traveller culture through a process of cultural erosion. This involved the demonisation and criminalisation of Traveller culture and identity, suppressing their nomadic traditions and using the full force of the law to coerce them into giving up their way of life, in an attempted effort at assimilation into the majority settled community.

Sedentarist Ideology

The findings indicate that central to the struggle for human rights for Travellers in Ireland have been two competing ideologies, with an age-old nomadic tradition posited against a more modern sedentarist ideology. The sedentarist ideology believes that settled culture, which is shaped by private property ownership, individualism and profit as core values, is superior and views Traveller culture as backward and therefore an obstacle to progress and development.

The pervasive influence of a sedentarist ideology is evidenced by a resistance within services and the state to implement progressive culturally appropriate policies and recommendations. Despite growing recognition of Traveller ethnicity, the development of policy and a change in rhetoric, there continues to be resistance to providing culturally appropriate services or to accommodating Traveller nomadic cultural traditions. Instead, this ideology continues to promote sedentarist lifestyles and culture as the norm, which reinforces the notion that settled culture and lifestyle is superior to Traveller culture and nomadic way of life. This underpins the ongoing poverty, marginalisation, exclusion and anti-Traveller racism that Travellers experience often on a daily basis.

The findings correspondingly indicate that the Irish state has maintained and reified its sedentarist ideology by enacting the 2003 anti-trespass legislation, which criminalises Traveller nomadism and to date, has only been enforced against members of the Traveller community. This legislation has resulted in the seizure of caravans and in some cases, the prosecution of Travellers, leaving families homeless and reinforcing the participants' belief that the state's sedenarist ideology remains unchanged (Cauley and Ó hAodha, 2006).

The findings reveal that a sedentarist ideology has been instrumental in generating and reinforcing particular perceptions, beliefs and stereotypes in wider settled society, regarding the Traveller community. These perceptions and beliefs have been reinforced over time, leading to systemic exclusion and racism against Travellers in areas such as education, employment and accommodation (Equality Authority, 2006).

The findings indicate that this sedentarist ideology constructed a discourse to justify assimilation and absorption of Travellers into mainstream society. The 1963 Commission on Itinerancy report framed Travellers nomadic lifestyle as the root cause of their poverty and recommended their absorption as the final solution (McVeigh, 2007). Nomadism, a cornerstone of Traveller culture, did not fit with this sedentarist ideology or with in the emerging capitalist, consumerist, neo-liberal society and was therefore identified as a practice that needed to be curbed, which was made manifest in the criminalisation of nomadism firstly in the commission's report and in more recent years in the Anti-Trespass Legislation 2003.

The study suggests this ideology condoned and permeated institutionalised practices that excluded Travellers from accessing essential goods and services such as education, healthcare and employment, thereby compounding their poverty, marginalisation and exclusion (Walsh,1963). The findings similarly indicate that a sedentarist ideology casts Travellers as morally deficient, a form of racialisation which condoned the exclusion and discrimination of Travellers in Irish society (McVeigh, 2007). This racialisation of Travellers and Traveller culture as "bad" and "other" is a form of psychological and physical distancing, as argued by Todorov, (1999). Sedentarist ideology has been identified by participants as a "settled mindset" that policymakers and the state have continued to employ to discriminate against the Traveller community. Where according to the findings, despite the changing policy and rhetoric, this settled mindset remains entrenched and resistant to change (âO hAodha, 2006).

The findings indicate that the ideological discourse regarding the Traveller community espoused by the state was mirrored and reinforced in society through institutions such as schools, churches, and the media with the approval of the majority settled community. These institutions propagated beliefs, assumptions and stereotypes about the Traveller community, creating a cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 2010) that served as a powerful tool in justifying and rationalising anti-Traveller racism and systemic inequality directed towards the Traveller community,

> *"… if you look at how that oppression then fanned out across the country, we are talking about education, we are talking about the judicial system, were talking about the provision of accommodation, every single institution and arm of the State were informed and told their primary goal is assimilation" (Anthony).*

The persistence of a sedentarist ideology also sheds light on the resistance to implement policies regarding the Traveller community, where participants repeatedly identified the Irish states continued failure to address issues such as culturally appropriate accommodation and nomadic rights, due to a settled mindset.

The study's findings indicate that the persistence of a sedentarist ideology presents a significant challenge to achieving equality and human rights for the Traveller community in Ireland. Where despite changes in policy and rhetoric, the study indicates that a sedentarist ideology continues to be a major obstacle to the implementation of positive change for Travellers in Ireland.

The findings correspondingly indicate that if this sedentarist ideological stance is not addressed, development of new policies, changes in rhetoric or recommendations may not be effective. In order to address these ideological barriers that permeate Irish society, there is a need for the establishment of independent bodies and structures to ensure implementation of policies and recommendations that have been agreed between Traveller representatives and the Irish state. The findings further suggest this ideology is at the core of anti-Traveller racism and is a key underlying factor in its persistence, which the findings suggest is deeply rooted in Irish society.

Anti-Traveller Racism

The study shows that the roots of anti-Traveller racism run deep, potentially tracing back to times long past (Helleiner,2000). Some participants contend that the seeds of this prejudice were sown within the context of a post-colonial mindset, where notions of sedentarism gained traction, as property ownership took precedence and a burgeoning bourgeoisie rejected nomadic traditions. This shift was closely intertwined with the emergence of a Catholic conservative nationalist ideology, which further exacerbated the divide between settled society and the Traveller community.

The research findings highlights the prevalence of anti-Traveller racism and exclusion, with evidence pointing to institutional factors as the root cause of these, indicating that the Irish state institutionalised, condoned and actively colluded in the exclusion of Traveller culture and identity (âO hAodha, 2006: McVeigh, 2007). The study's findings suggests that institutionalised policies and practices, which became normalized over a prolonged period of time, perpetuated structural oppression and anti-Traveller racism (Baker *et al.*, 2004).

"The State began to formally oppress Travellers - you could say that happened from 1963 onwards - with the Commission on Itinerancy" (Anthony).

The study's results suggest that anti-Traveller racism and inequality resulting from these structural factors were rationalised by portraying Travellers as the cause of the problem. This led to the introduction of policies and practices that were widely accepted and normalised (Baker *et al.*, 2004).

The study's findings emphasise the detrimental impact these policies and practices have had on the Traveller community over the past five decades with participants citing the devastating consequences for the community as a result (Our Geels, 2010). The findings indicate that despite the best efforts of Traveller activists and community workers to realise positive change, anti-Traveller racism remains deeply entrenched and resistant to change (McVeigh, 2008).

