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Title: **A Social Constructionist Examination of Traveller Parenting Values, Attitudes and Practices**

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Declaration of Ownership

I declare that this dissertation and the research involved in it are entirely the work of the author.

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Abstract - A Social Constructionist Examination of Traveller Parenting Values, Attitudes and Practices by Pauline Clarke Orohoe

This research study addresses a significant issue within Irish society: the social construction of Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices. This is a focused study where the overall aim is to examine how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed. It will then determine, from a Traveller perspective, how Traveller parenting can be most appropriately supported. The objectives of the study were to investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting, and to determine Traveller perspectives on what factors, contribute towards effective parenting. The study also explores supports Traveller parents need in order to be able to parent effectively and presents a set of guidelines for best practice for organisations who provide parenting support. In the literature to date little focus has been placed on the parenting values, attitudes and practices from the perspective of Travellers as a distinct ethnic minority group within Irish society. There is also little research on supports required to address the parenting needs of this group.

This research study employed a narrative inquiry approach to developing an understanding of how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices have been socially constructed. A sample of 19 Traveller mothers and fathers from across County Offaly took part in the research. As Travellers are considered a difficult to reach research community, a Peer Researcher assisted with gaining access to the research participants. The stories shared by individual Traveller parents were then analysed using Polkinghorne's paradigmatic mode of analysis in order to produce paradigmatic typologies or categories.

The research found that Traveller parents value their extended family network as a support to the parenting role, and this extended network is crucial in terms of parenting knowledge, skills and advice. Traveller parents face significant challenges as they try to maintain their cultural values and norms as they rear their children within a predominantly settled community. The research study concluded with a set of guidelines for service providers to consider when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families within the Irish context. In addition to this it would be advisable that any new model to support Traveller parents would need to be conscious of providing information in a manner that is accessible and mindful of literacy issues.

1.0 Introduction

The overall aim of this research project is to examine how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed, and from there determine, from a Traveller perspective, how Traveller parenting can be most appropriately supported. The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting;
- To determine Traveller perspectives on what factors, contribute towards effective parenting;
- To explore supports Traveller parents need in order to be able to parent effectively;
- To develop guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families.

As a Social Care Worker who worked for 17 years in the area of family support, and more recently within the regulation of children's services, I am acutely aware of the challenges that families face in relation to accessing culturally competent supports in relation to parenting and family life. It was this experience that drew my attention to this research study in an effort to address the gap in current knowledge. This research will also provide a research foundation upon which to develop guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families.

Parenting, or as it is referred to within the Traveller culture, child rearing is mainly a family – based activity. It is purposive in nature, whereby parents attend to the practical, social and emotional needs of their child (Hildebrand, 1994; Hoghughi and Long, 2004), and is generally carried out by one or two adults. Parenting can be defined as 'the primary means of training and preparing children to meet the demands of their environments and take advantage of the opportunities within those environments' (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016, p. 19). While there is a wide range of research available on parenting practices and perspectives (Connolly and Devaney, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016), this research is necessary and timely in order to bridge the knowledge gap which exists regarding parenting within the Traveller community.

Parenting can involve multiple generations of a family from parent to child, and at times can extend along the life course from grandparent to mother/ father (Bornstein, 2012; Breland – Noble, 2014; Connolly and Devaney, 2017). Such generational involvement is particularly

pertinent when considering child rearing practices from the perspective of Travellers, where grandparents and extended family are viewed as significant supports to parents and young families (AITHSS, 2010). Family relationships have been universally recognised as having a substantial influence on the long-term well-being of society as a whole (Family Support Agency, 2013). The availability of extended family can provide significant support, guidance, advice and information. Extended family members act as role models, and can be particularly influential in terms of a first-time parent's approach to child rearing (Bigner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002).

Parenting bears a significance on a societal and cultural level. As Bornstein (1991, p. 6) argues the 'particular and continuing task of parents and other caregivers is to enculturate children . . . to prepare them for socially accepted physical, economic, and psychological situations that are characteristic of the culture in which they are to survive and thrive'. Thus, perhaps the most important single thing that a parent does for a child is to determine the culture into which the child is born. For Traveller parents, adherence to their cultural norms and expectations are a key part of the parenting role. Traveller families can be viewed as being more traditional in comparison to the settled community, particularly in relation to their parenting (Harvey, 2013). Family sizes remain larger in comparison to those of the settled community and the role played by women in the family is often a traditional one of homemaker (Hayes 2006, as cited by Murphy, 2016; Helliner, 2000, as cited by Hourigan and Campbell, 2010). The Traveller community, however, like the settled community, is not immune from social change. This study will examine Traveller views in relation to parenting values, attitudes and practices at this moment in time.

Irish society's structures have altered as have family structures, but childrearing families of some kind have prevailed throughout the years. Since the early 1990s there has been an increase in government interest in the area of parenting as a policy issue on an international level (Broadhurst et. al., 2009; Connolly and Devaney, 2017). The needs of children were put firmly at the centre of the government agenda with the development of the National Children's Strategy 2000 which the government at the time implemented to support parenting and child development (UN Commission on Human Rights, 1990). A more recent government policy Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014) places a strong emphasis on parenting. The recent policy recognises the challenges which raising a family can bring, particularly for communities such as Travellers who already experience significant disadvantage and inequality (AITHSS, 2010; Department of Children and Youth

Affairs, 2014; Special Interest Group, 2013; Watson et al., 2017). It also places significance on the pivotal role which parents have on their children's future (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; Sylva et al., 2004).

This demonstrates the importance of parenting and the commitment required in raising the next generation. The integrity of every society ultimately relies on the proficient parenting of children, but from time – to – time questions about how effective parenting can be achieved arise. The challenge for society is to advocate parenting that will ensure its endurance and prosperity.

These issues will be discussed and examined in greater detail throughout the various chapters within this research study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review*:* This chapter will examine the current literature in relation to parenting practice and policy development. It will also discuss Traveller culture and issues related to parenting, and why a social constructionist examination of Traveller parenting is appropriate.

Chapter 3 Methodology*:* This chapter gives an overview of the methodology for the research study. The study examines parenting amongst the Traveller population, using narrative inquiry as the methodological framework for the study. It will will provide a rationale for the steps taken in completing the research fieldwork, and discuss the method of data analysis used. The ethical considerations for the study will be discussed, while the limitations of this research will also be outlined.

Chapter 4 Findings*:* In this chapter, I will examine the findings which emerged from the research fieldwork. These findings will be discussed under four key categories as they relate to the overall objectives of this research study.

Chapter 5 Discussion: This chapter will discuss the findings of this research study as they relate to the current body of literature as discussed within the literature review, and the influence which the findings may have upon further research in this area.

Chapter 6 Conclusion: This chapter summarises the overall research findings that have emerged throughout this research study, drawing attention to the key messages that can be garnered from the process.

Travellers experience parenting from a unique perspective. This study takes a social constructionist approach, so it is interested in listening to how Travellers talk about parenting and construct meaning in relation to parenting issues. The findings from the study will inform further research and endeavour to drive some form of change in relation to parenting support for this group. Current literature on this topic will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, I will provide an overview of the literature in relation to parenting and its impact on personal, cultural and societal wellbeing and will examine parenting specifically within the Irish Traveller community. I will begin in section one by examining parenting as a concept. I will discuss specific theoretical perspectives on parenting practices, and will explore the value of parenting in society, the support and recognition it receives therein and the subsequent impact on parenting. In section two I will focus upon Irish Traveller culture, providing an overview of Travellers ethnic background and their experiences within Irish society. I will then explore specific Traveller cultural attributes, and the influence of government policy on Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices. Finally, in section three I will examine why social constructionism was viewed as an appropriate theoretical framework to underpin this study in relation to parenting and the Traveller community.

2.2 Section One: Parenting

Parenting or child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood (Bornstein, 1991; Child and Family Agency, 2013; Virasiri et al., 2011). While there is a wide range of research available on parenting practices and perspectives (Connolly and Devaney, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016), I will examine this literature with a specific interest in the Irish context. Within this section, I will discuss parenting as a process, and consider the theoretical perspectives available in relation to parenting styles and practices. This will provide an insight into the parenting process and the factors which can influence this practice. Following this I will discuss the value of parenting within society, and outline the provision of parenting supports available throughout the country.

2.2.1 What is Parenting?

Parenting is primarily a family-based activity carried out by one or two adults. Parenting can be defined as 'the primary means of training and preparing children to meet the demands of their environments and take advantage of the opportunities within those environments'

(National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016, p.19). From the moment of birth, babies rely upon their parents and other caregivers to ensure they are protected and cared for in a manner which ensures their needs are met. Parenting is a purposive activity whereby parents provide care, nurturing and love in order to meet the child's developmental needs, and ensure their survival and welfare (Hildebrand, 1994; Hoghughi and Long, 2004). The process of parenting involves much more than providing for basic needs in relation to food, shelter and warmth. It is a journey of two-way interactions between a parent and child which aims to develop the child's sense of independence, identity and belonging, while ensuring that children are productive and economically independent in the future (Baumrind, 1991; Bornstein, 1991; Child and Family Agency, 2013). While not always the case, parenting can involve multiple generations of a family from parent to child, and at times can extend along the life course from grandparent to mother/ father (Bornstein, 2012; Breland – Noble, 2014; Connolly and Devaney, 2017). This is particularly pertinent when considering parenting and child rearing practices from the perspective of ethnic minority groups, where extended family members are viewed as significant supports to parents and young families (AITHSS, 2010; Child and Family Agency, 2013).

Parenting is also defined on a societal and cultural level. Furthermore, it is regarded as the 'particular and continuing task of parents and other caregivers (is) to enculturate children ..... to prepare them for socially accepted physical, economic, and psychological situations that are characteristic of the culture in which they are to survive and thrive' (Bornstein, 1991, p.6). Thus, perhaps the most important single thing that a parent does for a child is to determine the culture into which the child is born. Culture can be conceived of 'as distinctive patterns of norms, ideas, values, conventions, behaviours, and symbolic representations about life that are shared by a collection of people, persist over time, guide and regulate daily living and constitute valued competencies that are communicated by mature members of the social group to new members' (Bornstein, 2013, p.2). Individual cultures are typified, characterised and distinguished from one another by established and widely acknowledged ideas on how individuals should think, feel and behave as an active member of that culture (Bornstein, 2012). Parenting plays a key role in preparing children for their role within their culture of origin (Bornstein, 2012). It is interesting to note that the influences of the individual culture also play a pivotal role in shaping the parental approaches and practices utilised. 'Expectations and practices learned from others, such as family, friends, and other social networks; and beliefs transferred through cultural and social systems' (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering,

and Medicine, 2016, p.22) shape an individual's approach to the role of being a parent. Additionally, when parents engage children in activities such as chores or taking care of siblings, they are enabling their children to develop the skills required for parenting (Weisner, 2002). I would argue that this practice is particularly prevalent within the ethnic minority cultures, where older children help to care for younger siblings. Parents can also learn appropriate social and practical parenting behaviours from those role models within their broader network, such as siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents (Sameroff and Fiese, 2000).

Parenting is a process which unfolds and evolves within a particular context which involves relationship networks both within the family, and those relationships external to the family (Connolly and Devaney, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016). It can be argued that the influence of close and extended family, coupled with the parenting environment has a significant influence on the parenting role across cultures. The availability of extended family can provide significant support, guidance, advice and information. They act as role models, and can be particularly influential in terms of a first-time parent's approach to child rearing (Bigner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002). This can prove to be a significant support to parents from ethnic minority groups, as parents must strive to ensure that their children are 'equipped to function in a society where they may be marginalised or experience discrimination' (Breland – Noble, 2014, p.173). In fact, national policy on children in Ireland, which will be discussed later within this review, emphasises the role of extended family and suggests that they must be taken into account when providing support services to children (Halpenny, 2012).

It is clear that parents are a primary socialising agent, who transfer knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. Parenting for ethnic minority families is no different. It is concerned with supporting children to be independent both physically and economically, and it is also cognisant of the children's psychological wellbeing. However, ethnic minority groups, such as Travellers tend to be more traditional in their views (Hayes, 2006; Hourigan and Campbell, 2010) and their children face significant marginalisation in their lifetimes (Hayes, 2006). In the next section, I will examine the theoretical perspectives that underpin key parenting styles.

2.2.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Parenting Practice

The world within which we live is constantly evolving and changing. Societies are becoming progressively more global. While developments and progression in relation to technology,

travel, industry and employment are to be welcomed, they also pose significant challenges in relation to the parenting role. For example, new parents often have reduced access to their family support networks due to travel, while parents also face the challenge of managing their children's access to and use of social media. Parents do not receive any instruction manual when a new born arrives, but instead must gather their resources in terms of familial, societal and cultural supports so as to meet the needs of this new person (Breland – Noble, 2014). While public perception on parenting, views it as a task which should come naturally (Volmert et al., 2016), parenting involves the learning of a 'skill set' based upon the relationship between parent and child (Connelly and Devaney, 2017; O'Doherty, 2015, Volmert et al., 2016). Parent's behaviour impacts on the life of the child because it contributes to the physical, emotional and psychological health of the child. Parent's positive responses towards their children's cues help to reduce the parent child communication gap and support the child in learning to manage their emotions thus developing healthy adult relationships. Therefore, the parent child relationship needs to continually evolve in order to meet a child's developmental needs.

Parenting behaviours are also connected with both child competence and child maladjustment (Collins et al., 2000). Maladjusted behaviours within children refer to a regular and consistent pattern of behaviour which is habitual and potentially harmful for the child or the environment within which they live (Boll, 1989). Competent children, on the other hand have the ability to take on tasks with a strong sense of their own capability. They are able to face daily challenges confident in the knowledge that they are capable of completing the task at hand (Beurkens, 2016). Empathetic parenting practices have been associated with higher levels of psychosocial well-being during childhood (Baumrind, 1991; Zhou et al., 2002) whereas; strict and unpredictable parenting has been associated with higher levels of children externalising problems (Forman & Davies, 2005). There is significant research indicating that an important influence on parenting may involve the continuities of childrearing practices across generations (Belsky, 2005; Patterson, 1998; Putallaz et al., 2001; Van IJzendoorn et al., 1992). In spite of the evidence that the style of parenting in one generation influences parental behaviour in the next, to date there is little consideration of the specific mechanisms that may promote such continuities. Furthermore, some researchers propose that evidence for continuity may be reduced if the effect of children is taken into account (Belsky, 2005). Our experiences as children growing up inform how we parent when we have children of our own. However, when

those experiences are adverse, abusive, or neglectful, they can increase the risk for a negative cycle that can play out for generations within a family (Fife and Schrager, 2012).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) summarises that positioning parenthood within an ecological perspective allows it to be seen as a process which evolves, as opposed to something which remains static. From an ecological perspective, there are a number of complex social and psychological factors which are thought to influence parenting (Appendix 1). Firstly, the temperament of the child and the personality of the parent influence the interactions between both (Belskey, 2005). The parents own experience of being parented, and the quality of the relationship which they had with their caregivers will influence their ability to respond to, and meet the needs of their child (Bowlby, 1973; Kothchick and Forehand, 2002). Parents who experienced a childhood where they were shown warmth, encouragement and support are more likely to demonstrate these skills in their own parenting role than those who did not.

> 'Parenting practices that include the provision of positive reinforcement, open displays of warmth or affection, involvement in and active monitoring of children's activities, and consistent but not overly harsh disciplinary strategies tend to relate to various measures of adaptive child psychosocial adjustment, including academic competence, high self-esteem, positive peer relations, and fewer child behaviour problems' (Kothchick and Forehand, 2002, p.255).

Social learning theorists further maintain that parenting behaviours are impacted by the individuals own experience of being parented, and the behaviours which they have learned to model. This point comes up repeatedly in parenting research (Dix, 1992; Virasiri et al., 2011). This can dictate how particular behaviours and practices such as violence can be viewed as normal within certain societies and cultures. For example, within the Irish context, physical punishment of children was viewed as an acceptable parenting practice. Social learning theory is strongly linked with the work of Bandura (1977). Social learning theory contends that children's behaviour is shaped, directly and implicitly, by their exposure to everyday experiences (Virasiri et al., 2011).

> 'The fundamental tenet is that moment-to-moment exchanges are crucial; if a child receives an immediate reward for his/her behaviour, such as getting parental attention or approval, then he/she is likely to do the behaviour again, whereas if she/he is ignored (or punished) then she/he is less likely to do it again' (Virasiri et al., 2011, p.6).

This demonstrates the need for consistency with parenting. Social learning theory argues that children learn their socialisation skills, and develop strategies to manage their feelings and deal with conflict from the way in which their own behaviours and reactions to situations were managed and responded to by others (Dix, 1992; Virasiri et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that the attitudes, practices and values we hold in relation to parenting are also influenced by our own experience of being parented (Bornstein, 2012).

The psychological capacity of a parent can also have a significant influence on their ability to fulfil their parenting role. As Kavanagh (2015) explains, a person's psychological capacity to parent and their parenting style can be affected by the type of attachment which they experienced as children from their caregivers. 'Attachment theory is concerned with fundamental issues of safety and protection; in psychological terms, it focuses on the extent to which the relationship provides the child with protection against harm and with a sense of emotional security' (Virasiri et al., 2011, p.6). Parental responses to children and their behaviour enables children to learn the skills required to manage their behaviours and feelings, while also learning how to adjust to new situations which they will encounter (Safdar and Zahrah, 2016). Children develop their 'inner working model based on the beliefs, expectations, responsiveness, attention, care and emotional bonding of caregivers' (Safdar and Zahrah, 2016, p.24). These relationships become internalised, and form the foundations of the child's expectations for other relationships as they grow into adulthood. Attachment theory is largely based upon the work of Mary Ainsworth (1989) and John Bowlby (1973) who proposed that the quality of care provided by the parent to the child, specifically in the areas of sensitivity and responsiveness, supports the child to develop either a secure or insecure attachment with their caregivers (Virasiri et al., 2011). It can be argued that such attachment relationships can influence parenting styles and the future relationship between the parent and the child, demonstrating the complexity of parenting (Ahmadpour, 2013).

In addition, Baumrind (1991) argued that parental approaches can be further categorised within key parenting styles which are significantly influenced by two core behaviours – parental control and parental warmth (Baumrind, 1991; Bornstein, 1995; Hoghughi, 2004). Parental control is described as 'the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys' (Baumrind, 1991, p.61-62). Parental control is concerned with the manner and degree to which parents establish and enforce both age and culturally appropriate boundaries for their children. Parental behaviours can be very radical and range

from being extremely controlling of their children's behaviour, to the opposite extreme where there are few boundaries in place (Bornstein, 1995; Kopko, 2007). The second core aspect of parenting behaviour, parental warmth, describes 'the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands' (Baumrind, 1991, p.61-62). It is concerned with the extent to which parents are actively responding to their child's developmental needs, and their level of acceptance of their child's behaviour (Houghughi, 2004; Kopko, 2007). Therefore, one would conclude that these parenting practices have a direct effect on child development outcomes (Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

Following on from these developments Baumrind (1971; 1991) further developed three categories or styles of parenting and described these in the form of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting (Table 1 below). Additional research later added a fourth category to capture what is termed uninvolved parenting (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Authoritarian parents are seen to display low levels of warmth towards their children, and maintain strict levels of discipline. They expect that children should follow rules without question, and they do not enter into discussion with their children in relation to rules and boundaries (Cole et al., 2005; Kopko, 2007; Miller et al., 2012). Children raised by authoritarian parents tend to lack social competence and show little initiative, as parents have predicted their behaviours and activities for them with little room for compromise. These children also tend to lack spontaneity and curiosity. They value adherence to rules over independent thought (Cole et al., 2005; Kopko, 2007).

Permissive parents on the other hand show high levels of warmth towards their children, although they place low demands on them, they provide few guidelines for them, and do not expect mature behaviour from them. These parents often seem more like a friend than a parental figure to these children. They avoid asking their children to complete household tasks, and allow them to make their own decisions, often at an age where this is not appropriate (Cole et al. 2005; Kopko, 2007). As Kopko (2007) explains permissive parents view themselves as a resource to their child, as opposed to having an active role in influencing and shaping their child's development. While children raised in this type of parenting environment may have high levels of self-esteem and confidence, they tend to struggle with authority, and with self-regulation (Baumrind, 1991; Kopko, 2007).

Uninvolved parents tend to show little warmth for their children, and impose few boundaries or controls. There is little interaction between the parents and the children. Parents tend to display a level of indifference to their child's developmental needs. Children who are parented in this manner display poor self – control, low levels of self – esteem and poor self – regulation, with parents being judged for parenting in this often-controversial manner (Joseph and John, 2008; Kopko, 2007). Sometimes, this style develops when a person has been raised by neglectful parents themselves, or when a parent deals with mental health issues that prevent forming any type of emotional attachment.

Authoritative parents demonstrate high levels of warmth towards their children, combined with firm and consistent boundaries (Baumrind, 1991; Kopko, 2007; Miller et al., 2012). Authoritative parents will enter into discussions and debates with their children regarding rules, tasks and boundaries (Baumrind, 1991). However, the ultimate responsibility for decision making rests with the adults. Children who experience authoritative parenting tend to develop positive negotiation skills, high levels of self – regulation and confidence. They have a sense that their voice is listened to, and that their opinion is valued (Joseph and John, 2008; Kopko, 2007).

Children fare best when they experience love, warmth and consistent boundaries (Steinberg, 2001). Authoritative parenting has consistently been linked to the best outcomes in children (Baumrind, 1991). Despite this, parents tend to use a combination of the above four parenting styles at different stages in their child – rearing journey as no one style fits all situations, and parents need to be able to adapt and adjust to meet and address the complexities of parenting that arise on a daily basis.

Table 1: Four Styles of Parenting (Joseph and John, 2008, p.17)

Authoritarian Parenting	Permissive parenting	Uninvolved parenting	Authoritative parenting
High demandingness / control and low acceptance / responsiveness. Engagement is strictly adult - centred. These parents often fear losing control over children, and they discourage open communication.	High acceptance / responsiveness Non-demanding. These parents lack parental control.	Neither responsive nor demanding. These parents often fail to monitor or supervise the child's behaviour. They are uninvolved.	Moderate demanding / control, and acceptance / responsiveness. Open communication, trust. Acceptance / encouragement of psychological autonomy are typical to this pattern.

While it is true to say that our experience of the social world around us informs our construction of our lived reality, and is likely to affect day to day parenting practices, there are key social factors which can significantly influence both the capacity, and style of parenting used within a family. Factors such as neighbourhood, social support, ethnicity, family relationships, composition, income, deprivation levels and stress levels within the community / family can impact the style of parenting which is considered appropriate by individuals within particular social situations (Kavanagh, 2015; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002). Furthermore, it is significant to highlight here that Bigner (1989) advises that there are six key factors which can impact upon the parenting style which we adopt:

- Culture in terms of family and parental social class. This also encompasses the value system of the family's peer group, and community. Cultural norms about parenting practices typically influence how children are raised. These norms affect what beliefs and values parents teach their children, what behaviours are taught and what methods are used to teach these values and behaviours (Bornstein, 1991).

- Parental personality and their ability to manage and cope with the parenting role. Maternal personality is a significant influential factor in determining the parenting style because it is thought to affect parental behaviour however there is limited research regarding this subject (Bigner, 1989).

- Attitudes of the parents to the tasks and requirements of parenting is a significant factor as to the parenting style adapted. Parent's attitudes constitute the main social influence that the child experiences during their early years and impacts significantly on the development of the child's personality (Baumrind, 1991; Bigner, 1989).

- Availability of role models involved in the parenting role, particularly the influence of own parents. The impact of such role models can influence a new parent's own approach to parenting significantly and what behaviours and attitudes are passed on to the child (Bigner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002).

- Environment within which the parenting role occurs. The social environment refers to an individual's physical surroundings, community resources and social relationships. This takes consideration of the supports and challenges within that environment and the extent to which they influence parental responses (Bigner, 1989; Haydon et al., 2018).

- Expectations and goals which parents hold in relation to their parenting role. This considers the long and short-term goals which parents strive to achieve within their parenting (Bigner, 1989). Research in this area has shown that the expectations that parents hold for their children influence children's actual academic outcomes as much if not more than previous academic performance (Jacobs, 1991). Much of the focus in this area however, has been on research findings which show how parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from minority ethnic groups tend to hold lower educational expectations regardless of the child's actual ability in school (Alexander et al., 1994; Goldenberg et al., 2001; Trusty, 2010).

Parents 'seek to lead happy, healthy, fulfilled parenthoods and to rear happy, healthy, fulfilled children' (Bornstein, 2012, p.217). As discussed earlier, it is the manner in which the parenting role is carried out that allows children to internalise messages about cultural appropriateness and expectations, particularly in relation to family roles. Research conducted in Australia reported a sense of determinism in relation to parenting practices (Volmert et al., 2016). In this study, 10 face-to-face, hour long interviews were conducted with researchers, practitioners,

policy experts in order to garner their views on 'effective parenting'. The researchers also conducted an extensive review of literature from both appropriate academic literature, and literature from the field regarding parenting issues. Finally, parenting experts from across Australia took part in feedback sessions as a means of verifying and refining the information (Volmert et al., 2016). Their aim was to examine the factors that shape parenting, the importance of effective parenting and what can be done to better support parenting. This research also reviewed the public's perception of parenting, models of good parenting, cultural models of parenting and the influence of these on parenting and parenting supports. The predominant view amongst the research participants was that adults tend to parent their children in the way they were parented, indicating that our values, traditions and norms are constructed from our experience of how we are parented.

In essence, there are many approaches to parenting, and these are influenced by the social and physical environment within which the parent lives. As discussed earlier, parenting is the mechanism through which children are prepared to contribute towards their environment, and also through which they learn their cultural expectations. This will be discussed further in the following section.

2.2.3 The Value of Parenting in Society

Family relationships have been universally recognised as having a substantial influence on the long-term well-being of society as a whole (Family Support Agency, 2013). The Commission on the Family argued that 'the experience of family living is the single greatest influence on an individual's life and the family unit is a fundamental building block for society' (The Commission on the Family, 1998, p.13-14). The Commission further highlighted that it is in the family context that a person's basic emotional needs for security, belongingness, support and intimacy are satisfied and that these are especially important for children. Furthermore, it emphasised that individual well-being has a high priority as a measure for family effectiveness and as an objective of family policy. Continuity and stability in family relationships should be recognised as having a major value for individual well-being and social stability, especially as far as children are concerned. Baumrind's (1971; 1991) four parenting styles of authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved and authoritative parenting greatly influence the manner by which parents rear their children.

Parenting has a significant and powerful effect not only upon a child's overall wellbeing and development but across their life span and their involvement in society in the following ways:

- Parents are generally the primary educators of children, and so significantly shape and impact the developmental outcomes for their children, including their 'confidence, resilience and physical and mental health; their capacity for self-regulation and empathy towards others; their academic and eventual employment outcomes; and their subsequent behaviour and effectiveness as parents themselves' (Volmert et al., 2016, p.17). The relationship which develops between the parent and the child is instrumental in shaping a child's overall development. It impacts the child's ability to manage and regulate their emotions, develop and maintain relationships and their level of engagement within society as a whole both socially and economically (The Parenting Network, 2019).

- Parenting has an impact upon the overall development of society in terms of the economy, and also health outcomes both at an individual and at a social level. 'Poor parenting can contribute to substance abuse, involvement with the criminal justice system, mental and physical health challenges and welfare dependence, all of which have substantial personal costs as well as shared costs for communities, states and the nation' (Volmert et al., 2016, p.17).

- Effective parenting practices affect the quality of life for the family, but also for civic and community life. This impacts society into the future as we depend upon the capacity and wellbeing of parents to 'raise their children to become sound, productive and civic-minded people who engage and participate' (Volmert et al., 2016, p.17). Stability, stimulation and warmth within childhood have a significant positive influence upon a child's overall well-being and social mobility. Children who grow up having experienced supportive parenting are more likely to connect within their communities (The Parenting Network, 2019).

- Parenting can also be viewed as a pathway to reducing the disparity which exists within society.

> 'In light of pervasive achievement and health disparities between disadvantaged and affluent families, it is important to provide supports to those parents most in need of help. Supporting these parents is a critical tool for elevating outcomes of currently disadvantaged children and populations in areas including health,

> learning, community engagement and future employment' (Volmert et al., 2016, p.17).

The parenting role can, at times help to bridge the gaps which exist within society by remedying the impact of social issues such as poverty and disadvantage, by providing children with opportunities to progress within education and society in general (The Parenting Network, 2019). Children who have experienced positive parenting have a higher possibility of achieving within education, and engaging in employment with a reduced risk of criminal behaviour (The Parenting Network, 2019).

Irish society's structures have altered over time, as have family structures. While Census 2016 indicates that there is an increase in single parent, and co – habiting couples when compared to the traditional family structure of married parents (Central Statistics Office, 2017), childrearing families of some kind have prevailed throughout the years. The challenge for parents, particularly those from ethnic minority groups can be to conform to the expectations of the society within which they live, while also remaining loyal to their own culture and heritage in relation to their parenting practices. In the following section I will discuss Irish policy development as it relates to the provision of parenting support within society, while also looking at the provision of parenting supports within Ireland.

2.2.4 Parenting Support Policy

Since the early 1990s there has been an increase in government interest in the area of parenting and family support as a policy issue in Ireland (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Connolly and Devaney, 2017). While both concepts continue to develop and evolve in line with societal changes, family support can be viewed as a

> 'Set of (service and other) activities oriented to improving family functioning and grounding child-rearing and other familial activities in a system of supportive relationships and resources (both formal and informal). Parenting support is a set of (service and other) activities oriented to improving how parent's approach and execute their role as parents and to increasing parents' child-rearing resources (including information, knowledge, skills and social support) and competencies' (Daly et al., 2015, p.12).

The Child and Family Agency, Ireland's dedicated state agency responsible for improving the wellbeing and outcomes for children explain that

> 'Family Support is recognised as both a style of work and a set of activities that reinforce positive informal social networks through integrated programmes. These programmes combine statutory, voluntary, community and private services and are generally provided to families within their own homes and communities. The primary focus of these services is on early intervention aiming to promote and protect the health, wellbeing and rights of all children, young people and their families. At the same time particular attention is given to those who are vulnerable or at risk' (Pinkerton et al., 2004, p.22).

While family support has a specific focus on the provision of both formal and informal support services which seek to promote the overall welfare of children, parenting support is concerned with the method by which parents carry out the parenting role (Daly et al., 2015). As Daly et al. (2015) explain, parenting support focuses on the relationship between the child and their parent, while trying to provide parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to strengthen their parenting practices.

The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 signified a commitment on behalf of governments both nationally and internationally to highlight the significant protections and rights which children are entitled to. Article 5 and article 18 of the UNCRC, stress the role of parents as the primary care-givers with responsibility for the upbringing of their children. Furthermore, they placed an obligation on member states to support parents in fulfilling their essential role. Article 5 stated that State Parties shall 'respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents…. to provide in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention' (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010, p.12). Such direction placed pressure on the Irish government of the time to review the policies and practices in place, and so began a new era in policy development regarding children and parenthood.

This new era began with the commissioning of the final report of the Commission on the Family, Strengthening Families for Life (1998) which saw the government focus on the value of parenting. The report highlighted the need for the state to provide a hierarchy of appropriate

supports to parents from the universal service provision through to targeted services for those families at higher risk, with a focus on four key areas:

- 'Building strengths within families
- Supporting families in carrying out their functions – the caring and nurturing of children
- Promoting continuity and stability in family life.
- Protecting and enhancing the position of children and vulnerable dependent family members' (Commission on the Family, 1998, p.5).

In 1994 the first Family Resource Centres were established in areas of disadvantage and presently there are now over 100 nationwide. These were developed as a 'one-stop shop' where families could access a range of support services crossing the life span, such as services for children through to adult education and parenting information. The Commission on the Family, Strengthening Families for Life (1998) also called for the expansion of the health board (currently The Child and Family Agency - Tusla) family support service, as a preventative measure for families, which would develop family skills and strengths to develop parenting capacity and self-esteem (Commission on the Family, 1998). Furthermore, the Commission recognised that parenting requires a 'skill set' which can be supported and developed over time (Daly, 2011), and called for the introduction of accessible parenting skills and information programmes for parents. The provision of these support programmes was to focus on internal family resources, and also the availability of external agency supports.