The Impact of Anti-Traveller Racism

The findings shed light on a systematic and targeted effort by the Irish government to undermine Traveller culture and identity, which has had far-reaching consequences for the Traveller community in Ireland.
The findings indicate a deep frustration, anger and disappointment that is felt amongst participants, who have witnessed decades of racism, poverty, and exclusion by the Irish state and wider society. Where despite consistent and ongoing efforts by Traveller and settled community workers and activists, there has been little tangible improvement in the everyday lives and living conditions of many Travellers, highlighting an urgent need for structural and systemic change,

"We don't have the outcomes that we want after so many years, I feel we need to do something different, have I got the answers for what we need to do no, I am still working my way through that but I know one thing that all we're doing now is putting a lid on a pressure cooker because our people are imploding all around us" (Ger).

Internalised Oppression

Based on the data, it is evident that the Traveller community has endured a profound impact stemming from decades of systemic anti-Traveller racism and oppression. One of the most distressing consequences is the pervasive sense of apathy and hopelessness that has permeated the lives of many Travellers, becoming ingrained and accepted as the norm. This despair is due to the severe psychological and emotional toll exacted by the enduring racism, discrimination, and marginalization experienced by Travellers.

It is crucial to recognize that this internalised racism and oppression have far-reaching consequences. Participant narratives indicate a direct link between these monumental struggles and the emergence of problems within the Traveller community, such as the mental health crisis which is evidenced by the alarmingly high rates of suicide,

"So that damage ... the addiction, the suicide rate, the mental health issues, the violence, the internal violence, the self-destruct button, Traveller on Traveller violence, it's all a direct consequence of how the State first began to engage with Travellers back in 63" (Anthony).

Additionally, a disconcerting pattern emerges within the community, where Traveller leaders and organizations sometimes become the target of blame, as Travellers can at times direct their frustrations and anger towards members of their own community for lack of positive change (Ruth, 2006a).

Overcoming these deep-seated issues requires not only political and economic strategies but also a focus on addressing the psychological and emotional impacts of oppression and anti- Traveller racism on the community. Efforts must be made to create safe spaces for Travellers to express their experiences and feelings and to facilitate healing and collective action through community-led initiatives. Moreover, it requires recognition of the diversity of experiences and a sensitivity to the unique challenges and needs of different groups within the community.

The task of addressing the sense of apathy and hopelessness that is experienced by many Travellers requires a holistic approach that recognizes the multiple and intersecting factors that contribute to this issue. This includes addressing systemic and structural issues such as anti-Traveller racism, discrimination and marginalisation, while also recognising the importance of community-led initiatives that prioritise healing, empowerment, and collective action.

Conclusion

The ramifications of anti-Traveller racism and oppression extend beyond the immediate challenges faced by members of the Traveller community. They reach into the very core of an individuals' emotional and psychological well-being, leaving lasting scars and a disturbing cycle of despair.

Acknowledging these repercussions is essential to understanding the urgent need for comprehensive support and social change for the Traveller community in Ireland.

Section Two - Traveller Mobilisation

Introduction

The study demonstrates that the collective mobilisation of Travellers has been pivotal in the development of the Traveller struggle for human rights and challenging Anti-Traveller racism, sedenarist ideology and empowering Travellers to participate in collective action. The data demonstrates that the collective mobilisation of the Traveller community has had a significant impact on promoting and preserving Traveller identity, as well as thwarting the ongoing erosion of Traveller culture.

Traveller Activism

The study's findings point to the significance of the 1960s and the subsequent decades that followed. It was a time when the seeds of political activism took root within the Traveller community, altering the course of Traveller history forever. Through the dedication of activists and the tireless efforts of community workers, a movement began that propelled Travellers into the realm of resistance and advocacy, embarking on a transformative journey that carved a path toward recognition, equality, and a future defined by resilience and hope.

During this time evictions and substandard living conditions were contested and resisted. The oppressive currents of anti-Traveller racism were met with a collective of Traveller voices demanding justice and equity. At the heart of it all lay a call for human rights and equality. While Travellers had historically faced exclusion and racism prior to industrialisation, this situation worsened during this period in the 1950s and 60s, causing a significant rupture in the relationship between Travellers and the majority community (McDonagh,2000b).

 For the first time, the Traveller community mobilised into a formalised political struggle. This was spearheaded by a cohort of dedicated Traveller activists and community workers who refused to give in to adversity (Puxon,1967). Faced with threats of eviction, dismal living conditions and entrenched anti-Traveller racism, these activists and community workers launched a resolute campaign.

Their demands called for equality, the recognition of Traveller culture and human rights. Against the backdrop of societal prejudice and systemic anti-Traveller racism, this concerted effort marked a departure from the status quo. The battle they waged wasn't confined to mere survival, it was a defiant stance against anti-Traveller racism, poverty and exclusion and the emergence of the Traveller struggle for human rights in Ireland (Joyce and farmer, 2000).

Traveller Leadership

According to the findings, Traveller leaders have played a critical role in actively promoting approaches and addressing the challenges confronting the Traveller community, approaches rooted in the principles of equality, human rights, anti-racism and community development, which have played a pivotal role in influencing wider social change in Ireland (Lentin, 2006).

The findings correspondingly indicate that the emergence of Traveller leaders was significantly influenced by the context and circumstances in which they lived (Ricketts, 2008). With deplorable living conditions, widespread inequality, and persistent discrimination and racism identified as significant motivating factors for Traveller leaders becoming involved.

The data correspondingly emphasises that, despite facing considerable challenges, Traveller leaders have inspired many others from both the Traveller and settled community to become actively involved in the Traveller struggle, Indicating that Traveller leader's efforts have been successful in mobilising the community to engage in collective action and advocate for recognition, respect, and equality for Travellers (Joyce and farmer, 2000).

The study highlights the influence of Traveller leaders in galvanising the community to take collective action and confront the institutional and structural barriers that perpetuate anti-Traveller racism and inequality. Despite encountering significant adversity and resistance from both the state and the wider settled community, Traveller leaders continue to play a crucial role in challenging anti-Traveller racism and structural inequality and achieving transformative change.

Traveller Engagement with the State

The findings highlight the crucial role that Traveller leaders, activists and community workers have played in facilitating Traveller engagement with the Irish state, It also emphasised their involvement in the policy making processes, with the aim of ensuring that the Traveller community's concerns are represented.

However, despite concerted efforts, the results demonstrate a sense of frustration, anger and disappointment among Traveller leaders, activists and community workers with the lack of improvement in the everyday lives of Travellers.

The study's findings indicate that, notwithstanding decades of engagement of Traveller representatives with the State, many of the agreed policies and recommendations have not been enacted, leading to persistent substandard living conditions, poverty, and poor health among many Travellers (Our Geels, 2010).

While it is widely perceived by participants that the state is the primary oppressor, it is equally evident that Traveller activists and community workers recognise the importance of engaging with the state to redress the structural inequalities and racism that Travellers face. The study suggests that non-engagement with the state is not seen as a feasible course of action for the Traveller movement, if it is to realise its objective of bringing about positive social change for the Traveller community in Ireland.