The aforementioned Commission on the Family, Strengthening Families for Life (1998) also focused on support for the then termed 'lone parents', now one parent families who were involved in work outside of the home, parents going through separation and also support for marriage. While the Commission called for collaboration between parents and service providers in order to work together to achieve better outcomes for children, it made little reference to the needs of vulnerable ethnic minority groups, nor were representatives from Traveller organisations, the largest indigenous ethnic group in Ireland included on the committee of the Commission. While this Commission acknowledged 'the work of the Task Force on the Travelling Community and the policy objectives in relation to supporting Traveller children in staying on in education and improved youth services for Travellers' (Commission on the Family, 1998, p.38), it did little to include the needs of Traveller parents within the Commission recommendations. Instead, Traveller parenting needs were seen to be

the remit of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, rather than the business of the Commission. Therefore, it is fair to say that service provision was not universal, holistic or inclusive. At the time, this fitted into the broader landscape of prejudice and discrimination that Travellers were experiencing, whereby there was an expectation that they fitted in with the settled community and were expected to conform to their belief and value system rather than practising their own belief and value system (Irish Traveller Movement, 2013; Naidoo and Wills, 2000; Harvey, 2013). This will be discussed in more detail later on in the chapter.

When we consider the steps which successive governments have implemented to support parenting and child development, the National Children's Strategy 2000 put the needs of children firmly at the centre of the government agenda (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010). This was the first children's strategy to be published within this country, and indeed globally. It was developed following consultation with parents, children and service providers (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010). While placing children's needs and rights on the national agenda, the Strategy set out three national goals for children, with 24 associated objectives:

- 'Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of service.
- Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development' (Department of Health and Children, 2000, p.11).

While the National Children's Strategy 2000 was the first government policy to place children at the centre of the discussion, it brought about significant changes in relation to establishing consultation processes and forums such as Comhairle na nOg, whereby young people can engage in discussions on matters of public interest which are affecting their lives. Similar to the Commission on the Family, the National Children's Strategy again acknowledged the work of the Task Force on the Traveller Community. It suggested that the Task Force recommendations on the Traveller community be implemented along with any other further measures as needed. However, they provided no guidance, support or direction on how to achieve this (Department of Health and Children, 2000). The National Children's Strategy (2000) also recommended the completion of a National Traveller Health Strategy, which occurred in 2002. A review of this National Children's Strategy was completed by the Children's Rights Alliance in 2010, and it noted that a 'series of actions have been taken,

including setting up a Traveller health advisory committee (to oversee implementation) and Traveller health units in each HSE region' (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010, p.18).

The National Children's Strategy (2000) was the commencement of a journey of putting the needs and rights of children on the government agenda. While it was limited in terms of the impact which it had for Traveller's, it recognised the existence of this minority group. This recognition has been continued through Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020. Better Outcomes, Brighter Future is a whole of government policy which strives to achieve an Ireland which will be 'one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.VIII). The aim of the policy is to support children and young people to achieve five national outcomes set out within the framework (Appendix 2). These are that all children and young people:

- 'Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
- Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.
- Are safe and protected from harm.
- Have economic security and opportunity.
- Are connected, respected and contributing to their world' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.XIV).

In order to achieve these outcomes, the policy also sets out six transformational goals which support these outcomes. These goals focus on the area of supporting parents, early intervention and prevention, children and young people's participation, supporting effective transitions for young people, cross governmental accountability and responsibilities, and the provision of effective, outcome focused services (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014).

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020) places a strong emphasis on parenting. The policy recognises the challenges which raising a family can bring, particularly for communities such as Travellers who already experience significant disadvantage and inequality (AITHSS, 2010; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; Special Interest Group, 2013; Watson et al., 2017). It also places significance on the pivotal role which parents have on their children's future (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; Sylva et al., 2004).

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is guided by the principle of equality, ensuring that the cultural experience of a child is respected, and their family unit acknowledged as the primary unit of society (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). It recognises the broad definition of family to include extended family members, aunts, uncles and grandparents. This is the core of Traveller family life which will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures recognises that issues of ethnicity, disadvantage and social exclusion can create a sense of parental stress, and reduce a person's capacity to parent (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). This highlights the on-going need for parenting research, but especially that which is cognisant of social disadvantage and social exclusion environments experienced by Traveller parents, which can increase parental stress.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014) proposes to support parents through the provision of early intervention and prevention supports, through the delivery of evidence-based programmes, while recognising that 'effective parenting supports should encourage positive parenting and discipline approaches. Programmes and interventions used should be proven to increase parenting skills, confidence and capacity; reduce parental stress; improve child wellbeing and behaviour; and increase the enjoyment of and satisfaction in parenting' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.27). To achieve this, it is important to garner the views of parents in all life situations, but especially those experiencing social disadvantage, as their voice is often not heard. This parental participation will ensure that parenting interventions, if required, are appropriate to the needs of the specific ethnic minority group, while also having a positive impact on the uptake of such programmes and supports by parents who may otherwise have felt excluded.

Parental participation is a concept that was defined by the Parenting Network (2019) as a broad umbrella term for the ways in which a parent engages with a service or government agency. The Parenting Network is a special interest group set up to support the role of parents with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies. In a recent position paper, they draw attention to the fact that parental participation leads to better services, and acknowledge that there has been focused work by Tusla to promote parental participation (The Parenting Network, 2019). There are a number of documents that guide participation across the state and voluntary sector (Child and Family Agency, 2013). However, these documents do not discuss the role of parental participation in any great detail. There is a gap in the research in terms of the impact of parent consultation methodologies on the design, implementation and evaluation of national policy (The Parenting Network, 2019). Parental engagement involves initial reach out to families,

contact with and the ongoing connection with the parent and child (The Parenting Network, 2019). It is about active engagement rather than passive participation and ensuring that children and parents do not miss appointments with relevant services. According to La Placa and Corlyon (2014) there are three reasons children and parents do not engage with services. These are structural, social and cultural, and barriers related to suspicion and stigma.

The worry is that families who face these barriers may be excluded from mainstream services altogether (The Parenting Network, 2019). Parents who are from ethnic minority groups such as Travellers often face exclusion. The Parenting Network (2019) also argue that practical issues such as access may mean that parents do not turn up for appointments, so therefore those families who are already facing exclusion will be further marginalised. As previously acknowledged, parents from ethnic minorities face significant challenges within their parenting role. While Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures recognises the family as the 'natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of children' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.2), little consideration has been given to the challenges faced by parents from ethnic minority groups, or marginalised groups such as Travellers (AITHSS, 2010; Central Statistics Office, 2017; Watson et al., 2017). While the policy discusses universal access to parenting support and advice, little is known as to how best to support specific groups, such as Traveller parents while respecting their cultural values and experiences. This highlights the importance of providing a Traveller perspective and insight on parenting values, attitudes and practices. These can then form the foundation for the development of Traveller informed parenting supports.

The development of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) in January 2014 as the dedicated agency with key responsibility for children, saw the merger of key state agencies and services into a specific organisation tasked with the provision of specific services to children and their families. These services included the previously named Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board. The development of Tusla represented the most significant and 'comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland' (Child and Family Agency, 2013).

The publication of the Tusla, Child and Family Agency Parenting Support Strategy (2013) marked a new direction for statutory services in relation to the provision of parenting support services. While service provision within this area had predominantly focused on addressing shortfalls within parenting and family situations, (Special Interest Group, 2013), Tusla's focus

shifted to the delivery of evidence – based parenting and family support programmes (Devaney et al., 2013; Gillen et al., 2013). The Parenting Support Strategy focused upon providing parents, carers and families with the knowledge, skills and support to ensure that children and young people achieved the five national outcomes outlined in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). The Parenting Support Strategy was accompanied by a suite of five supporting documents, which encouraged practitioners and service providers to be 'on message' in relation to how and why to support parents (Child and Family Agency, 2013). Tusla acknowledged the uniqueness of Traveller culture specifically, and advised practitioners to be aware of the shared culture and value system which exists (Child and Family Agency, 2013). In fact, there was a focus throughout the Parenting Support Strategy on the value of a social support system for all parents (Houghughi, 2004; Health Service Executive, 2010; Newman, 2002; Place et al., 2002). The 2015 High Level Policy Statement on Supporting Parents and Family emphasises the 'availability of a coherent continuum of local supports to all parents and families which can be accessed easily and in a timely way' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015, p.2).

Parenting support is seen as part of a suite of family support services provided to Irish families. The Child and Family Agency (2013) argue that parenting support is essential for encouraging better outcomes for families, communities and it leads to a reduction in inequalities amongst other benefits. It is also focused on respecting and protecting the rights of the child by supporting their parents (Child and Family Agency, 2013). Tusla, the Child and Family Agency see parenting supports as ranging from the giving of advice, emotional support and also practical support where necessary to families. They have adapted the Hardiker model (1991) to outline what types of parenting support the family may need at different stages in their lifecycle. For example, at level 1 preventative supports would be provided universally, at level 2 'top up' supports and early interventions strategies would be put in place, at level 3 services would engage in observational or supervised parenting and at level 4 alternative care would be put in place for young people (Child and Family Agency, 2013).

Tusla is moving towards delivering and commissioning services that are evidence based (Connolly and Devaney, 2017). They use Veerman and van Yperen's (2007) classification of levels of evidences (Connolly and Devaney, 2017). In addition to this, staff must follow a set of principles when they are carrying out parenting work (Child and Family Agency, 2013). They must focus on outcomes, they must be cognisant of the fact that parenting support is only part of a wider family support mechanism, parenting support can be formal, semi-formal and

informal and early intervention is key. According to the strategy, managers and staff must ensure that child safety and welfare is paramount and a strengths-based approach is used. Staff must also recognise that services are accessible, participatory and respect diversity. The strategy also emphasises the need to use evidence to inform parenting support practice. Parenting supports in the Irish context are provided by a combination of statutory, voluntary and community organisations. Some services are funded by Tusla while some are provided using service level agreements and grants. Other parenting services are funded by charity organisations (Connolly and Devaney, 2017). Parenting supports fall into a broad range of service provisions, from information and advice to home visits and individual supports to group-based work (Connolly and Devaney, 2017). There is evidence that parenting programmes are effective, particularly those which are carefully designed and where staff who deliver them are trained and supported (Moran et al., 2004).

While there are many parenting programmes available internationally, the Triple P Parenting Programme is one which has been implemented nationally by various statutory, community and voluntary services. Triple P is a 'parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioural and emotional problems in children and teenagers. Triple P draws on social learning, cognitive behavioural and developmental theory as well as research into risk factors associated with the development of social and behavioural problems in children' (Triple P, 2020). Research was conducted by Morowska et al., (2010) with 137 parents on the cultural acceptability of the Triple P programme materials, delivery methods and barriers to using the programme. The research found that while the strategies used were useful, and the programme materials were seen to be culturally appropriate, issues of location, venue, cost of getting to the programme and balancing work commitments were cited as the challenges to attending and completing the programme (Morowska et al., 2010). While parenting programmes, such as Triple P can be seen as a positive intervention for addressing difficulties in the parent-child relationship, such programmes have low utilisation rates by parents from different cultures (Morowska et al., 2010). There is also evidence of high dropout rates, particularly where families have complex difficulties (Centre for Effective Services, 2012). In fact, Connolly and Devaney (2017) argue that those who are not engaged in parenting programmes may be experiencing cultural or language barriers. They also suggest that these families may feel stigmatised and do not feel that current parenting programmes that currently exist meet their needs. This is particularly relevant for parents and families from ethnic minorities, where

language and cultural expectations can create challenges for parents who are rearing their children within a predominantly settled community.

More recently, the First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2019), provides for a continuum of parenting services, ranging from universal to targeted supports. In 2019, a new Parenting Support Policy Unit was established by the Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs to oversee policy direction in this area and parenting support provision. The policy unit was charged with the task of liaising with Tusla, the HSE and other key stakeholders in order to devise a national model for the provision of parenting services (Kennedy, 2019). At a European level, the Council of Europe have launched the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020 – 2025) which sets out 'to promote and protect the human rights of Roma and Travellers, to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, and to foster inclusion in society' (Council of Europe, 2020, p.11). The Plan sets out a roadmap for member states for the implementation of actions and programmes which will strive to achieve better outcomes for Roma and Traveller communities in relation to inclusion, and discrimination (Council of Europe, 2020). This further emphasises the importance of research in this area at a time when the provision of supports for ethnic minority communities is firmly on the political agenda.

Clearly there has been a shift in policy in relation to parenting and the rights of the child. As stated previously in this section, parenting has an impact upon the overall development of society in terms of economy and health outcomes both at an individual and at a societal level. Parenting practices are directly linked with the functioning of society. Parenting as a concept has developed over the years in terms of theory on parenting types and the impact on children and society. The theoretical material that has come to the attention of researchers is based on the mainstream of society. There is very little material that examines parenting styles for example in relation to ethnic minority groups. Bornstein (2012) argued that one's attitude to parenting is based on how we experience being parented ourselves. Ethnic minority groups have a distinct experience that is different to that of mainstream society so there is a need to examine ideas such as those presented by Baumrind (1971;1991) in the context of ethnic minority groups. Therefore, this needs to be considered in the provision of parenting support services, as currently such programmes tend to be generic rather than designed specifically for groups such as Travellers or ethnic minorities. As mentioned earlier in this chapter there is also a need to examine engagement with parenting programmes in general (The Parenting

Network, 2019). It would be empowering for Traveller families if they had an opportunity to give their views on what would work in terms of engagement and participation in parenting support programmes to ensure that they 'turn up' to avail of help. The state has recognised the need to provide parenting support for families in order to stave off adversity. In the following section, Traveller culture will be discussed further, and the impact of this culture on parenting practices will be considered.

2.3 Section Two: Traveller Culture

'Traveller community' is defined under the Equal Status Act (Government of Ireland, 2000) as 'the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and by others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland' (Government of Ireland, 2000, Sec 2 (1)). The Traveller community is Ireland's largest indigenous minority, numbering 30,987 in the Republic of Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2017). This represents a rise of 5.1% in the Irish Traveller population from 2011 to 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2017). While some believe that the Traveller community emerged following The Famine Years, there is also evidence to suggest that Travellers have been part of the Irish heritage much longer (Harvey, 2013). Genome research has concluded that the Traveller population are, and have been a population separated from the general population of Ireland for over one thousand years (Kenny, 2011).

Within this section I will discuss Traveller culture and ethnicity as it relates to parenting values, attitudes and practices. I will highlight the key accommodation issues facing Traveller parents as they rear their children, and also the marginalisation that Traveller families experience within Irish society. Finally, I will discuss government policy as it relates to Travellers in Ireland with a specific focus on policy which impacts the parenting role. This will provide an overview of the challenges which Traveller parents face when carrying out their parenting role, and also further identify the areas that need to be considered when providing parenting supports to ethnic minority groups, specifically Travellers.

2.3.1 Traveller Culture and Ethnicity in Ireland

Irish Travellers are a distinct ethnic group who received national recognition as such in Ireland in 2017. The case for this specific recognition had been a long running battle. As was argued within the Report on the Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity (2017)

> 'The negative impact of non-recognition on the engagement between the Traveller community and State is unnecessary. With the unequivocal recognition of a distinct culture and identity, we can better anticipate and respond to the needs of the Traveller community..... From that starting point, the issues which are important to our society can begin to be discussed in a more meaningful and mutually respectful context. With that, we can continue the work of understanding what needs to change in law and policy to support members of the Travelling community, for example, in accessing education, in accessing culturally-appropriate and safe accommodation and in accessing healthcare, amongst other priority areas. Respect for Travellers' cultural identity must be reflected in Government policy decisions' (House of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality, 2017, p.13).