The study similarly finds that Traveller activists and community workers have been effective in utilising state consultative mechanisms to shape policy development and highlight issues of concern impacting on the Traveller community at a political level. Nonetheless, the study indicates that the lack of implementation of agreed policies poses a major challenge for the Traveller struggle, with many participants asserting that their implementation would substantially enhance the quality of life for the Traveller community in Ireland.

The Role of non-Travellers

The study indicates, there have been a combination of benefits and support, that have worked in tandem with underlying drawbacks, including disempowerment and exclusion that have arisen out of the involvement of members of the settled community at various stages of the Traveller struggle, from both a human rights and charity perspective.

The findings suggest the initial phase of settled involvement was characterised by a paternalistic, charitable model, The next stage involved a partnership approach, where settled allies worked with Travellers in Traveller organisations based on equal partnerships. The findings suggest that despite the ideals of the partnership model, this study identified power dynamics that can be reflective of the unequal power relations in wider society, that at times manifest as settled workers holding power, with some claiming that Traveller involvement has at times been tokenistic.

Many believe we are now at a stage where Travellers need to be leading the change, holding leadership positions in local and national organisations and making decisions within these organisations, in short, Travellers need to be the power holders. This does not mean that settled community workers do not have a role to play, rather, it indicates that they would play a supportive rather than a leadership role. It is crucial that the direction of the movement be determined by Travellers themselves, as they are the ones who live with the consequences of the movement's policies, actions and direction.

The data suggests realising this change is a challenge that cannot be underestimated and requires sensitivity in navigating the complexities of relationships within these organisations. According to the findings, this shift requires the continued support and solidarity of non-Traveller community workers and activists who are willing to work in partnership with Traveller leaders to achieve this goal.

The findings suggest that this may present a challenge for some non-Traveller community workers and activists who may have historically played more of a leadership role in Traveller organisations and in the wider Traveller struggle.

In addition, the study found that settled individuals working in Traveller organisations at times encounter challenges. The findings highlighted the difficulties of being a settled person working in a Traveller organisation, trying to navigate these complex power relationships and cultural differences.

The data highlights that it is imperative that these issues are addressed with sensitivity and support. Failure to do so has the potential to create an ethnic divide between Traveller and settled community workers and leaders within Traveller organisations and in the wider Traveller movement thereby creating division, undermining solidarity and hindering progress towards achieving collective goals.

The Struggle is Personal

The study's findings demonstrate that for Traveller leaders and activists, the struggle for equality and human rights is an ever-present aspect of their lives. There is limited opportunity for respite from the struggle and few clear boundaries between their personal and political domains.

In contrast, members of the settled community who work in solidarity with Travellers, while deeply committed and supportive, have greater choice and freedom to separate their work from their personal lives. This distinction highlights the structural and systemic differences between the experiences of Travellers and non-Travellers in the struggle for human rights and highlights the importance of recognising power and settled privilege within these community partnerships.

The findings highlight the heavy burden that falls on the shoulders of Traveller activists and community workers, who often take on leadership roles not only within their community but also within their immediate and extended families. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and demands faced by Traveller activists and leaders.

Internalised Shame

A further difference that the study identified between Travellers and settled activists and community workers, is that a significant number of Travellers, including many Traveller activists have internalised the oppression and racism they face in wider society. This can hinder their ability and undermine their confidence.

This has been identified by participants in this study as internalised shame. This sense of shame can be a powerful force that can silence members of the Traveller community and create a desire to remain invisible or hide their identity, which can prevent them from engaging in collective action to bring about change,

> *"I was made to feel ashamed and that went on for a very long time…I think it is probably in a lot of Traveller activists, it is how we are forced to feel"* (Davey)

The findings indicate that negative stereotypes about Traveller culture and way of life are pervasive in the majority settled population in Ireland and have contributed to the internalisation of negative self-image and low self-esteem among many Travellers. where despite some changes in the portrayal of Travellers, the research indicates that the core of these negative messages remains largely unchanged (Cauley and Ó hAodha, 2006).

Diversity within the Community

The study highlights the diversity that characterises the Traveller community, in which individuals hold a broad spectrum of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs, despite sharing a common culture and identity. This diversity is frequently underappreciated and unrecognised, as there is a tendency to perceive Travellers as a homogenous group and to presume that Traveller leaders and organisations represent the views of all Travellers.

This study correspondingly illustrates that this diversity within the community is also reflected within the wider Traveller movement, which at times can lead to tension and disagreement, where Traveller leaders, activists, community workers and organisations can hold divergent perspectives and views.

Consequently, this can result in different approaches being advocated on issues, with various strategies and tactics being employed or different outcomes being pursued. While diversity within the Traveller community can create challenges in achieving consensus and unity, it can also be a strength in demonstrating a truly collective voice rather than an individual one.

The findings demonstrate the essential need to recognise and respect the diverse perspectives and approaches of Traveller leaders, activists and community workers, to ensure everyone's input is valued, in an effort to bring about collective change. Recognising that while a diversity of perspectives is inherent in any community, effective collaboration among Traveller leaders, activists, community workers and Traveller organisations towards shared goals and priorities is critical. Failure to acknowledge this diversity can lead to misrepresentations, misunderstandings and ultimately impede the efforts to facilitate constructive dialogue and promote change. It is essential to acknowledge and respect this diversity and to develop policies and practices that recognise and are inclusive of this diversity within the community.

This entails fostering open and inclusive communication, active listening and a willingness to compromise and find common ground. A unified effort is essential for achieving positive change for the Traveller community. This requires individuals and organisations to prioritise shared objectives over individual or organisational choices. The inclusion and equality that the Traveller community seek in wider society, must also be replicated within the community itself, where diverse voices, including voices from the margins are accepted and welcomed.

The findings indicate that through collaborative efforts, Traveller leaders, activists and community workers can establish a stronger and more resilient movement that is better positioned to bring about positive outcomes for the Traveller community. This highlights the importance of promoting inclusive collaboration and collective action among Traveller leaders, activist organisations and the wider Traveller community, in order to prevent fragmentation and optimise the impact of the Traveller struggle towards achieving the realisation of human rights and equality.

The Role of Traveller Organisations

The study findings illustrate that Traveller organisations have played a pivotal role in the development of the Traveller struggle for human rights. However, the findings suggest that Traveller organisations need to become more inclusive of the diversity of Traveller voices that have emerged from within the Traveller community particularly over the past two decades. The findings indicate that the Traveller movement in Ireland has reached a pivotal phase in its development, which could have significant consequences for both local and national Traveller organisations engaged in the fight for equality and human rights, suggesting that Traveller organisations need to modify their strategies and tactics to meet the current challenges, as the current strategies may no longer be suitable for achieving their objectives.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the success of the Traveller struggle depends on its ability to build a broad-based, inclusive, and intersectional movement that can challenge structural and systemic inequalities that perpetuate racism, discrimination and marginalisation as highlighted above.

In order to build a more inclusive collective movement for change, the Traveller movement needs to mobilise the community at local and national level, while at the same time building solidarity and common cause with other struggles, movements and excluded groups, who similarly face inequality, exclusion and racism, driven by the forces of neoliberalism and capitalism, which has instigated a resurgence of racism across Europe and internationally in recent times towards refugees, Travellers, Roma and other minority groups.

Section Three - Community Work

Introduction

The study's findings indicate that from the 1980s there was a shift towards a more collective approach in the Traveller struggle in Ireland, with community work playing a critical role in empowering Travellers to organise and mobilise collectively as a community (Harvey, 2013). The findings suggest that adopting a collective approach, community work played a critical role in empowering Travellers and has been instrumental in raising awareness of the issues and challenges faced by the community, as well as advocating for their rights and recognition.

The Role of Community Work

Using Ledwith's, 2011,framework of critical praxis, demonstrates the crucial role that community work has played in building a stronger, more collective movement for sustainable change, where the principles that underpin community work, such as empowerment, participation, and collective action, were shown in the findings to be instrumental in supporting Traveller activists and community workers to develop a framework for questioning the taken for granted and engaging in collective action to bring about social change (Harvey, 2013).

The findings also highlight community work started in the everyday lives and experiences of Travellers themselves, this is the initial context for bringing about social change which is funded on a process of empowerment and participation, which encourages people to critically question the taken for granted reality, this is the basis for collective action(Ledwith, 2011).

Based on the findings, community work has emerged as a critical factor in fostering a sense of shared purpose and collective identity among Traveller leaders and organisations (Harvey, 2013; Crickley, 2014). The findings indicate a community work approach has contributed greatly to empowering Travellers to take ownership of their struggle and work collectively towards achieving a common goal, resulting in a more cohesive and resilient movement for social change.

The use of community-based action campaigns, such as protests, participatory planning, and collaborative decision-making processes have been integral in fostering a sense of shared ownership and participation among the Traveller community. These efforts have empowered community members to actively participate and engage in identifying issues and setting priorities, as well as designing and implementing interventions and strategies aimed at bringing about social change. By empowering community members to participate at all stages of the process, community work has facilitated a deeper sense of collective ownership and commitment to achieving equality and human rights.

Traveller Empowerment

The empowerment of Travellers through community work training courses has been crucial in supporting the community to highlight and challenge anti-Traveller racism and advocate for their rights (Fay, 1990). Through this process, many in the Traveller community have become more critically aware of the structural nature of inequality and anti-Traveller racism and have gained a sense of collective ownership and confidence for bringing about social change.

The prioritisation of Traveller voices and experiences in community work approaches and interventions, based on a bottom-up approach has been crucial in fostering a sense of ownership, collective identity, and solidarity among the Traveller community (Ife, 2010).

By empowering Travellers to take ownership of the process and work collectively towards achieving a common goal, community work has played a critical role in supporting a strong foundation upon which the Traveller movement is built and continues to build. However, while the findings indicate that community work has played a pivotal role in empowering Travellers to collectively mobilise and engage in critical analysis of their struggle, community work on its own has not been and will not be enough to achieve the transformative changes that are needed.

The study indicates the persistence of deeply ingrained systemic and structural anti-Traveller racism and sedentarist ideology that continue to underpin the exclusion, marginalisation and denial of human rights that the Traveller community experience and correspondingly undermine the efforts of community work.

State Influence

This study suggests community work faces an ongoing challenge due to the state's influence in shaping the development and definition of community work, especially in terms of funding and resourcing for community development projects. The findings suggests this can create a situation in which the state exerts a degree of influence over the priorities, goals and actions of community work initiatives, which can potentially undermine their effectiveness and limit their impact to bring about social change (Ledwith, 2011).

The study findings suggest that state-funded community projects are frequently subject to service-oriented expectations, which can create a situation in which community work initiatives feel under pressure to conform to state priorities in order to secure funding. As a result, some community projects may engage in self-censorship and avoid more direct forms of lobbying and advocacy for fear of endangering their funding streams.

The data suggests that the aim of the state is to get community development projects to become service providers which could limit the development of critical analysis and collective action to bring about deeper change. Similarly, competition for limited state resources engenders competition between Traveller organisations that can undermines solidarity and collective action between the many Traveller organisations currently in operation.

However, the data similarly points to the fact that state funding is necessary to facilitate Traveller organisations in empowering the Traveller community to participate in developing critical analyses and engage in collective action. This can lead to a complex relationship, where the state is seen both as the oppressor and the provider of resources.

The findings suggest that while it may be necessary to work both in and against the state in order to bring about social change for the Traveller community in Ireland, it is crucial that community work does not allow itself to be driven by a service delivery agenda which has the potential to undermine the principles and practice of community work.

The study points to the necessity of maintaining a critical and independent perspective for Traveller activists, community workers and Traveller organisations engaged in community work, in upholding the principles and values of empowerment, participation, collective action and self-determination in order to bring about systemic and structural change.

"Partnership is the way forward, … but only if those relationships are equal" (Fran)

The findings indicate that it is imperative for both Traveller and settled community workers to establish a space where they can collectively reflect on their practices to ensure that there is alignment with the fundamental principles and values of community work. Several participants noted that such reflective spaces and dialogues are lacking at present. This highlights the need for more intentional efforts to be made towards the creation of such critical reflective spaces to take place within Traveller organisations and with Traveller leaders. The findings highlight the significance of upholding the integrity and principles of community work, as participants emphasised the need for critical reflection on the community work that is currently being practiced.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Recommendations

The study's findings suggest that the government's policy of cultural annihilation of the Traveller community would have succeeded if it were not for the efforts of Traveller and settled community workers and activists who challenged the structural inequality and anti-Traveller racism. Nevertheless, the study reveals that irreparable damage has been done to Travellers' sense of identity, culture and way of life, with the consequences only becoming evident today.

The recommendations outlined below are rooted in the findings of this study, which identified the intersection of a sedentarist ideology, capitalist economic development, and the Irish state's efforts to affirm its national identity. These interconnected elements culminated in the establishment of the Commission on Itinerancy and its seminal 1963 report, which not only institutionalised a sedentarist ideology but also propagated anti-Traveller racism within governmental structures.

Effectively addressing the impact of this sedentarist ideology, which fuels anti-Traveller racism, necessitates more than advocating for inclusive and culturally appropriate policies. It demands a concerted effort to challenge the underlying assumptions and beliefs that perpetuate sedentarism as the norm.