In order to understand parenting values and attitudes from the perspective of Travellers, we need to have an understanding of the aspects of Traveller culture that directly impact on child rearing practices. Culture as alluded to earlier can be described as a pattern of meaning which is transmitted across generations whereby individuals develop, maintain and communicate their attitude and knowledge about life (Ross, 2000). Culture is generally viewed as a collection of shared beliefs and behaviours that are held by a group of people, which serve to direct their daily routine and interactions (Bornstein, 2012). These beliefs and behaviours 'tend to persist over time and constitute the valued competencies that are communicated to the new members of the group. Central to the concept of culture, therefore is the expectation that different cultural groups possess distinct beliefs and behave in unique ways with respect to their parenting' (Bornstein, 2012, p.212). It is these beliefs and patterns of behaviour that influence parenting styles, and in turn provide children with their unique experience of being parented within their culture. Therefore, culture can be viewed as a means of constructing parenting practices, and maintaining cultural values and norms across generations (Bornstein and Lansford, 2010; Harkness et al., 2007)

I would maintain that the task of parenting, coupled with maintaining a cultural identity within a predominantly settled community and social environment can create cultural tensions for

Traveller parents and their children. Traveller culture and identity are characterised by their uniqueness, particularly regarding their practice in relation to marriage and family life. It is the separateness of this ethnic minority from the settled community which facilitates them to maintain this identity (AITHSS, 2010). Travellers have 'a value system, language, customs and traditions, which make them an identifiable group both to themselves and others' (AITHSS, 2010, p.9). However, as will be discussed later within this literature review, Irish Travellers have experienced significant discrimination and social exclusion (Harvey, 2013; Irish Traveller Movement, 2013; Naidoo and Wills, 2000).

One of the fundamental aspects of Traveller culture is the nomadic lifestyle. Nomadism has an impact upon all elements of Traveller life including social, educational and psychological functioning (McDonagh, 2000). Kenny argues that nomadism can be viewed as the core cultural value for Travellers as it is and 'not necessarily the intention to keep travelling, but the nomadic mind-set which is maintained' (Kenny, 1996, p.179). Nomadism serves an important function in regards to broader Traveller values. It facilitates smaller family units to meet with their extended family, and also provides opportunities for younger Travellers to meet potential marriage partners (McDonagh, 2000). A study commissioned by Offaly Traveller Movement in 2014 on the needs of young Travellers in the county highlighted the sense of freedom which travelling brings to the culture. The research was conducted with 93 research participants in total, comprising of Traveller children, young people and parents. The data was collected through individual interviews and 11 focus groups which took place across County Offaly. It emerged through the research that many of the young people who participated in the study still travelled across the country (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). However, while 'all were aware of the restrictions now on travelling compared to times gone by when there was more freedom' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015, p.23), nomadism remained a part of the Traveller identity for both younger and older Travellers who participated in the study.

The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHSS, 2010), commissioned by the Department of Health and Children in 2007 following a recommendation from the National Traveller Heath Strategy 2002 – 2005 revealed a number of stark findings in relation to the overall health status of Travellers. The study was unique in that the research team worked with Traveller organisations, Travellers, the HSE and other service providers throughout the process, while Peer Researchers conducted the fieldwork. It was comprehensive in nature, in that contact was made with all Traveller families across the island to provide them with the opportunity to participate in the research. It achieved a uniquely high response rate of 80%, ensuring that the

results were representative for the Traveller population. Such a high level of participation indicates that Travellers trusted the research process, and valued the need for authentic data collection (AITHSS, 2010). AITHSS (2010) revealed that:

- The life expectancy for Traveller women is significantly lower at 11.5 years less than women within the settled community. Similar figures apply for Traveller men, with a life expectancy of 15.1 years less than men within the settled community.
- The mortality rate for Traveller women is three times that of the mortality rate for the settled population.
- The rate of suicide within the Traveller community is six times higher than that of the settled community. 11% of Traveller deaths are attributable to suicide.
- Babies from Traveller families are 3.6 times more likely to die when compared to babies within the settled population.
- Over a quarter of Travellers aged 45 – 64 years have only primary education, with that figure rising to 38.5% for those within the 30 – 44 age group.
- Almost one third of Travellers had difficulty in reading, with 50% of Travellers having significant difficulty reading the directions on medicines. (AITHSS, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Watson et al., 2017).

Census 2016 further identified a number of key features in relation to the Irish Traveller population:

- Irish Travellers remain a predominantly young population with nearly 60% aged under 25, with only 451 Traveller men and 481 Traveller women aged 65 years or over.
- 78.6% of Irish Travellers live in urban areas. This is significantly higher than their settled counterparts, with only 62.4% of the general population living in towns or cities.
- Irish Travellers tend to marry at a much younger age than their settled counterparts. 31.9% of Irish Travellers aged 15 to 29 years were married whereas only 5.8% of the settled population within this age category were married within Census 2016. The typical age for marriage within the settled community was 33.8 years for women and 35.7 years for men (Central Statistics Office, 2017).

- Travellers are overrepresented within the unemployment figures with 80.2% of Travellers presenting as unemployed, compared to 12.9% of the general population (Central Statistics Office, 2017).

The findings from AITHSS (2010) and also the results of Census 2016 serve to highlight the challenges faced by Traveller parents as they carry out their parenting role. Traveller parents are significantly younger than their settled counterparts, while they also face significantly greater challenges in relation to sourcing employment to provide for their family. Such dynamics are likely to place additional stresses on Traveller parents who are striving to meet their children's needs, while remaining true to their culture and heritage. This highlights the need for research to examine this from the perspective of Traveller parents. The issues Traveller families face are likely to require greater parenting supports due to the additional challenges that they face, and the significantly younger age at which Travellers marry and become parents. As identified throughout this literature review, gaps exist in relation to the provision of parenting supports that specifically consider the complexities of parenting within an ethnic minority group, so therefore parenting supports should be tailored to meet the needs of these groups and communities.

2.3.2 Attributes of Traveller Culture and Parenting

Traveller culture dictates clearly defined gender-based roles for boys and girls, men and women (Hayes, 2006; Harvey, 2013). Similar to parental behaviours, these social norms and expectations are learned at a young age (Clarke Orohoe, 2016). Traveller families can be viewed as traditional in comparison to the settled community, particularly in relation to their parenting (Hayes, 2006; Harvey, 2013). Family sizes remain larger in comparison to those of the settled community and the role played by women in the family is often a traditional one of homemaker (Hayes, 2006; Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Harvey, 2013). The Traveller community is patriarchal in nature, with the men and fathers seen to be the authority figures both for the children within families, and also in relation to Traveller women, with Traveller men expected to be physically strong, independent and able to provide for their family financially (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Ni Shuineir, 2005). They are looked up to within the culture, and are seen as a source of authority. Traditionally Traveller men were engaged in trades such as tin – smithing, and horse trading. These skills were passed through the generations (Harvey, 2013). Within the Traveller Youth Needs Analysis conducted by Offaly

Traveller Movement, it emerged that young Traveller boys and men had a clearly connected sense of identity with these trades (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). While the social role of Traveller men and particularly fathers is evolving due to the erosion of traditional trades and crafts, Traveller families remain patriarchal in nature where fathers continue to be viewed as a source of authority within their families.

Marriage and family relationships are also held as core elements of Traveller life. There is an expectation that Travellers are married at a younger age, and have larger families than what is considered the national average (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Census 2016 revealed that 'among Traveller women aged 40-49 (the age by which women have typically completed their fertility) 13.3 per cent had not given birth to a child - compared with 18.3 per cent of women generally. Nearly half had given birth to 5 or more children, in stark contrast to just under 1 in 20 (4.2%) of women overall in this age group' (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Marriage is viewed as a means of progression within the Traveller community. While the teenage years are viewed as the time when the settled community are laying foundations for their future education, Traveller teens are being prepared for marriage by their families (Helleiner, 2000; Hourigan and Campbell, 2010). While Traveller Training Centres are no longer in operation, research with Travellers who were previously participating in education through these centres found that 'for Traveller girls, the task of finding a marriage partner assumed a higher position in their priorities than progression into work or education placements' (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p.39). The research consisted of 96 interviews with Travellers, Traveller education stakeholders and community stakeholders in the fields of health, criminal justice and local environment.

Census 2016 found that 22.6% of Traveller girls between the age of 15 and 24 years were married, when compared to the general population with a figure of 1.2% (Central Statistics Office, 2017). The significance of marriage is also evident given that only 35.1% of Travellers between the ages of 25 and 34 years were single, when compared to 69.1% of the general population who were within the same age group (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Marriage within the Traveller community provides status for Travellers, with the boy or young man seeking permission from the girl's father in order for the marriage to proceed. Firstly, it indicates that they are prepared to take on the adult roles within the community such as homemaking, parenthood and providing for a family. Secondly it allows Travellers to influence their social, economic and political position within the broader Traveller community and hierarchy where for example 'marrying a partner from a richer or more powerful Traveller

family, in particular, offered significant opportunities for progression' (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p.39). Furthermore 'for women if you're not married and a mother, you're no-one. If you talk to the young girls, they don't have any ambitions or dreams, other than getting married' (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p.40).

Traveller's sense of community and belonging is synonymous with the presence and significance of extended family, as opposed to a particular location geographically (Gmelch, 1985; Helleiner, 2000; Murray, 2014). It is this connection with extended family which provides both the practical and emotional support to Traveller parents. These close – knit family ties facilitate the transfer of parenting skills, values and behaviours from one generation to the next (Bornstein, 2002; Watson et al., 2017). Ogbu (1981) has shown that general 'parenting practices are determined by (1) the availability of resources in the environment that facilitate the development of culturally valued competencies and (2) folk theories of childrearing that dictate the customary parental practices believed to be successful in fostering culturally valued child behaviour' (Ogbu, 1981 cited in Kotchick and Forehand, 2002, p.259). Given the younger age profile of Traveller parents, the proximity to older members of the community who are seen as role models, provides reassurance and guidance to younger Traveller parents. These Traveller couples, who are often at the initial stages of family formation, may experience a sense of isolation if they are forced to move away from their community and extended family. Loneliness, isolation and budgeting are significant factors for young Travellers who are forced to move away from their family network (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). Traveller parents view their extended family as a source of parenting advice, support and information along the child rearing journey. Traveller parents are remaining significantly younger than their settled counterparts overall, with this having a direct impact upon their need for proximity and contact with extended family. Focussed research is long overdue on parenting within the Traveller community, to garner an insight into Traveller views and experiences of parenting.

Within Traveller culture there remains a strong sense of the restrictions and freedoms afforded to Traveller boys and men, when compared to the girls and young women (Helleiner, 2000; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). As previously mentioned, the role of Traveller girls and women is seen to be that of carer and homemaker, where they 'were expected to spend a number of hours a day cleaning and / or looking after younger siblings or relatives. Boys and young men are not expected to do any cleaning or child minding' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015, p.24). Anecdotal evidence garnered through discussion with the Community Healthcare

Workers, who are members of the Traveller community, highlighted this point (OTM, 2018). While there is evidence as previously mentioned of Traveller women becoming involved in employment outside of the home (Lovett, M. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June), the expectation remains that Traveller women are the primary carers for the children. Nonetheless, the male and female roles are evolving, with some Traveller men taking on what has traditionally been seen as the tasks for women, though these practices are restricted to within the home environment (McDonagh, S. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October). I argue that these role expectations have a significant impact upon the parenting duties, as they remain within the responsibility of Traveller women. Traveller parenting roles continue to maintain a strong gender basis (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October), further highlighting the need for the views of both Traveller mothers and fathers to be captured in parenting research.

Honour is seen as a significant cultural value within Traveller communities, particularly in relation to Traveller girls and young women. Patriarchal authority is particularly evident in this domain. Young people are restricted from forming relationships with each other prior to marriage. This has significant implications for Traveller girls both within school, training or work environments (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). Traveller parents hold the view that 'if a couple 'ran away' together they would have to get married and if they didn't, it would bring shame to her family and have significant consequences for her and future marriage prospects' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015: p.24). This view was also evident in consultation with the Community Healthcare Workers within Offaly Traveller Movement, who feel that these rules extend into adulthood for single girls (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October). In my view, it is probable that such pressure to conform to cultural expectations increases the demands placed on Traveller parents to ensure that this norm is maintained by their children. It is likely, then, that this places additional pressure and restrictions on those Traveller parents who consider continuing education as an option for their children, and wish to see their children progress within this field prior to getting married, and having children. Research exploring the views and experiences of Traveller parents as they parent would fill this knowledge gap.

As individuals we grow and develop in multiple contexts, rather than in isolation (Bornstein, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1999). We parent within the context of the culture which we ourselves have been parented (Bornstein, 2012). As discussed earlier in this literature review, our parenting values, behaviours and style are significantly influenced by what we have

experienced (Bigner, 1989). When we consider the customs and traditions of Traveller lifestyle which have been explored, it is evident that characteristics such as close family ties, extended social networks, participation within the Traveller community coupled with a deep sense of respect across the generations have remained central aspects of Traveller life, and parenting practices. As well as likely gendered cultural differences in parenting practices and expectations, this also raises the issue of the possible pervasive influence of older generations, such as parents and grandparents on parenting values and practices. There is a strong sense of respect for these role models, and therefore younger generations strive to maintain the parenting expectations of the culture (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June).

Travellers hold a deep sense of respect for the older generations and the lessons which they can teach. In relation to parenting, this bears a greater significance. As noted earlier, Traveller parents are younger than their settled counterparts (Central Statistics Office, 2017), therefore benefiting from the availability of extended family support. It is very rare for family members not to speak with, or meet each other many times on a given day (Lovett, M. 2016, Personal communication). Within Traveller culture, family ties are of significant importance, and the views of extended family members are seen to hold power and authority (McDonagh, 2000). As marriage, parenting and family life are fundamental aspects of Traveller culture, this is the life path which Travellers respect and value. Traditionally Traveller parents view marriage as a form of personal progression within teenage years (Hourigan and Campbell, 2015; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). Policy decisions made within this area must consider the context within which Traveller families are completing their parenting role, and the factors which have influenced these practices.

Traveller parents and families have held tight to the practice of family support as provided by the broader Traveller family network throughout the generations (AITHSS, 2010). It is this transfer of family values, skills and practices that we need to understand, not from the settled perspective, but from that of the Traveller, in order to support this continuation of learning and support which is so evident within the culture. While the Tusla Parenting Support Strategy 2013 acknowledges the need for workers to be aware of cultural differences and expectations that exist within Traveller culture in relation to parenting (Gillen et al., 2013), there is little evidence of the 'how to' in terms of implementation for front line services. Research is necessary in order to address the knowledge gap which exists in relation to the specificity of Traveller parenting. Findings from research that explores first-hand accounts of Traveller parenting will also be timely as policy moves towards evidence-based practice, and will ensure

that practitioners who provide targeted supports to Traveller parents, can ground their practice within current research. The 2015 High Level Policy Statement on Supporting Parents and Family emphasises the 'availability of a coherent continuum of local supports to all parents and families which can be accessed easily and in a timely way' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015, p.2). As noted earlier in this literature review, the First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2019), provides for a continuum of parenting services, ranging from universal to targeted supports. In 2019, the establishment of a new Parenting Support Policy Unit to oversee the direction of parenting support provision further emphasises the importance of research in this area to ensure responsive and timely service provision for all families.

Again, it is clear that the will is there at government level to support families but the support is targeted at families in the majority rather than the minority. Traveller families have had to be cautious in terms of allowing professionals in to support them due to their experiences of marginalisation over the years (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). To date Traveller parents have been hesitant to engage with existing parenting supports, and this further highlights the need for bespoke research into Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices.

2.3.3 Traveller Accommodation

The lack of appropriately resourced and located accommodation sites has forced many Traveller families to live in houses, overcrowded accommodation and on unofficial sites, with a high proportion of Travellers becoming homeless (AITHSS, 2010; Murphy, 2016; Murray, 2014; Watson et al., 2017). Travellers living on unauthorised sites face difficult and significant challenges when parenting their children typically without basic services such as showers, toilets, or anything else that requires running water (Murphy, 2016). RTE Investigates conducted a survey in 2018 with 27 of the 31 Irish local authorities, and found that homelessness and overcrowding are significant issues for Traveller families. The survey showed that 25% of homeless children living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin are Travellers, and 13% of homeless adults are from the travelling community while 10% of Traveller families share a halting site bay or a house with another household (Murphy, 2016). The scale of the problem differs from county to county. Of the 609 Traveller families living in

County Westmeath in 2017 none were living on unauthorised sites (although one third were sharing with another household), while in neighbouring Offaly, 10% of the county's 294 Traveller families were living on unauthorised sites (Murphy, 2016) – only Dublin City has a higher percentage at 14% (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Regarding the number living on official halting sites, there are, again, big variations between local authority areas. Almost 6 times as many families live on official halting sites in South Dublin (124) compared to Co. Meath (22) for example. While government policy highlights the importance of providing a safe, secure and warm home environment for children within Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, Traveller parents face increased challenges in this area due to the lack of appropriate, authorised sites and accommodation.