This requires establishing more inclusive and independent structures and practices that both respect and accommodate Traveller nomadic culture and traditions and way of life, while actively challenging anti-Traveller racism. It is imperative to engage wider settled society in conversations and debates that critically examine and challenge the prevailing narrative of sedentarism as the norm. Moreover, Recognising the historical and contemporary contribution that Traveller nomadic culture and lifestyle has made to Irish society is essential. Addressing the impact of sedentarist ideology on anti-Traveller racism requires a multi-faceted approach grounded in historical analysis, critical theory, and community empowerment. By advocating for systemic change, promoting cultural sensitivity, and fostering dialogue, these recommendations aim to challenge existing power structures and create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Critical Juncture

This study has identified several stages and periods of transformation and change in the struggle for Traveller rights in Ireland from the 1960s to the present day. The views expressed by those interviewed for this study suggest that we are now at a critical juncture where it is possible for transformative change to take place once again.

However, while change is possible, it is not without challenge, as outlined by study participants, particularly in relation to a new generation of Travellers with different ideas and perspectives who need to have their voices heard and need to be part of that change.

The findings highlight the diversity that exist within the Traveller community and consequently the need to bear in mind, not everyone will agree on the best way forward, despite agreeing on the desired outcomes. The challenge, therefore, is to develop a process and structure that facilitates and that is inclusive of this diversity. Among these, are a discernible yearning for substantial transformation, and a hunger for bigger change that goes beyond the incremental. They advocate for an approach that's more radical and strategic, emphasizing the need for a departure from the familiar avenues in order to have a more profound and far-reaching impact. For these individuals, the desire for change isn't merely about adjustments within the existing framework, it's about challenging anti-Traveller racist ideologies and realising transformative change for the community.

The data indicates that the path forward could lie beyond the traditional confines of organisational structures. This viewpoint advocates for a more organic approach, envisioning a broader collective movement that extends beyond formal organisational boundaries.

Global Analysis

The findings suggest that the resistance to social change and the perpetuation of systemic inequalities faced by Travellers and other excluded groups in Ireland are driven by the forces of neoliberalism, which prioritise the interests of the market and profit over the needs of marginalised and excluded communities.

This study suggests that Traveller and settled community workers and leaders must develop a broader political and economic analysis that examines the intersectional nature of oppression, that recognises the links between local issues and broader global forces. This analysis has the potential to expose the ways in which policies and practices perpetuate racism, discrimination and exclusion and inform the development of more effective strategies for social change at multiple levels. As Harvey, (2005) has argued, the struggle for equality cannot be divorced from the struggle against the dominant neoliberal ideology, which normalises and reinforces structural inequalities.

Developing a broader analysis of human rights and equality would also combat insularity of the Traveller struggle, which in turn, could broaden the effectiveness and scope of the Traveller struggle for human rights and gain broader political support. Additionally, a broader analysis can lead to the development of more effective collective action for achieving broader social change for the Traveller Community and other marginalised communities in Ireland.

In this context, the community work moto of "act locally, think globally" takes on added significance, as it highlights the importance of connecting local struggles to broader structural and systemic factors that operate at multiple levels. By doing so, Traveller leaders and community workers can help to build a more collective, powerful, and effective movement to bring about change.

Community Work

The study indicates that community work has been and continues to be an essential foundation of the Traveller movement in Ireland, creating a strong collective base that is unified by a shared set of values and principles of equality, human rights and social justice.

As indicated by the findings, community work has transitioned from a situation where it was initiated and led by members of the settled community to one where it is now a central pillar of the Traveller struggle in Ireland. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of Traveller groups and Traveller leaders now operate on community development principles of consultation, participation, empowerment, and collective action. However, the findings also indicate that the state's influence over community work and Traveller groups has the potential to undermine community work seeking deeper structural change.

The Role of Settled Community Workers

The study emphasises the importance of examining power relationships between Travellers and settled community workers in partnership organisations where members of the settled community and Travellers are committed to building partnership structures based on solidarity and equality. The study contends that power relationships within Traveller organisations, if not checked, have the potential to reproduce broader societal power disparities between Travellers and the settled community. Therefore, acknowledging and addressing these power differentials within Traveller organisations, both local and national, remains crucial for building more supportive, equitable and inclusive partnerships.

Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for Traveller organisations, for theory and the practice of community work, for the future development of the Traveller struggle in Ireland, and for government policy and practice.
The insights gained from this study can inform and enhance community work practices. Likewise, the findings provide valuable insights that can contribute to the development of strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by the Traveller struggle in Ireland.

Conclusion

In many ways, this study serves as a poignant reminder of the power dynamics at play in terms of the deeply rooted racism, prejudice and biases that have permeated society towards Travellers for decades and correspondingly the courage of those who have taken a stand against these injustices in an effort to bring about social change and human rights for the Traveller community. It highlights the journey of Irish Travellers and settled allies from historical marginalisation to their present-day struggle to shed light on and challenge the pervasive nature of anti-Traveller racism.

By taking a stand and challenging the poor conditions, racism, exclusion and poverty that Travellers experience, these activists and community workers have not only unveiled the structural inequality and anti-Traveller racism but also initiated a transformative journey toward dismantling the walls of racism, exclusion and prejudice and forged a path toward greater equality and human rights. This research demonstrates that the Traveller struggle in Ireland has been successful in mobilising and politicising the Traveller community and in the development of policy on Travellers. However, the challenge now faced by the Traveler movement is an ideological one. That targets the root causes of anti-Traveller racism, inequality and the persistent lack of policy implementation in order to achieve tangible progress in the struggle for equality and human rights for Travellers in Ireland.

Limitations of this Study

The findings highlight the need for further research to be carried out with members of the wider Traveller community to get their perceptions of how they view the Traveller struggle and what would support them to become involved in a broader collective movement.

Likewise, research is warranted to find the strategies to address, challenge and change the anti-Traveller racism and the sedentarist ideology that is evident among policy makers, service providers and the wider Irish society.

There is correspondingly a need for the development of more researchers and academics from within the Traveller community who will carry out research within their own community and bring their unique perspective and voice, that has been historically excluded, into the academic arena.

Recommendations

The State

Official State Apology

An official state apology is a pivotal step toward acknowledging and redressing the historical wrongs experienced by the Traveller community. A state apology to the community, would represent a starting point, a gesture of atonement and reconciliation, to begin the healing process in redressing the oppression and racism that the Traveller community have suffered at the hands of the Irish state and wider Irish society. It holds the potential to bring about healing, empowerment, policy change and enhanced social awareness, fostering a society that values diversity, equity, and justice. The apology would need to explicitly acknowledge the historical mistreatment, racism, and systemic injustices that the Traveller community has endured over the years. It would encompass the experience of forced assimilation, evictions, discrimination and cultural denial. Such an apology would serve to validate the lived experiences of Travellers and the intergenerational trauma resulting from systemic racism, discrimination and marginalisation. This validation could have a profound psychological impact on individuals and the community as a whole.

An official apology would need to be accompanied by a commitment to rectify historical injustices through policy changes, resource allocation and concrete steps to address ongoing difficulties faced by the Traveller community.