Travellers also face obstacles in accessing private rented accommodation. One survey showed that 82% of landlords will not rent to Travellers, with only one in four living in the private rented sector (Housing Agency, 2017). Travellers living on unauthorised sites face challenges from landowners and also find themselves in a difficult situation. Some such families want to live in a standard local authority house, and some want to live in Traveller specific accommodation – group housing or halting sites, where Travellers can live with extended family as is their tradition (Lovett, L. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June).

The introduction of the Trespass Act in 2002 under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act brought significant changes for Irish Travellers as trespass became a criminal offence (Murphy, 2016). This legislation has had a significant impact upon Irish Travellers nomadic way of life with authorities having the power to evict Traveller families from unofficial accommodation sites. Traveller parents and their children face significant stress while living in inadequate accommodation and with the threat of possible eviction on a daily basis. Traveller parents have described situations where their children have 'nowhere to do their homework and never knowing if there would be light sufficient to get it done, particularly in the wintertime' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015, p.27). This forced accommodation is in effect perpetuating the practices of assimilation, with 95% of Travellers living in houses or on unofficial sites (Murphy, 2016). While evidence from AITHSS (2010) found that Traveller families are remaining in one location, particularly during school term times, the lack of appropriate sites creates significant difficulties for Travellers to maintain this aspect of their heritage.

RTÉ Investigates revealed that 16 of Ireland's 31 councils did not build any new Traveller-specific schemes in the ten years to June 2018. In 2014, a halting site proposed for Tullamore, was removed from Offaly County Council's draft Traveller Accommodation plan, after opposition from councillors (Murphy, 2016). While there is an expectation that local authorities take steps to ensure the provision of Traveller appropriate accommodation, Traveller families face the additional challenge of having to live within the general population, and at times have limited access to extended family networks (Murray, 2014) diminishing the Traveller tradition of nomadism and living close to their extended family (AITHSS, 2010; Murphy, 2016).

Accommodation issues are a source of stress for many families. Traveller families experience significant stress in relation to accommodation. According to Volmert et al. (2016) parenting practices and supports are a pathway to reduce disparity in relation to housing and the associated challenges it can present. It is clear that current parenting supports which are generic in nature, are not addressing the issues of disparity which Travellers face in relation to suitable accommodation. Volmert et al. (2016) makes the point that parenting supports elevates outcomes of disadvantaged children and populations. Therefore, it is important to research the views and experiences of Traveller parents, to assess the challenges they face on a daily basis.

2.3.4 Travellers Experience of Marginalisation

Public perception of the Irish Traveller community has been marked by discrimination and social exclusion (Harvey, 2013; Irish Traveller Movement, 2013; Naidoo and Wills, 2000). Travellers have been viewed as different and often set apart or as Hayes (2006) describes, Travellers have been 'othered' by society at large, as a means of understanding their culture. 'Those who are Otherised can both become society's scapegoats, and simultaneously the objects of pity and compassion' (Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2016, p.I). The identity constructed by the settled community in relation to Travellers is one steeped in prejudice and negativity (Murphy 2016). Traveller identity is defined 'in terms of reductive essentialism based on a series of mostly negative stereotypes' (Hayes, 2006, p.137).

As a marginalised group within society, it is important that I examine the challenges which Traveller parents have experienced over the past decades, as this sets the social and environmental context in which Travellers parent today. Initially, I will discuss key government policy as it relates to Traveller culture, and then more specifically how it has impacted Traveller parenting. As discussed earlier, Travellers have experienced significant

disadvantage as an ethnic minority for many decades (AITHSS, 2010; Government of Ireland, 1963; Harvey, 2013; MacGreil, 2011; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Watson et al., 2017). Ni Shuinear (1994) pointed out that the Traveller population have faced pressure from government and society to conform and assimilate across multiple domains such as health, housing, education and employment, and this has remained the case even today within Irish society. The experience of Travellers across Ireland has been one of exclusion, where they have been viewed as a 'problem' within society (Harvey, 2013).

2.3.5 Government Policy Relating to Travellers

To fully appreciate the experience of Travellers when rearing their children within the Irish context, we need to understand the policy context that surrounded Traveller participation within society considering state policies dating back to the 1960s as they relate to the current situation for Travellers within modern society. As discussed previously there were many policies developed and enacted within Irish society to support parenting such as the National Children's Strategy 2000 and in more recent times, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures 2014. However, the first attempt made by the Irish state to enquire into, and make recommendations for Travellers was through the Commission on Itinerancy (1963). This was the first effort made by the Irish state to formally express concern about the Traveller community in Ireland. At the official launch Charles Haughey commented 'there can be no final solution of the problem created by Itinerants until they are absorbed into the general community' (Mc Veigh, 2007, p.91). This set the tone for how Ireland would 'deal' with Travellers. Established in 1960, the Commission set about enquiring 'into the problem arising from the presence in the country of itinerants in considerable numbers' (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963, p.11). The focus of the Commission was to encourage and develop strategies for the absorption of Travellers into settled community, while also working 'to reduce to a minimum the disadvantages to themselves and to the community resulting from their itinerant habits' (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963, p.11). The Commission espoused the principles of absorption and assimilation of Traveller culture, behaviours and values in relation to the culture and expectations of the settled community of the time (Watson et al., 2017).

The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy was produced without any Traveller representation, portrayed Travellers as a social and moral problem and was a cornerstone of Government policy in the years that followed (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963; Jones, 2014;).

Travellers were settled in urban areas as a result of the Report of the Commission on Itinerancy and subsequent reports and Government policy. The solution to the presence of itinerants in the country was to assimilate the Traveller community into the dominant culture (Commission on Itinerancy, 1963; Jones, 2014).

The Commission on Itinerancy (1963) published a report which implied that the culture and lifestyle of Travellers was abnormal in some way. It could be argued that this stance reinforced the discrimination and racism experienced by Travellers at that time, facilitating the negative public thinking and opinion in relation to Travellers at that time. According to Khazanov (1994), since the dawn of mankind there has been a violent confrontation between two lifestyles: the settled and the nomadic way of life. The battle between Cain, the farmer and Abel, the herder, is often viewed as an illustration of this violent clash. From the mid 1980s, reviews of Government policy and position towards Travellers shifted focus towards integration. The Report of the Travelling People Review Body (Government of Ireland, 1983) acknowledged that the principles of absorption and assimilation heralded within the earlier Commission on Itinerancy Report were 'unacceptable, implying as it does the swallowing up of the minority traveller group by the dominant settled community, and the subsequent loss of traveller identity' (Government of Ireland, 1983, p.6). The Report advocated a process of integration between both the settled and Traveller communities, while recognising that this would require 'adjustment of attitudes towards one another' (Government of Ireland, 1983, p.6).

While the Report did not impose this integration on Travellers, ensuring that they could maintain their nomadic lifestyle, it maintained a focus on the 'deficits' of the Traveller community. For example, the Report asked that newly married Traveller couples be given consideration for housing in order 'to lessen the risks of regression to a travelling way of life and the consequential negating of permanent accommodation and education' (Government of Ireland, 1983, p.45). The Report highlighted the impact of poor educational attendance and opportunities, inadequate sanitation and family accommodation as increasing the risk of Travellers experiencing significant deprivation.

The 1983 Report highlighted the role of Traveller parents, and their associated lifestyle as having a negative impact upon the outcomes for Traveller children. Rather than being viewed as partially the social responsibility of the state, inadequate living environments, for example were seen to be solely the responsibility of Traveller parents. Traveller parents were also

criticised for having large families, despite this being the norm at the time for both settled and Traveller parents (Government of Ireland, 1983). Family size was also noted within the Report as impacting upon the time and stimulation available to children from their parents. Overall, the Report reinforced the prevailing view of the time that 'a majority of Traveller children do not come from 'reasonably normal home conditions' (Government of Ireland, 1983, p.65). However, the Report did mark a change in government attitude towards Travellers. The use of the word 'itinerant' was seen to be unacceptable by the Travelling People Review Body, who replaced it with the term 'Traveller'. It also included representatives from the National Council for Travelling People, which indicated some efforts towards integration and representation, and recognising the benefits to society of a multi-cultural society.

In 1995, the Task Force on the Travelling Community published their report highlighting the need for Traveller culture to be recognised. The Task Force explained that 'the recognition of Travellers' culture and identity has an importance for Travellers and their status in Irish society. Cultural difference therefore is a key element to be taken on board in policy design.' (Government of Ireland, 1995, p.5). The Task Force set about exploring the possible ways by which the Irish state could support and enable the Traveller community to take part in, and contribute towards decisions which impacted upon their environment and way of life (Government of Ireland, 1995; Watson et al., 2017). It highlighted the need for Traveller culture to be protected within society, and afforded equal opportunities of access to services and resources stating that 'equal Status legislation would define Travellers in a manner that acknowledges their distinct culture and identity' (Government of Ireland, 1995, p.23).

While the Task Force marked a shift from an approach to policy development which focused on the perceived deficits of the Traveller community, to one which advocated for the rights of minority communities to be taken into account, it proved difficult to monitor the implementation of the recommendations made in the Report. Progress reports published in 2000 and 2005 by the monitoring committee noted that there was 'difficulty in monitoring progress in the absence of good quality data on the number of Travellers availing of services in areas such as education, health and employment' (Watson et al., 2017, p.13). It was only in the census of 2006 that the ethnic or cultural status of Travellers was enumerated; hence the data on Traveller participation within services up to that point is limited.

As previously mentioned, the commissioning and completion of the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHSS) in 2010 by the Irish government signified further progress in

highlighting the considerable health needs of Travellers across Ireland. The AITHSS (2010) was the first study to encompass Traveller parenting needs within its recommendation stating that 'all sectoral aspects of mother and child services merit top priority to reduce infant mortality, support positive parenting outcomes and break the cycle of lifelong disadvantage that starts so early for Traveller families' (AITHSS, 2010, p.174). The report demonstrated that Travellers were facing significantly poorer health outcomes in relation to life expectancy, mortality rates for women and babies, deaths through suicide and educational attainment when compared to the general population.

There was agreement throughout the report that Travellers value their children, and the service providers who participated within the study highlighted that children are Traveller parent's first priority (AITHSS, 2010). Professionals and service providers who are on the front line, and interact with Travellers accessing their service need to have an awareness of the cultural norms of the Traveller community (AITHSS, 2010; Child and Family Agency, 2013). The AITHSS (2010) further recommended that 'current undergraduate and graduate curricula for health and education professionals should explicitly include a module on Traveller health status and customs' (AITHSS, 2010, p.173). This would ensure that all health care professionals have a basic level of knowledge in regards to Traveller culture and practices. While the findings from AITHSS (2010) provide valuable insights into Traveller health status and related issues, including parenting, it also demonstrated how employing Traveller Peer Researchers ensured the collection of accurate data. With this approach, Travellers were directly involved in the data collection and the overall research process, rather than being just research participants. As will be further discussed within the methodology, the involvement of the Peer Researchers served to create meaningful engagement with the research population, and supported Travellers to engage with and trust the research process.

In 2017, the development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021, acknowledged the states 'recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group of the Irish nation' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.4). The development of the strategy involved consultation with service providers, government departments, and most importantly Traveller representative organisations including Pavee Point, creating a sense of empowerment for Travellers, and their representative bodies. This consultation saw a shift in focus for policy development from integration to inclusion whereby Travellers were directly involved in developing and creating a strategy document which impacted their culture and way of life (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017).

The strategy heralded a new era of inclusion for both Traveller and Roma communities (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). This report provided a mechanism for increasing state funding in order to promote Traveller culture. The Strategy aims to promote six key initiatives over the course of a 4-year period:

- 'State recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group of the Irish nation;
- Investment by the State in community-based support mechanisms to ensure greater retention of Traveller and Roma children and youths in the education system;
- Increased funding to be invested by the State to promote knowledge of, and pride in, Traveller culture and heritage;
- A culturally appropriate initiative will be designed to address feuding in the community;
- New system of ethnic identifiers will be developed across the public sector to help to track progress and/or challenges for the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland
- Reinvigorated efforts by the State to ensure that Travellers and Roma interact fully with the public health sector in order to address some of the underlying health-related challenges facing those communities' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.4).

The completion of these initiatives would serve to significantly reduce the pressures and challenges experienced by Traveller parents, increasing public awareness of Traveller culture, and potentially reduce the barriers faced when accessing services and supports within the community.

The strategy indicated that it will endeavour to support Travellers to both preserve and promote their culture and heritage throughout Ireland. It recognises the significance of traditional skills such as horse trading to the community, and the importance of intergenerational learning within the Traveller culture (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). As has been noted earlier in this chapter, Traveller families pass skills from one generation to the next. The Strategy recognised the significance of this knowledge transfer.

> 'The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development of intergenerational initiatives in collaboration with local Traveller and Roma organisations to support cultural continuity and promote positive self-identity to

> promote, pass on and preserve knowledge of traditional Traveller and/or Roma crafts and skills' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.24).

Such intergenerational learning is key to the area of parenting for Traveller communities. However, in order to be able to promote and support these initiatives, we need to understand the basis upon which Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed and acknowledge the practices which exist with the wider Traveller community, as we do not parent in isolation, but in a wider social and environmental context.

The strategy is striving to ensure that Traveller children and young people are consulted and involved in decision making through locally accessible forums such as the local Children and Young Peoples Services Committee, Comhairle na nOg, and local youth services (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). However, this may pose a challenge for both the young people and also their parents. In a culture where the freedom of girls and young women is restricted, their involvement in these processes would require parental consent, leading to a struggle between the parenting norms and values of the Traveller community, and the need to ensure their voice is heard within wider society. Therefore, the development and provision of Traveller parenting supports needs to be led by 'what works' for this community, with the voice of Travellers central to this process.

The strategy draws attention to the need for 'appropriate, culturally sensitive, preventative and early intervention supports' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.29) should a Traveller family need services to enable their children to live in a safe home environment. It highlights the need for those frontline professionals to engage in continuing training to 'balance the need to recognise and respect ethnic and cultural diversity with the need to promote and ensure child welfare and protection' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.29). The strategy also places an onus on Tusla to consider the ethnic and cultural background of foster and residential facilities for Traveller children who are in need of out of home placements. When engaging with Traveller parents and families, it is essential that service providers have an awareness and understanding of the cultural practices within the Traveller community. This facilitates service providers to consider the context and challenges which Traveller parents are facing on a daily basis in relation to carrying out their parenting responsibilities. Again, this draws attention to developing a research knowledge base on Traveller parenting which can be used to inform future policy and practice development within the area of parenting support. Traveller parents are forced to engage with supports which view children's needs, and the role of parents from a

significantly different cultural position (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010). It is essential that parenting support services consider the cultural expectations of the Traveller community, recognising the unique traits which characterise their parenting. The structure and delivery of relevant supports needs to be considered in order to ensure their success. Traveller parents need to be partners on this journey, where they can inform the process and the development of services.

Additionally, the Strategy sets out that there 'should be adequate provision of accessible, suitable and culturally appropriate accommodation available for Travellers' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.41). As discussed earlier, the lack of appropriately resourced and located accommodation sites has forced many Traveller families to live in houses, overcrowded accommodation and on unofficial sites, with a high proportion of Travellers becoming homeless (AITHSS, 2010; Murphy, 2016; Murray, 2014; Watson et al., 2017). The strategy is calling upon the government housing department to ring-fence capital funding across the state for the provision of Traveller accommodation (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will also be involved in mobilising local Traveller Accommodation Committees to maximise their capacity to be involved in local consultation processes regarding the accommodation needs of Travellers within their local community (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). The location of Traveller accommodation has a significant impact upon the availability of, and access to services such as schools, health centres and GP's (AITHSS, 2010; Department of Justice and Equality, 2017; Murphy, 2016; Murray, 2014). As outlined earlier, the proximity of family members to each other is a unique cultural factor which needs to be considered by local authorities when developing plans for Traveller accommodation. Issues of availability, proximity and connection to services and family support networks have a significant impact on Traveller parenting capacity. The transfer of parenting knowledge and skills from the older generations to younger Traveller parents is a central aspect of Traveller culture. This availability of support and skills has been shown to have a positive impact upon parenting ability in the longer term (Kotchik and Forehand, 2002; Murray, 2014).