Political Representation

Due to the small numerical size of the Traveller community and the wide geographical spread, alongside the historical racism and exclusion expressed both by the state and the majority settled community towards Travellers.

There is a need for the establishment of a Traveller Panel within Seanad Eireann, similar to the University Panel, this would ensure that the Traveller community have political representation and input in the political and social life of the country as a whole.

A Traveller panel in the Seanad would play a crucial role in providing a direct channel for the Traveller community's concerns, aspirations, and challenges to be addressed at the highest Political level. This representation acknowledges that different cultural groups within society possess distinct cultural differences, experiences and needs that should be accounted for in the political decision-making processes. By having Traveller representatives elected through a dedicated panel, the democratic process becomes more inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of Travellers and the population as a whole, rather than just serving the needs and viewpoints of the majority settled population.

One of the primary benefits of establishing a Traveller panel lies in its ability to ensure that the Traveller community's voice is not only heard but actively integrated into discussions on policies and legislation. This engagement can lead to more informed decisions that reflect the realities faced by the Traveller community, ultimately resulting in better-targeted social initiatives and policies that address the unique challenges they face, such as access to education, accommodation, healthcare and combating anti-Traveller racism.

Furthermore, the presence of Traveller representatives within Seanad Eireann brings visibility and recognition to the community as a whole. It sends a powerful message that the country is committed to addressing historical inequalities and creating an environment where all citizens, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background, can contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. This acknowledgment not only empowers the Traveller community but also fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for the betterment of Irish society as a whole.

Independent Traveller Accommodation Agency

Establishing an independent agency with responsibility for overseeing Traveller accommodation would be a significant step to address the longstanding issues of inadequate and lack of accommodation, discrimination, and cultural insensitivity that the Traveller community has faced at the hands of local authorities. This agency would play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable, culturally appropriate, and sustainable accommodation solutions for Travellers.

Independent Ombudsman for Travellers

In order to address the deep-seated anti-Traveller racism that has permeated society for decades if not centuries, with the result that it became the norm, there is a need to establish an independent ombudsman for Travellers. This ombudsman would play a crucial role in advocating for the rights, well-being and social justice of the Traveller community by challenging systemic and institutionalised anti-Traveller racism and exclusion, promoting accountability and fostering a more inclusive society.

Community Work

Reflective Spaces

A clear recommendation that emerges from the findings is that spaces need to be created where Traveller and settled community workers come together and reflect on the community work that is taking place with Travellers and question its future direction, including how it deals with the influence the Irish state exercises over community development and the push towards community development projects becoming service providers, which has the potential to undermine the role of community work. Creating spaces for reflection among both Traveller and settled community workers and activists, would promote the exchange of community development best practices. Reflective spaces would be designed to provide a safe and supportive environment where community workers and activists can openly discuss their experiences, challenges and successes.

This environment would encourage open dialogue and vulnerability. These reflective spaces might include facilitated sessions led by experienced facilitators that could employ various techniques like group discussions, case studies and presentations, to encourage in-depth reflection.

The collective wisdom and diverse experiences shared in these reflective spaces would enable better problem-solving and strategy development, which can lead to more effective and impactful outcomes for the community. It would correspondingly build solidarity between organisations, who can find themselves vying for funding or credibility and thereby ensure a more collective, consolidated and targeted approach to addressing current challenges faced by the community.

Training

The development of community work training courses specifically tailored to the needs and perspectives of the Traveller community which have already started in the Dept of applied social studies in Maynooth. These courses would not only look at interventions, strategies and tactics but would also prioritise cultural differences, which would thereby foster more culturally inclusive community work approaches. This training could correspondingly be a source of employment for Traveller community workers as tutors, some of whom have been engaging in and practicing community work with the Traveller community for decades.

The Role of Settled Community Workers

Defining the roles of non-Traveller community workers within Traveller organisations is essential for fostering effective collaboration, cultural sensitivity and respectful engagement. The emphasis on supportive roles rather than leadership positions recognises the importance of centring Traveller voices and agency while acknowledging the value that non-Traveller workers can bring to these contexts.

Traveller Movement

Global Analysis for Change

The Traveller movement needs to develop a global analysis acknowledging the influence of neoliberal capitalism, which drives injustice and inequality for marginalised groups. Such analysis would highlight how neoliberal capitalism disproportionately affects marginalised groups, including Travellers. Such an analysis would explore how economic policies, privatisation and resource allocation contribute to their socio-economic disadvantages and limited access to essential services.

This analysis would aim to build bridges between different marginalised groups and Travellers, by identifying common challenges arising from neoliberal capitalism. This would foster a sense of solidarity and promote a broader collective movement for change.

Collective Cultural Events

Organising collective cultural events within the Traveller community are a powerful way to strengthen connections, preserve traditions, and instil a sense of pride. These events play a crucial role in fostering unity among Travellers and compensating for the challenges posed by the lack of nomadic connectivity in contemporary times. These gatherings provide a platform for community members to come together, celebrate their culture, share experiences and build lasting relationships. They tap into the cultural veins of nomadism of reconnecting and a sense of belonging to a wider and broader community of people.

Broader Collective Traveller Platform

There is a need to develop a broader Traveller platform that transcends existing Traveller organizations, fostering representation from diverse Traveller voices. The concept of an inclusive Collective Traveller Platform entails the creation of a dynamic collective space that goes beyond the confines of traditional Traveller organisations. This platform would aim to unite and amplify the voices, perspectives and concerns of the diverse Traveller community, ensuring that all segments of this community are heard and represented.

Right to Nomadic Tradition

Asserting the right of Travellers to practice their nomadic lifestyle is a critical step toward preserving their cultural heritage, identity, and way of life. Recognizing and respecting the value of nomadism contributes to a more inclusive and diverse society that honours the richness of cultural traditions. Legal measures can safeguard their rights to access land, travel and live according to their cultural practices, which includes repeal of the anti-Trespass legislation. This might also include designated areas where Travellers can camp, thereby supporting their nomadic tradition.

Wider Support Campaign

As the data highlights, there is no avenue whereby members of the wider settled community can demonstrate their support or involvement for the Traveller struggle if they are not part of a Traveller organisation. Unlike many other social movements, no such process is in place for showing support to the Traveller community. This could be part of a national collective action, to create an avenue that would allow and encourage members of the wider settled community and Travellers to become involved and show solidarity with the Traveller struggle and the ongoing fight for social justice and equality.

Academia

Traveller Studies Department

The establishment of an academic department dedicated to Traveller Studies within universities would be a significant step toward enhancing understanding, recognition and respect for the Traveller community's history, culture and contributions. A Traveller Studies Department would provide a platform for in-depth research, education and dialogue, ultimately fostering social change and challenging stereotypes. A Traveller Studies Department would typically adopt an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from fields such as social studies, anthropology, sociology, history, cultural studies, and more.