As discussed in section one, while it is agreed that parenting can be demanding for the general population as noted within government policies such as Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014) and Tusla's Parenting Support Strategy (Child and Family Agency, 2013), Traveller parents are fulfilling this role while living within a culture experiencing exclusion and discrimination on a daily basis. The findings from

AITHSS (2010) in relation to the inequalities experienced by Travellers across the country, were a stark reminder of the challenges which Traveller parents faced on a daily basis while rearing their children. Similarly, research conducted by Watson et al. (2017) on behalf of the ESRI emphasised the challenges faced by Traveller parents raising children on sites which are inadequately serviced. In this report, they analysed the data provided in Census 2011 regarding the 'patterns of disadvantage experienced by Travellers in the areas of education, employment, housing and health' (Watson et al., 2017, p.VII). The shift in government thinking on Travellers as an ethnic group is relatively recent but it is so important. Once the state recognises the unique position of Travellers and the level of inequality they experience in terms of health and accommodation as well as many other issues there is no question that they must act to support Travellers. This research is timely as government policy in relation to parenting supports is evolving, and this research can be used to inform developments in this area.

2.4 Section Three: The Social Construction of Traveller Parenting

Traveller parents carry out their parenting role within a specific community which faces additional challenges when compared to their settled counterparts. While we are aware of the challenges that Traveller parents face, and I have presented the various theoretical perspectives that underpin parenting practices generally, there are gaps in knowledge in relation to Travellers views on their style of parenting, and what they consider to be important in relation to effective parenting. The voice of Travellers has not been included in this discussion, so research is necessary to gain their views and perspective. In order to achieve this, we need to understand how Traveller parenting is constructed within the Traveller community. Social construction theory has been used as the theoretical framework which underpins this research. Within this section, I will discuss the use of social construction theory as an appropriate choice of theoretical framework for this research study.

Social construction theory puts forward that all knowledge originates from social interaction, and is maintained and reproduced through social interactions (Descartes, 2012). According to Burr (2015), social constructionism involves identifying and assessing the knowledge we take for granted, being aware of the historical and cultural specificity of how we understand the world, knowing that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and appreciating that knowledge and social action go together. According to this theoretical perspective, all our knowledge and attitudes, as well as the actions we take reflect our social constructions, which

are defined socially and culturally. For example, as Travellers are a closed social group, who socialise within extended family, there is little exposure to alternative methods of parenting. Therefore, patterns of early marriage for example continue to be seen as a means of personal progression, while remaining within education continues to be seen as a challenge for the Traveller community as the focus for young Travellers is on marriage and starting a family (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015).

Social construction theory takes the view that knowledge as we know it is constructed within society as opposed to being created (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015). In relation to our identity, and social position Burr (2015) argues that identity is something which is given to us by society, and our interactions within society. Therefore, it can be said that the parenting values, attitudes and practices of Traveller parents have been constructed through both their internal cultural experience, and their interaction with the wider external community. As Bornstein explains 'parents normally organize and distribute their caregiving faithful to indigenous cultural belief systems and behaviour patterns' (Bornstein, 2012, p.213). However, this can create a challenge in relation to parenting practices, and 'what is perceived to be good parenting in one culture may be regarded as maladaptive in another culture' (Descartes, 2012, p.63). For Traveller parents, this idea of 'good' and 'maladaptive' parenting bears a greater significance, due to the negative perception which the settled community can hold of Traveller parenting at times (Hayes, 2006; Murphy, 2016), For example, the marriage of Traveller teenage girls would be seen as contrary to the norm for the settled community, where teenage girls are traditionally preparing to further their education and skills. Therefore, social construction is the ideal methodological framework for this research study, as it provides the lens by which to understand Traveller culture in relation to parenting and how these values, attitudes and practices are constructed.

A social constructionist perspective posits that knowledge and the truth as we know it are created by the mind, as opposed to being discovered (Schwandt, 2003). As Berger and Luckmann (1991) point out this knowledge and reality is based upon our lived experience of the world around us. Social construction is concerned with how society assigns meaning to certain actions, and behaviours. 'How the world is classified and categorized varies culturally (that is from place to place) and historically (over time)' (Burr and Dick, 2017, p.60). Take for example the birth of a baby. The baby is assigned a gender, and from that moment there are specific norms and expectations which are assigned such as girls should be dressed in pink, and boys in blue. If we extend this to the Traveller community, there are culturally specific

norms and expectations which inherently become part of that child's lived experience within the community. The expectation that girls take on the caring role for example, or that boys should be involved in the traditional trades in order to be the financial provider for the family. As has been highlighted throughout this chapter, the lived reality of Traveller families has been one marked with significant discrimination and challenge, while also a reality which embodies core values such as the importance of marriage and close family relationships, which are being eroded within the wider population. This reality can only be fully understood in relation to Travellers lived experience of it.

Berger and Luckman (1991) contend that societal reality exists in both the objective and the subjective form. Our objective reality is constructed through complex, two-way interactions between the individual and their social environment, which results in the development of routine behaviours, expectations and values. These routinised behaviours lead to habitualisation, whereby the behaviour is repeated routinely without significant effort or thought on the part of the individual developing a body of knowledge within a family, or community (Allen, 2005; Berger and Luckmann, 1991; Burr, 2003). Over time, this knowledge becomes institutionalised within society through the individual or community's experiences, hence younger generations accept the knowledge as objective (Allen, 2005). Our subjective view of society occurs through our socialisation experience from birth, when we are assigned our place within society, and our social identity (Allen, 2005; Burr, 2003). Our socialisation as humans occurs through those significant individuals around us. Children look to parents, carers and adult role models to mediate social interactions and experience, which become internalised into their perspective and experiences (Berger and Lockmann, 1991). Therefore, it is true to say that Traveller children learn their role within the family from their parents, and this in turn influences their parenting style as adults. Burr (2003) contends that it is through the use of language that our thoughts and concepts are created and made possible. Language and conversation allow communities to maintain, adjust and reconstruct our subjective views of reality (Allen, 2005; Berger and Luckmann, 1991). As humans, we are predisposed to using the language of storytelling to organise our lived experiences (Bruner, 1990). These experiences, beliefs and perspectives can be shared through conversation, without the need to explain or redefine the meaning. The order which we give to experiences and the stories that are shared are strongly influenced by the culture to which we belong (Gergen, 1994). Within Traveller communities, language and storytelling are central aspects of the culture. While the native language of 'cant' is not used as frequently, there are words within the dialect of

Travellers which hold particular and significant meanings. For example, Traveller parents use the term child rearing as opposed to parenting when discussing the role of parents. From earlier evidence throughout this chapter, it becomes apparent that many of the practices which are unique to Traveller parents as such are culturally transmitted, as 'parenting' is learned from the social environment within which parents exist (Bornstein, 2012; Machery and Faucher, 2005).

Parenting is constructed by the influence of cultural norms and values within families and communities, and yet parenting practices help to maintain cultural norms and expectations from one generation to the next (Bornstein and Lansford, 2010; Bornstein, 2012). 'Individual behaviour; is a consequence of largely internal traits or motivations that are either inherited or learned' (Burr and Dick, 2017, p.61). Therefore, if we take the case of marriage within Traveller communities, the research clearly demonstrates that teenagers are preparing to find, and be matched to life partners at an age where their counterparts in the settled community are focusing on educational and career progression (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Watson et al., 2017). Traveller teenagers are clear on the expectations of their family that this is their life path, and also have a deep sense that this is the journey which they need to take at this stage. There is both an internal belief, and an external expectation from parents, and the extended family. Therefore, this set of values or ideas enable Traveller children and parents to make sense of the world within which they exist as they hold a cultural significance for them (Burr and Dick, 2017).

Parenting is constructed through a complex set of interactions and cultural expectations long before a child is born (Bornstein, 2012). This opinion was echoed by members of Offaly Traveller Movement, as they highlighted the manner by which parenting practices are being promoted and reproduced culturally, with cultural values and attitudes influencing parenting practices. Traveller families have passed on their traditions and beliefs to their children over the years through their parenting practices and approaches. However, Travellers must parent their children within a predominantly settled community. This means that Traveller families are acutely aware of the differences in relation to how Travellers live their lives and how the wider community choose to live theirs. Traveller children are engaging more and more in education and employment in the wider community, which also brings in to focus a different way of living. The social construction of life for Travellers is different to that of the settled community, and this adds to the challenges for parents in this ethnic minority group.

2.5 Conclusion

As has been highlighted throughout this chapter, the lived reality of Traveller families has been one marked with significant discrimination and challenge. We have little understanding of the cultural basis of Traveller parenting in terms of their unique parenting values, attitudes and practices. This area of parenting support provision has been under researched and the Traveller voice has not been heard on this topic. As there is a significant focus on policy and service development in relation to the provision of parenting supports, this research is timely. As discussed within this literature review, Traveller parents face significantly greater challenges than their settled counterparts, yet are expected to benefit from the generic parenting support services that are currently available. This research will ensure that the perspective of Traveller parents is considered within this discussion, and that the guidelines developed are in line with the areas that Traveller parents feel need to be considered when providing parenting support services.

The overall aim of this research project is to examine how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed, and from there determine, from a Traveller perspective, how Traveller parenting can be most appropriately supported. The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting;
- To determine Traveller perspectives on what factors, contribute towards effective parenting;
- To explore supports Traveller parents need in order to be able to parent effectively;
- To develop Traveller informed guidelines for best practice to support parenting.

In the methodology chapter, a detailed description of the research process will be provided. I will discuss the methodological framework for the research study and the areas that needed to be considered when embarking on the fieldwork with Traveller parents, including the role of the gatekeepers and the Peer Researcher. Finally, I will highlight the ethical considerations that were required in order for the research to progress.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodological considerations which formed the foundation of this research study. I will discuss the methodological framework for the study, and the research process which was undertaken. I will outline the rationale for completing this case study research, and the research fieldwork process which was undertaken. In order to provide context to the research findings, I will discuss the data analysis framework chosen for this study, and the quality markers which I considered to maintain the integrity of the research. Finally, I will outline the ethical considerations for this research.

3.2 Narrative Inquiry as the Methodological Framework for this Study

The objectives of this research study were to investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting, to determine Traveller perspectives on what factors contribute towards effective parenting and to explore supports Traveller parents need in order to be able to parent effectively. In undertaking this research study, I wanted to provide a faithful representation of the values, attitudes and practices of Traveller parenting in order to develop Traveller informed guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families. In order to achieve this, I wanted to give a voice to Traveller parents, so as to provide a real insight into how parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed within Traveller culture. As discussed within the literature review, there is limited knowledge in relation to the unique aspects of Traveller parenting, and this research will enable those providing parenting supports to consider Traveller perspectives when developing and delivering services to Traveller parents. Finally, I wanted to develop an ethical research study which ensured that Travellers were directional in the research process from outset through to completion. The research needed to explicitly detail my involvement in the process and tell the story of the research journey. A narrative inquiry approach was adopted as it allowed me to achieve the objectives of the study. Within this section I will discuss narrative inquiry as the methodological framework for the study.

Narrative inquiry is an approach which amalgamates events and human actions to focus on the story of the person and their experience at that time (Polkinghorne, 1995; Riley and Hawe, 2005). It is firmly based on the premise that ‘people shape their daily lives by stories of who

they and others are and they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which their experience of the world enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful' (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.477). It is a methodology which allows for both the understanding, and study of experience (Clandinin, 2013). Bruner (1990) argued that humanity was predisposed to using stories or narratives as a means of organising their experiences, while Gergen (1994) believed that story telling was strongly influenced by the culture to which a person belonged. For generations, stories of family life have been shared in order to conserve memories of events, and also as a means of passing on, and maintaining family values (Sharp et al., 2018). Narrative inquiry takes account of both the experience and the environment where the individual experiences occurr.

However, narrative inquiry is more than the mere gathering of stories. It is a journey of exploration where consideration is given to the meanings that research participants attach to their experiences, and their overall construction of the story (Trahar, 2009; Wang and Geale, 2015). 'The narrative scholar pays analytic attention to how the facts got assembled that way. For whom was this story constructed, how was it made and for what purpose?*'* (Riessman and Speedy, 2007, p.428 – 429). The stories which are shared can be viewed as socially situated knowledge constructions in their own right, and are grounded in what is considered tellable (Atkinson et al., 2003; Ison et al., 2014). The manner in which these stories are constructed and shared serves to convey a specific perspective of those life events (Wang & Geale, 2015). Narrative inquiry values the messiness, differences, depth and texture of experienced life (Ison et al., 2014; Polkinghorne, 1995), allowing the researcher to develop an understanding of life from the perspective of research participants. As Wang and Geale (2015, p.196) explain 'this insider view does not reveal objective 'truths' but instead reveals subjective truths for the participants within their social context'. This approach, as used within this research, ensured a genuine gathering of Traveller views and perspectives on what factors contribute towards effective parenting, and potential supports that may be required to support Traveller parents.

The storytelling process is a central aspect of narrative inquiry. As Eastmond (2007) explained stories provide rich descriptions and allow situations and specific events to be conveyed in a meaningful and logical way. Narratives can be seen as components of exploration that arise from the stories told. Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p.477 - 487) argue that 'narrative inquiries can begin with the telling of stories or the living out of stories, a living out that may later involve the telling of stories of the experience'. Polkinghorne (1988) argues that adopting a

narrative research approach is vital to interpreting the meaning of life events, and giving a voice to those who have often been unheard. As discussed within the literature review chapter, the Traveller community have been marginalised within Irish society for many years (Harvey, 2013; Irish Traveller Movement, 2013). The use of narrative inquiry enabled Traveller parents to have a voice in relation to a central aspect of their culture, and have their perspectives considered in relation to the provision of parenting supports.

Gergen (1994) argued that individual culture had a significant influence upon a person's propensity to tell stories. Traveller culture is deeply rooted in the tradition of narration and storytelling (Harvey, 2013). Stories have been used to pass on norms, values and expectations from one generation to the next, while also serving as a mechanism to maintain Traveller culture and identity (AITHSS, 2010). Narrative inquiry allowed me to gather rich descriptions of the research participants experience through the stories they shared (Creswell, 2012; Ison et al., 2014; Josselson, 2006). As a methodological approach, narrative inquiry allowed me to explore the individual experiences of Traveller parents in relation to parenting values, attitudes and practices. From there, I was able to develop an understanding of how these experiences were shaped and impacted upon by their culture, coupled with their physical and social environment (Haydon et al., 2018).

Narrative inquiry facilitates the research participants to have a real voice within the research and the story which emerges through that process (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Trahar, 2013; Wang & Geale, 2015). As Elbow (1986) notes, the initial role of the researcher within narrative inquiry is to play a 'believing game', listening to the stories which the participants share, 'affirming or entering into someone's thinking or perceiving' (Elbow, 1986, p.289). In this way, the research participants and their stories are given authority within the process. This bears a particular significance for the Traveller population, as their experience has been one of exclusion, feeling unheard within society, where research and policy development have traditionally been conducted in relation 'to' as opposed to 'with' Travellers. (Harvey, 2013). The use of narrative inquiry provided the research participants with an opportunity to have their voice heard within the process, thus providing opportunities for empowering those parents who took part in the research study, and creating a sense of involvement.

The use of narrative inquiry demonstrated the impact which cultural and social experiences have had upon the parenting experience (Smeyers, 2008). As discussed within the literature review, we parent our children in a similar manner to how we ourselves were parented. There

are many different experiences, beliefs and identities in relation to parenting, and what constitutes effective parenting. Therefore, it is unlikely that a one-size-fits-all approach to the provision of parenting supports will address the needs of all parents who present to services. This bears a greater significance for Traveller parents as an ethnic minority group, due to their unique cultural values and expectations. To this end, narrative inquiry provided a useful way of knowing about individual parenting perspectives, enabling me to provide meaning and understanding to the lived experiences of the parents I interviewed, and developing an insight into the future possibilities which these stories and experiences revealed.

3.3 The Three Dimensions of the Narrative Inquiry Space

As Bochner (2007, cited in Trahar 2013) explains the narratives which are collected through the research process create 'knowledge from the past and not necessarily knowledge about the past…What we see as true today may not have been true at the time the actions we are describing were performed' (Bochner, 2007, p.203, cited in Traher, 2013). The focus of narrative inquiry within research is to explore and understand the meanings which research participants place on their individual experiences (Bailey & Tilley 2002), and interpreting these experiences as opposed to creating explanations of that world (Wang & Geale, 2015).

From an epistemological and ontological perspective, narrative inquiry is an ideal methodological framework for this study. It is a situated and relational practice, in which stories of experience are understood within a three – dimensional narrative inquiry space: temporality, sociality and space (Estefan et al., 2016). In considering this three – dimensional space and narrative structure, the stories shared need to be considered from the perspective of the personal experiences of the research participant, and also their interaction with other people (Wang and Geale, 2015). Personal elements of a research participant's story relate to their internal conditions; their thoughts, feelings and moral dispositions, while the social aspects are concerned with looking outward to the external environment and their interaction with that environment (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Temporality is concerned with the past and present actions of the story teller, as they are likely to influence their future actions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bruner (1990) asserts that humans were predisposed to consolidating life experiences into narratives that had what he termed a 'temporal sequence'. Spatiality considers the physical location of the research participant's narrative, and how it influences their experience within that story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It considers the context, time and

setting within which the narrative being shared was experienced. In relation to Traveller parenting, this three – dimensional space must consider Travellers own experience of being parented, their current social and physical environment within which they are parenting their children, and their experience and feelings in relation to parenting their children as Travellers within a predominantly settled community.

Narrative inquiry takes account of the relationship between the research participants experience, and the cultural context within which this experience rests (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). It allows the researcher the opportunity to join the community where the research is being carried out. It was imperative that I considered my position as researcher within the relationship with the research participants, as a mother from the settled community. Charmaz (2006, p.27) points out that 'interviewers must remain attuned to how participants receive them, and how both participants' and interviewers' past and immediate identities may influence the character and content of the interaction'. Within narrative inquiry, the researcher becomes part of the phenomenon under study, as they do not stand outside the lives of the research participants (Clandinin et al., 2010). The interview space is the space where the story teller and the story analyst meet. As will be discussed later within this research I needed to be aware of any potential bias or judgement that I may have held in relation to the Traveller community, to ensure that it did not influence my interactions with the research participants.

In order to develop an understanding of Traveller parenting perspectives, it was crucial to consider the social context within which Traveller parents were rearing their children. In order to understand how the stories of research participants were experienced and told, it was essential to acknowledge the relational aspects of the narrative inquiry process between the researcher and the research participants (Clandinin, 2013; Haydon et al., 2018; Josselson, 2007). The individual experiences articulated by research participants do not operate in isolation 'but are constructed as we negotiate through and around constantly shifting meanings. Narrative inquirers are not interested primarily in facts or truth of these accounts, but rather in the meanings portrayed in story form' (Wang and Geale, 2015, p.196).

As discussed earlier, the stories shared by Traveller parents were socially situated knowledge constructions in their own right (Atkinson et al., 2003; Ison et. al., 2014). Therefore, these stories and their telling needed to be considered in terms of these three key dimensions – temporality, sociality and space.

3.4 Research Fieldwork

3.4.1 Step One: Accessing a Research Sample

County Offaly as the Case Study Research Site

Creswell (2006) defines case study research as 'the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system, such as a setting, context or culture' (Creswell, 2006, p. 73). This form of research provides a rich and dense body of knowledge regarding the complexities of life (Flyvbjerg, 2011), in this case that of Traveller parenting. Case study research provides for the rich description of cases (Flick 2014), and facilitates the creation and development of knowledge which is 'context – dependent' and allows for the integration of different perspectives in relation to a case (Bourdieu 1977; Flvvbjerg, 2011). The use of a case study approach facilitated an in-depth analysis (Smeyers, 2008) of the parenting role, patterns, values and behaviours from the Traveller perspective. It allowed me to explore the differences and similarities that exist within the parenting role for Traveller parents.

County Offaly was selected as a case study site for this study for a combination of reasons. Firstly, County Offaly has the third highest Traveller population outside of counties Dublin and Galway (Central Statistics Office, 2012). Combined with this, Offaly also has a highly proactive and engaged community development organisation in place in the form of Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October). OTM has evolved from the former Tullamore Traveller Movement Ltd, and is recognised and well respected across the county by the Traveller community (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Murphy, 2016). The mission of OTM is to achieve equality and social justice for Travellers by developing partnerships between Travellers and the settled community (OTM,2020). OTM has made numerous representations to government ministers and local services on behalf of the Traveller population of County Offaly for the past 20 years, spanning the areas of health, accommodation, training and employment (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October). OTM is a progressive organisation with firm roots within the Traveller community across the county.

OTM operates the second longest running Primary Healthcare Project in Ireland. The objective of the Traveller Primary Healthcare Projects is to provide a model of good practice in relation to addressing Traveller's health needs. The Primary Healthcare Projects focus is upon developing the skills of Travellers within the community to provide healthcare services, and support the identification of gaps and inequalities that exist in relation to current service

provision (Harvey, 2013). The Community Healthcare Workers within OTM, who are themselves Travellers, are well integrated and respected within their role in the county, and are trusted by the Traveller community (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October). This ensured that they were well positioned to act as potential gatekeepers for this research, supporting Traveller parents from across the county to have their voices represented in relation to a fundamental aspect of their culture, that of parenting. As this research study was not focused on population level statistics, but rather on conducting an in-depth analysis of Traveller parenting, from the perspective of Traveller parents, County Offaly was viewed as a suitable and accessible case study site.

Developing the Relationship with OTM

In order to gain access to the research population, it was crucial that I developed a relationship with the Community Healthcare Workers employed by Offaly Traveller Movement. As will be discussed later in this chapter, they were the gatekeepers to the research participants. Initially in September 2016, I was invited by the Health Manager of the Primary Healthcare Programme within Offaly Traveller Movement to attend the launch of '*Travelling Through Homelessness: A Study of Traveller Homelessness in County Offaly'* (Murphy, 2016). The purpose of the invitation was to give me an opportunity to meet with the Community Healthcare Workers, who had identified the area of parenting support as a research priority (Jackson, 2016).

Following this event, the Health Manager with OTM suggested, based on her experience of working directly with Travellers as a settled person, that I meet with the Community Healthcare Workers on a more formal basis. This meeting took place in October 2016 in the offices of OTM. This ensured that the Community Healthcare Workers felt comfortable and at ease as they were within their work environment. This meeting gave me an opportunity to explain the research and ask for their involvement as gatekeepers. The Community Healthcare Workers were familiar with the topic as they had been consulted, when the proposal for this project was designed in February 2016 for submission to the AIT President's Seed Research Fund. During that consultation, they highlighted that research into parenting values, attitudes and practices was necessary, as well as the development of Traveller led and informed parenting supports. Not only does the literature in the previous chapter validate the need for this research, but Travellers themselves have also identified it as an important research topic.

A second similar meeting was organised for April 2017 with the Community Healthcare Workers. I provided them with an update on what was emerging in the literature review, and

we discussed possible timelines for completing the fieldwork. The Community Healthcare Workers reviewed the interview questions to ensure that the language used was culturally appropriate. It also ensured that they were familiar with the topic areas when trying to secure involvement from the broader Traveller community. Email contact was maintained with the OTM Health Manager, who had daily contact with the Community Healthcare Workers. This allowed me to provide the OTM team with updates on the progress of the research.

Following discussion with my research supervisors and the Health Manager from OTM, there was agreement that the involvement of a Peer Researcher would be of benefit to the quality of the research study. As I will discuss later in this chapter, the Peer Researcher had privileged access to a traditionally hard-to-reach research population (Elliot et al., 2002; Griffiths et al., 1993), in this case Traveller parents thereby ensuring a greater level of participation by Traveller parents within the research. Following successful ethical approval, which I will also discuss in more detail later on in the chapter, a third meeting took place in May 2018 with the OTM Health Manager. At this meeting the role of the Peer Researcher, and the recruitment process for this role were agreed.

These consultation meetings were essential to ensure that the Community Healthcare Workers were actively involved in this process. The relationship building process was a central element of this research. This ensured that as gatekeepers to the research participants, the Community Healthcare Workers had trust in the research process, and had opportunities to query and check out the various stages of the process, which enabled them to validate the research from a Traveller perspective. As the researcher, it provided me with the opportunity to check out information, categories and details with the Community Healthcare team to ensure that the language used within the research was culturally appropriate, and also to validate research findings as they emerged. During this process we got to know each other and established a strong working relationship. The Community Healthcare Workers and the Peer Researcher needed to have trust in both myself as the researcher, and also in the process, as they were being asked to involve other Travellers in the research. As a member of the settled community, this relationship building was crucial to the overall progress of the research. Therefore, it was essential that I invested time in developing this relationship from the outset.

Peer Researcher Involvement

Bourke (2009) has defined peer research as ‘providing for those whose experiences are being researched to be involved in the conduct of research and decision – making processes’ (Bourke,

2009, cited in Warr et. al., 2011), therefore allowing those who will be directly affected by the research to play an active, and participatory role in influencing meaningful social change (Cameron & Grant - Smith, 2005; Warr et. al., 2011). Peer research is a participatory research method which can be used when attempting to access difficult to reach populations (Devotta et al., 2016; Elliott et al., 2002; Warr et al., 2011). As discussed within the literature review, the Traveller community are a closed social group, and can be a hard-to-reach population for the purpose of research. Therefore, the involvement of the Peer Researcher enables a member of the research target population to become actively involved in the research process (Elliott et. al., 2002).

The AITHSS (2010) study achieved high levels of research participant involvement due to the involvement of a Peer Researcher. The concept of peer research is based on the premise that a person's identity creates and produces a particular knowledge dependent upon their lived experience (Devotta et. al., 2016). Nind (2014) argues that our view of the world is influenced and created by our identity. Peer Researchers are seen to have an 'inside' perspective and knowledge based upon their personal, lived experience which an 'outside' researcher cannot access (Devotta et. al., 2016). Research conducted by Elliott et al. (2002, p.176) in the UK on the needs of parents using drugs found that the involvement of Peer Researchers within their study allowed them to 'obtain the accounts of a hidden population group that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for us to reach in any other way'. The involvement of a Peer Researcher can also provide a positive role model for research participants, challenging their perspective in terms of research, and empowering them to consider this role for themselves in the future. As has been highlighted by Temera O'Brien, a member of the Traveller community training to become a teacher at NUI Maynooth 'I'm hoping I'll be a role model for other Travellers…...If I can do it, then other Traveller children will think, 'why can't I do it as well' (O'Brien, 2018). The involvement of the Peer Researcher ensured that the research used a participatory approach which was authentic and genuine.

In order to identify a Peer Researcher in an open and transparent manner, OTM conducted an internal recruitment process. This was crucial to ensure that all of the Community Healthcare Workers had an opportunity to put their name forward for the role. I provided OTM with information and an outline of the research to support this process (Appendix 3, 4 & 5). While the knowledge and experience which a Peer Researcher can bring to the research is invaluable, it is critical that it is not viewed as the only perspective in relation to the research topic. Nind (2014) highlights the need to exercise caution in this regard so as to avoid accepting a single

perspective or viewpoint as being that of the wider community. Peer Researchers can be seen to have their own agenda, and may strive to present an overly positive image of an already disadvantaged community (Edwards & Alexander, 2011). For this reason, the expectations of the role were discussed and agreed in advance of the recruitment process with the Health Manager from OTM. With the agreement of this group, it was decided that the Peer Researcher would facilitate the data collection phase of the research, through contacting those parents identified by the Community Healthcare Workers who were interested in participating to arrange suitable times for the interviews to take place. Through these conversations, the Peer Researcher also identified additional research participants. The Peer Researcher introduced the research study to these parents, and explained the consent and interview process to them. This ensured that the parents were aware of the process, and could make an informed decision to take part.

While the lived experience of the Peer Researcher was valued in terms of having positive relationships with the research participants, there was agreement that the interview questions would be asked by myself. The role of the Peer Researcher was explained to the research participants at the start of each interview, and while they were given the choice as to whether or not the Peer Researcher remained in the room during the interview, the Peer Researcher did not become involved in posing the interview questions. This ensured continuity across the interviews as some parents choose for the Peer Researcher to remain outside the interview space, while a small number of parents asked for the Peer Researcher to remain in the room during the interview. Though the Peer Researcher was present during these interviews, the parents spoke openly about their experiences and perspectives.

Devotta et. al. (2016) argues that the involvement of a Peer Researcher adds value, depth and authenticity to research studies. As previous research has indicated, Peer Researchers are considered to have 'privileged access' to traditionally difficult to reach communities (Elliott et al., 2002; Warr et al., 2011). The involvement of the Peer Researcher served to validate the research study from a Traveller perspective, and facilitated real and genuine participation by the Traveller parents. This also facilitated me to gain access to a traditionally hard-to-reach research population. As Warr et. al. (2011, p.337) argued such 'collaborative and participatory methods present opportunities for lay communities to have active roles in processes of knowledge construction concerning their experiences and circumstances'. Research participants trusted the process, and were clear that they were participating because of the involvement of the Peer Researcher within the research study and fieldwork process.

The involvement of the Peer Researcher served to reduce the hierarchy which can sometimes exist between the researcher and the research participants (Devotta et al., 2016). As a member of the settled community, who was completing the research study, the involvement of the Peer Researcher demonstrated my willingness to work in partnership with the research community. It demonstrated the genuineness of this research in seeking to develop a true understanding of parenting values, attitudes and practices from a Traveller perspective by valuing 'insiders' perspectives, experiences and contextual insights' (Warr et al., 2011, p.338). As became evident throughout this research study, the involvement of, and consultation with both the Peer Researcher and the Community Healthcare Workers was central in terms of gaining access to the research participants. It must be noted that the benefits of involving a Peer Researcher can only be truly realised where there is an investment in supporting and developing their role initially (Elliott et al., 2002). As the Peer Researcher within this research was already employed as a Community Healthcare Worker within the community, she was trusted by Traveller parents across Offaly having earned their respect over time. Additionally, discussions with the Peer Researcher on reflections following the interviews acted as a knowledge check to ensure that the views I was forming were accurate and relevant.

Sampling

Snowball sampling was used as the sampling technique for this research. Snowball sampling is considered an effective method to reach difficult to reach populations for the purpose of research (Bryman, 2004; Sedgwick, 2013). While the Community Healthcare Workers and Peer Researcher provided access to research participants initially, each of the parents who participated were asked if they knew other Traveller parents from the county who may be willing to participate, generating a larger sample population. In some of the interview's parents agreed to ask their daughters and sons to participate, and the Peer Researcher contacted these parents to invite them to participate. This ensured that I had access to younger Traveller parents, both mothers and fathers. Snowball sampling created a broader sample population, where rich narratives were shared until the study reached saturation point, whereby no new information was emerging through the interviews (Whitemore and Melkus, 2008).

Throughout the research process, I was mindful of including a combination of views from both mothers and fathers. The involvement of fathers was crucial in order to create a more balanced viewpoint in relation to parenting experiences. Traveller fathers can at times be under – represented within Traveller research as they can be difficult to reach within the broader

Traveller community. Traditionally, involving Traveller fathers has been challenging (Lovett, M. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). As discussed within the literature review, gender roles have a significant influence upon parenting practices within Traveller culture. Therefore, it was essential to include the views of Traveller fathers within this research study.

The parents were divided into two specific age categories of 18 – 29 years, representing the younger Traveller parent population, with the second group comprising parents aged over 29 years, representing the older Traveller parenting population. These age groups were selected having reviewed the demographic information discussed within the literature review in relation to Census (2016) and AITHSS (2010). The consultation meetings with the Community Healthcare Workers also confirmed that parents over the age of 29 years are considered to be older parents within the Traveller community. While efforts were made to include parents from serviced and unserviced halting sites, it was not possible for this study. As the focus of this research was to explore Traveller perspectives on Traveller parenting, this was still achieved by ensuring Traveller representation across various age categories, as well as the voice of Traveller mothers and fathers.