Such a department would design curricula that explore Traveller history, culture, social issues, and contributions. Courses would cover topics like identity, nomadism, anti-Traveller racism, community work, advocacy, and the community's role in shaping society.

Academic research conducted in these departments could contribute to the documentation and preservation of Traveller traditions, languages, arts and practices that might otherwise be lost with time. A Traveller Studies Department would be a hub for research on various aspects of Traveller life. Scholars could investigate cultural practices, historical narratives, community diversity, social challenges and the impact of policies, with the support of Traveller academics to ensure they are culturally and ethically sensitive.

A Traveller Studies Department would correspondingly support members of the Traveller community to carry out research and empower the Traveller community to take an active role in shaping their own future.

By addressing ongoing challenges and needs through research-driven initiatives, the community not only gains valuable insights but also contributes to positive change that is culturally sensitive, relevant and sustainable and ensures that the Traveller voice is represented in academia. Such a department within the academic arena, would correspondingly serve to challenge the prevailing mindset that continues to exist within Irish society, that Travellers are inferior.

Academic recognition brings with it a level of regard and respect that would serve to challenge this mindset. Traveller studies would both broaden and deepen an understanding of the Traveller experience and Traveller culture across wider society, with elective modules from the Traveller studies department available to all students on campus, thereby breaking down and challenging racism and discrimination against the community and reinforcing the regard and respect that the Traveller community deserve as Irelands only indigenous, ethnic minority community.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet

Title of Study: An Exploration of Traveller Activism and the Struggle for Equality and Human Rights in Ireland

My name is Thomas McCann and I am a postgraduate student completing a Doctorate in Social Studies in Maynooth University I am currently undertaking thesis research into how the

Traveller Struggle in Ireland developed and evolved. I hope to explore from the experience of participants the emergence and development of the Traveller struggle in Ireland.

The research will involve each participant taking part in a 45–60-minute interview during which a series of semi-structured questions will be asked. Each interview will be recorded by audio tape.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be free to withdraw from the interview and/or to decline to answer any of the questions at any point in time. If at the end of the study you decide that you do not want your information to be included, your rights shall be fully reserved. No identifying information from any of the participants will appear in the written Thesis or any subsequent journal articles or workshops arising from the study. Nonetheless, there is a small possibility that you could be recognised, however all efforts will be made so that this does not occur, and every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, however,

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.' (Ref)

If you have any questions or queries, please feel free to contact either myself or the research supervisor should the need arise.

Many thanks for your time and cooperation in this study Yours sincerely

_____

Thomas McCann

Researcher:	Research Supervisors:
Thomas McCann	Dr Brian Melaugh and Dr Ciara Bradley
School of Applied Social Studies	School of Applied Social Studies
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Appendix B : Demographic Questions

Name:

Gender:

Age range: (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 59, 69,)

Nationality:

Ethnicity

How long have you been involved with the Traveller Issues?

What groups, organisations or bodies have you been involved with?

Appendix C : Interview Questions

1: How would you describe your involvement with the Traveller issue?

2: What motivated you to get involved in Traveller issues?

3: Would you see yourself as part of a lager movement?

4: What are the changes that the movement is trying to bring about?

 a.Are these to change the overall political or economic system?

b.Or bring about changes within the existing system?

5: What strategies or actions have the movement used to bring about these changes?

6: What are the key arguments that the movement has made regarding the issues?

7: What is the level of involvement in the movement by the community?

8: How are people recruited into the movement?

9: Is there a sense of a shared identity in being part of the Traveller movement?

10: Is there a link between the Traveller movement and other social movements?

11: Is there an international dimension to the movement?

12: Has the movement been influenced by other movements or struggles?

13: Do you feel the movement is compromised by being funded by the state?

14: How is a collective voice organised in the movement?

15: Who are the leadership of the Traveller movement?

16: How are decision made in the movement regarding strategic direction or key issues?

17: Are there tensions within the movement?
18: Has the Traveller movement changed over time?

19: How do you see the Traveller movement in the future?

20: Has the Traveller movement in Ireland been successful in bringing about change for Travellers?

Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of Study: An Exploration of Traveller Activism and the Struggle for Equality and Human Rights in Ireland

I have received, read and understood the Participant Information Form for this study. The nature and purpose of this study has been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask for further information at any time from the researcher Mr. Thomas McCann and/or his supervisors. My taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study up to or prior to submission.

I am aware that the information gained in the study will be used to advance research in this area but that I will not be identifiable and that all information will be treated with the strictest confidence. I am aware that outcomes of the study may inform workshops, conference presentations, journal publications or future research.

I am aware of the limits of confidentiality under the Code of Professional Ethics of Maynooth University which is outlined below.

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.' (Ref)

And I am responsible for my self-disclosures in this regard. Under the Freedom of Information Act, I understand that I am entitled to a copy of the study's findings. On this basis I consent to take part in this study.

I hereby confirm that I have read and understand the information form on the above named study and freely agree to take part in this research project.

Print: Name:

Signature of Participant:

Date

Appendix E: Debriefing Sheet

Dear Participant,

I would like to extend my thanks to you for completing the interview that was required for the purpose of this study. This study will provide valuable insight and understanding of the Traveller Struggle in Ireland for Human rights. It is my hope that such information will contribute to the further development of the Traveller movement in Ireland and to social change. In conducting the research, I also hope to contribute to development of research that is generated from within the Traveller community. If you have any questions or queries as a result of the research undertaken, please feel free to contact either myself or my research supervisors.

Thank you for your contribution to this research study.

Thomas McCann

Research student: Research Supervisors:

Thomas McCann   Dr Brian Melaugh. Dr Ciara Bradley

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Itinerants set up campaign committee

ITINERANTS living in the Dublin city area are to establish a nine-man committee to conduct their campaign for camping sites and full-time education. They decided this at a meeting at the Cherry Orchard Settlement this week.

Chairman of the new Dublin Itinerant Committee, Mr. John Connors, of Cherry Orchard, said that the Catholic Church was now taking a keener interest in their problems. This, coupled with recent Government announcements, promised to bring practical action in the near future.

He said that Archbishop McQuaid was paying for buses to take the children to a Legion of Mary voluntary school two nights a week. This was the kind of help needed but still the children had the right to full-time education and this must come.

OWN SCHOOL

For four months they had been running their own school at Cherry Orchard, said Mr. Connors. With the help of 25 volunteers, classes were continuing every afternoon and evening. It was time the educational authorities stepped in and took over the special instruction the children needed.

Mr. Grattan Puxon, elected secretary, said that the families at Cherry Orchard had been settled there for over a year. An eviction was scheduled to take place before the end of the month. If this was carried out, the families would be thrown back onto the road. The many with huts built would be forced to live in rag and wattle tents in which four children had lost their lives in the Dublin area within recent months.

However, they would resist an eviction by all means short of violence and defend their school. Meanwhile, he believed that the newly-aroused concern and sympathy of the Government and Catholic clergy might bring a solution, in the form of an alternative site, before the eviction day arrived.

It was proposed to hold a national convention this summer at either Puck Fair or Ballinasloe to establish an all-Ireland itinerant organisation.

that's what started me off I remember walking out of

that pub and I said I will be back to you now I didn't threaten in the way I said it but still and that the day after that I then started to get involved in what was happening because I was only 18 time like you know going on 19 years of age and that's what made me get involved along with and then I started to do little bits in the town and there was a youth worker there and a committee in the town and we started to develop it and then as a voluntary youth worker and then they employed a full time youth worker who was a very interesting man from Belfast and he came I with these very new and radical ideas and that and started all this thing and at the same time as this was happening within a short space you know then there was the who;e thing I remember meeting John O'Connell the lord have mercy on him and he was a new voice more or less the local committee then was involved and then suddenly we started to mix in with other groups and then MInceir Misli started you remember that yourself and then the people involved with that I didn't know who they were I didn't know Thomas McCann I didn't know Nan Joyce I didn't know who they were I

I remember walking out of that pub and I said I will be back to you, now I didn't threaten in the way I said it but still and that the day after that I then started to get involved

Role of settled people in raising

awareness Emerging Traveller Voice

suddenly we started to mix in with other groups and then MInceir Misli started

it wasn't just in my area it is was happening
happening everywhere

A Road Less Traveled

didn't know none of them people like you know but from listening to them then latterly at that time it wasn't just in my area it is was happening in it was happening everywhere and it built up from there and I kept involved up all through the years so that's what started me now I suppose I could tell you a million and one stories of that Journey and that Journey was really interesting and that journey was full of learning

Appendix H: Sample Memo

Being state funded

Are there limits to what movements and organisations can do if they are state funded? Is there a limit to what Traveller organisations can do if they are state funded? And what are these limits if they do exist? Is there a conflict in being funded by a state that has oppressed your people? And is it as some people might view it as a way for the state to control what Traveller organisations do? Has this ever happened? There are two examples that I am aware of where the state either threatened to withdraw funding from a Traveller organisation if they did not cease what they were doing or in the other case the funding was withdrawn because the campaign was very critical of state policy, however, does this depend on who is in government and who the senior civil servants are in any particular department? Or does it limit what groups can engage in?

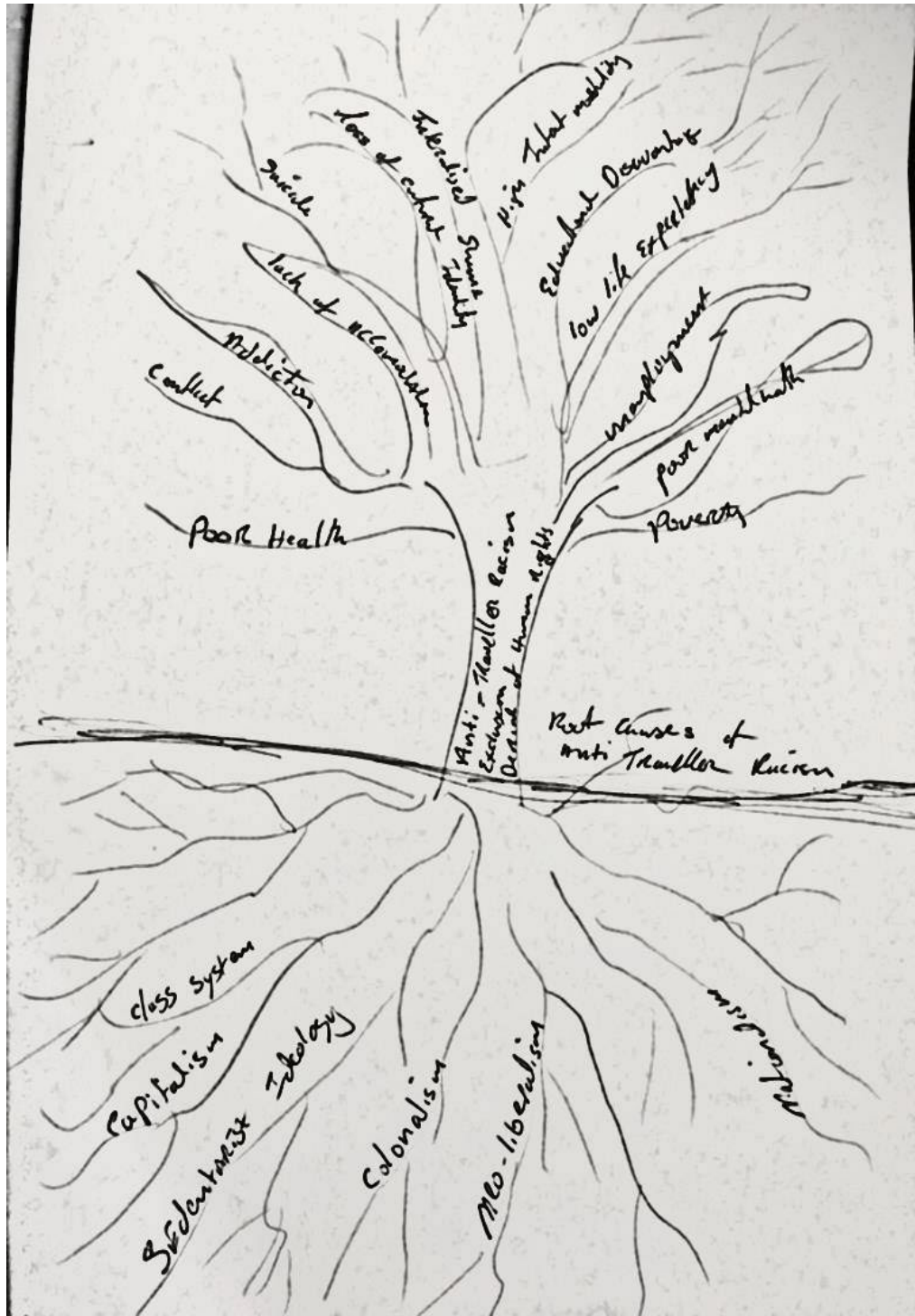**Appendix I: Living Conditions of Travellers in Cherry Orchid Dublin in the 1960s**

(A Traveller's Hut, Cherry Orchard 1965, Alan McWeeny Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/10599/5229)

Appendix J: Anti-Traveller protest on the Tallaght by-pass, June 1984

Appendix K: National Traveller Protest against the introduction of the anti-trespass legislation, Custom House Quay, Dublin, 2002

(Derek Speirs, Pavee Point Website, 2002)

Appendix L: Roots of Anti-Traveller Racism

Appendix M: Joe Donahue a Traveller Activist ; Cherry Orchid 1965, the sign in the background highting the differences among Traveller and settled activist at the time Photographer, Alan Mcweeney; southdublinlibraries.ie/handle/10599/5