As saturation was achieved after 19 interviews were completed, the fieldwork ceased at that point. The sample population included Traveller mothers and fathers who lived across County Offaly. It is important to note the significant number of fathers who participated in the research. The involvement of Traveller fathers ensured that the findings for the research study provided a balanced perspective on the views of both mothers and fathers. The table below provides an outline of the parents who took part.

Name	**Age**	**No of Children**	**Accommodation Type**
Maggie	29+	4	House
John	29-	4	House
Mary	29+	9	House
Tina	29-	2	House
Shelly	29+	5	House
Billy	29+	5	House
Kate	29-	1	House
Jack	29+	3	House
Betty	29-	4	House
David	29+	2	House
Jackie	29+	4	House
Ann	29+	11	House
Helen	29+	3	House
Sandra	29+	5	House

Tommy	29+	5	House
Catherine	29+	6	House
Sheila	29-	3	House
James	29-	3	House
Luke	29+	5	House
Jacinta	29+	5	House

3.4.2 Step Two: Deciding on a suitable research method

Due to the high levels of literacy issues within Traveller culture (AITHS, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Watson et al., 2017), the research tool needed to be accessible to the research population. I needed a tool which would allow flexibility for the narrative of the individual parents to be heard and shared. Taking this into consideration, an in – depth interview format was used. In-depth interviews allowed Traveller parents to talk freely, and did not create any challenges in relation to literacy issues. In – depth interviews also allowed for the interviews to go beyond those questions and take unexpected turns, enabling the research participants to talk in their own terms (Flick, 2014). The interview topics or questions were used as prompts which allowed for a range of possible responses. The flexibility of this interview format allowed for the gathering of rich narratives (Burck, 2005) as the Traveller parents told their story of parenting, and shared their experiences.

To this end, the in – depth interviews were very appropriate for this research study. In-depth interviews are versatile across a range of study topics, adaptable to challenging field conditions, and excellent for not just providing information but for generating understanding as well (Guest et al., 2013). In terms of this research study, the use of in-depth interviews enabled me to gain a real understanding of the influences upon, and challenges of parenting within the Traveller community. In-depth interviews also allowed flexibility in terms of the topic schedule. Additionally, Traveller parents could choose not to answer particular questions if they wished.

3.4.3 Step Two: Designing the Interview Questions

Designing effective questions for the fieldwork process was a crucial element of ensuring that I gathered rich narratives from the research participants. As I used an in – depth interview format, I needed to construct questions which could be used to guide the conversations in relation to the objectives of the research study. As McNamara (2009) points out neutral, open – ended questions which are worded clearly ensures that researchers can garner rich data

regarding their chosen research topic. Open – ended questions allow research participants to decide upon their own terms when responding to questions posed.

The involvement of the Community Healthcare Workers at OTM provided an opportunity for the research questions and interview format to undergo rigorous evaluation, consideration and discussion. The Peer Researcher and Community Healthcare Worker team brought their experience as Travellers, parents and Community Healthcare Workers to the table. Such collaborative discussion and consultation also served to reduce any bias which may occur (Elliot et. al., 2002), as they provided clarity and context to any queries that I had. They also ensured that the language used for the interview schedule was appropriate to the Traveller culture (McNamara, 2009). The Community Healthcare Workers at OTM allowed me the opportunity to pre-test the research questions on them to ensure that the language used, and topic areas covered were culturally appropriate. For example, while I used the term 'parenting' on the interview schedule, the Community Healthcare Workers highlighted that the language used by Travellers refers to 'child rearing' (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). This feedback ensured that the fieldwork process and the research study was endorsed by the Community Healthcare Workers who were respected and trusted members of the Traveller community, the majority of whom were parents. In the majority of the in-depth interviews, the topics guiding the interviews were pre-empted naturally, as parents related various views and experiences. The interview questions were developed in line with the following topic guide:

Traveller Views and Experiences of Parenting

This topic area focused on gathering stories on the Traveller parents' experiences of growing up, and how they learned their role within the family. This enabled me to gather stories on the extent to which parenting roles within the Traveller community are constructed, with a particular emphasis on gender in terms of the roles assigned to boys and girls within Traveller families. I needed to explore the differences and similarities between their experience of being parented as children, when compared to their experience of parenting their own children. Within this area, the topic schedule guided the conversation in relation to the expectations of parents and the values that inform parenting practices within the Traveller community. Finally, I asked questions that focused on sources of parenting advice in order to explore the role of family as a resource in terms of parenting advice, support and information.

Traveller Perspectives on What Constitutes Effective Parenting

Questions in this area focused on Traveller parents' perception of what constitutes effective parenting. This allowed me to gather stories in relation to Traveller parenting practices and their attitudes towards what they felt made for good child rearing. I also asked questions to guide the conversation in relation to Travellers experiences of parenting within their community, including any pressures they experienced either from within their own culture, or from the larger community where they lived. These questions led on to gathering the research participant's views on what had worked well for Travellers in the community regarding rearing their children, and what were the challenges they faced in this regard.

Supports Traveller Parents Need in Order to be able to Parent Effectively

The questions that I designed within this area explored the supports currently available to Traveller parents, and enabled parents to share their views on the supports they felt were needed in the county. Questions in this area also explored the barriers that Traveller parents felt existed when engaging with parenting support services or programmes. These questions helped to provide an insight into areas that need to be considered when delivering parenting supports to the Traveller community. When asking these questions, I needed to remain curious to encourage Traveller parents to share their experiences and perceptions of existing services. Travellers traditionally use storytelling to share information about their past and present experiences, hence asking open questions allowed Traveller parents to talk freely.

3.4.4 Step Three: Conducting the research

Traveller Parents as Research Participants

Offaly Traveller Movement offer services throughout the county, and have access to 350 Traveller families. As discussed earlier, the Community Healthcare Workers from OTM have established and trusted relationships with the Traveller families across the county. They were seen to be 'neutral' within the Traveller community, and worked to support Traveller families in relation to a variety of personal, social and educational issues (Lovett, M. 2017. Personal communication, 20 October; Murphy, 2016; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). In June 2018, I met with the Peer Researcher and the Community Healthcare Workers in the offices of OTM. During this meeting the Community Healthcare Workers identified possible research participants from across the County who they thought may be willing to participate. I developed

a culturally appropriate information leaflet (Appendix 3) in consultation with the Community Healthcare Workers. As the Peer Researcher was introducing the research to the Traveller parents, the leaflets were used as a means of verbally introducing the research study to the parents.

The In-depth Interview Process

In agreement with the Peer Researcher and the Health Manager from OTM, the fieldwork commenced in June 2018. The interviews took place during the summer months while children were off school as the parents were not under pressure with the normal school routine. Some of the Traveller parents who agreed to participate asked that the interviews take place within their home, rather than at the offices of OTM. This was accommodated following discussion with the Health Manager of OTM. On reflection, I feel that the option of home-based interviews allowed the Traveller parents to remain in control of the interview environment, with minimal disruption to their daily routine. The parents also felt more comfortable as they were within their own environment. In my opinion, it also minimised the rate of parents not being able to attend their scheduled interview time due to child minding issues, or family commitments, and enabled me to reach saturation point with the research data.

During the interview process, the Peer Researcher accompanied me to each of the interviews, both the home-based interviews and also those which took place in the offices of OTM. In order to ensure that the research participants fully understood the research process, and felt comfortable to talk with me, I talked through the information leaflet and consent form. While the Peer Researcher had discussed this information with the parents in advance of the interview, and though none of the research participants identified as having literacy issues, I felt it was important to explain the consent and research process again before the parents signed the consent forms at the time of the interview. I explained that the rationale for recording the interview was to ensure I could provide an accurate account of their views within the final research document. Before the parents were asked to sign consent for the interview to commence, I reassured them that the comments used within the research text would be anonymised to protect their identity, and that the recordings would be deleted once they had been transcribed.

As outlined earlier, while the Peer Researcher remained with me in the room for a small number of the interviews at the request of the Traveller parents, the Peer Researcher did not become involved in posing the questions. I reminded the research participants throughout the interview

process that there were no right or wrong answers, and that it was their view and perspective that the research was attempting to capture. This became a feature of each interview as I needed to be mindful from the outset, that the research participants did not feel pressured to give the 'correct' answer, or omit valuable information (Smeyers, 2008).

From the outset of this research study, I was aware of the importance of language, for example while I referred to parenting practices, Traveller parents talked about child rearing. The fieldwork process made this even more apparent. During the interviews there were occasions where the research participants referred to 'country people' indicating that they were different to the Traveller community. In discussion with the Peer Researcher and the research participants, they explained that Traveller's refer to the settled community as 'country people' (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). This was an important clarification to make so as to ensure that I had a full understanding of the contexts of the narratives shared when I began the data analysis process. It was essential that I had a clear understanding of the language used by Traveller parents, while ensuring that my own use of language fitted the social context within which this research study was taking place. This enabled me to gather narratives and stories of Traveller parenting which provided rich data. However, in the interviews with those who were initially more cautious about being interviewed by a settled person, the interview questions or topics acted as an aide to participation in the interview process. The involvement of the Peer Researcher in these situations helped to reassure these parents of the value of the research. In all cases, the story of an experience or that associated with a parenting value or practice, emerged spontaneously, in line with the natural storytelling aspect of Traveller culture.

3.5 Data Analysis

In line with using a narrative inquiry methodology for this research, and given the objectives of the research, my aim was to develop an understanding of the common categories or constructs that emerged from the data collected during the interview process. For this reason, I used Polkinghorne's (1995) paradigmatic mode of analysis, or analysis of narratives to interpret the interview data, as I was interested in producing paradigmatic typologies or categories. The analysis of narratives approach focuses upon paradigmatic cognition, a mode of thinking used by people to organise their experiences in a consistent manner while also attending to the general features, categories and characteristics of the experience (Kim, 2016).

Polkinghorne (1995, p.10) argued that paradigmatic cognition 'produces cognitive networks of concepts that allow people to construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over'. This enabled me to fully interrogate the individual stories that emerged throughout the interviews, and fit these individual details shared by the research participants into broader patterns or categories and sub-categories (Kim, 2016; Sharp et. al., 2018).

I analysed all the individual stories which emerged during the interviews in response to open-ended questions in the in-depth interviews, for example the stories which Traveller parents shared in relation to their own experience of being parented, their views on marriage and education. I gathered together the salient themes from the stories, and organised them under relevant categories for discussion (Kim, 2016; Polkinghorne, 1995; Sharpe et. al., 2019). As Sharp et al., (2018, p.2) explain 'by listening to people's stories, understanding can be gained about the way they make meaning of their everyday lives within a broader social context'. This is reflective of Traveller parents use of stories as a means of maintaining cultural norms and values, in particular those related to parenting. Specifically, this work used an inductive paradigmatic analysis approach, as it views the stories shared by the research participants as the data to be analysed resulting in 'descriptions of themes that hold across the stories' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.12).

The analysis of the stories took place over a number of key stages. Firstly, I listened to and fully transcribed each interview verbatim myself. This ensured that I remained close to the stories shared by the parents. I also took field notes following the interviews, and also following the consultation meetings with the team of Community Healthcare Workers. I then read and re – read the transcribed interview texts. The purpose of this naïve reading was to consider the text as a whole, and begin to develop an understanding of the words used by the research participants when telling their stories (Wangensteen & Westby, 2019). I asked questions of the data in terms of why specific stories were important, and tried to understand what was happening within the context of the individual stories as told by Traveller parents within the overall context of the interview. These questions allowed me to 'focus in on what the data is indicating, to understand structure and process, to identify connections between concepts, to stimulate thinking, and to increase sensitivity to what to look for in future data' (Sharp et. al., 2019, p.13). Following this, I organised the interview texts within categories and sub – categories. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.132) explain 'an inquirer composing a research text looks for the patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes either within or across an

individual's experience and in the social setting'. At this point, I was searching for common experiences and reflections which had been shared by the individual research participants. These interim texts and emerging categories were shared with the research supervisor, the Peer Researcher and the team of Community Healthcare Workers for discussion and refinement. This allowed for further discussion and reflection on the findings from the research, and supported me to refine the final research text. I then used an inductive coding process whereby various colours were used to highlight and emphasise pertinent passages of text (Sharp et. al., 2019). Each story was critically unravelled within the backdrop of the overall research question (Polkinghorne, 1995). While this method of data analysis had the potential to underplay individual aspects of each story, it enabled me to 'bring order to experience by seeing individual things as belonging to a category' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.10). This process assisted me to explore the commonalities that were present across the multiple stories that had been shared (Kim, 2016), in order to produce a bank of knowledge in relation to Traveller parenting attitudes, values and practices.

3.6 NVIVO 12 Within Qualitative Research

There has been a significant increase in the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to assist in the data analysis process throughout qualitative research (Morison & Moir, 1998; Thomas & Harden, 2008). CAQDAS packages such as NVIVO can support researchers in the analysis, storage and management of research data and literature (Bringer et al., 2004; Silverman, 2010). CASDAS packages are well recognised and accepted within the field of qualitative research (Kelle, 1995). While such software programmes can facilitate the checking of codes, and the organisation of data, it does not replace the connection between the researcher and the data collated. It is the researcher who must interpret the data, and make the connections with the literature available (Bringer et al., 2004; Meehan, B. 2018. Personal communication, 13 June; Morison & Moir, 1998). For the purpose of this research study, I used NVIVO 12 CAQDAS, as produced by QSR International to assist in the data analysis stage of the research, by collating the stories together into categories. NVIVO 12 allowed me to store and connect research articles and literature with the data collected through the interview process.

3.7 Ensuring Quality Within Narrative Inquiry Research

Clandinin (2013) referred to 12 touchstones of narrative inquiry which can be viewed as a 'quality or example that is used to test excellence or genuineness' (Clandinin, 2013, p.169). While these touchstones are accepted as quality indicators in narrative inquiry research, I also used them to guide the research process. This ensured a rigorous and quality narrative inquiry study from the outset. Clandinin (2013) posited that when these touchstones are applied and acknowledged within narrative inquiry, the reader can be confident that the researcher has attended to those elements that contribute to a good narrative inquiry.

Relational Responsibilities

Narrative inquiry, as a relational research methodology 'requires that the researcher and the research participants develop and maintain a caring, respectful, reciprocal relationship' (Shaw, 2017, p.212). As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain, relational responsibilities must be negotiated by the researcher and the research participants throughout the research journey. Attending to the relational responsibilities within narrative inquiry requires the researcher to listen empathetically, while remaining non-judgemental of the stories being shared (Clandinin and Murphy, 2007). As researcher, I needed to be attentive to the lives of the research participants as they continued to unfold as 'our intent is to enter the relationships with participants as researchers, participants come to know and see us as people in relation with them' (Clandinin, 2013, p.51). It was essential to develop a sense of awareness and self – understanding as a researcher (Walker and Thomson, 2010), reflecting on the impact which my background within family support services may have had upon the research study. Throughout the research study, I remained mindful of how my presence as a settled person shaped the relationship which I developed with the Peer Researcher, the Community Healthcare Workers and the research participants. Through meeting with the Community Healthcare Workers during the fieldwork stage, I developed a relationship with them which was based on trust and transparency. As discussed earlier, the Community Healthcare Workers were given an opportunity to share their insight and experience in order to shape the fieldwork process. I provided regular updates to the team of Community Healthcare Workers through attending team meetings, emails and phone calls to ensure that they kept updated on the progress of both the research and the fieldwork process. As also discussed earlier, I also met with the Community Healthcare Workers to discuss the language used on the interview information leaflet, consent form and the questions to ensure they were culturally appropriate. As the Peer

Researcher was also a member of the team of Community Healthcare Workers, these meetings also enabled me to develop my relationship with the Peer Researcher. As the fieldwork process commenced, I had regular phone contact with the Peer Researcher to agree the days, times and locations for the interviews. This continued engagement further strengthened our working relationship, and ensured that the Peer Researcher was actively involved in the process.

Committing to the relational responsibilities of this research study also involved attending to the relational ethics of the research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) including issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Relational ethics is greater than the process of seeking ethical approval from the institute, it is a journey that continues from the point of considering the initial research puzzle through to the completion of the final field texts (Clandinin, 2013). As Connelly and Clandinin (2006) explain 'in narrative inquiry, inquirers must deepen the sense of what it means to live in a relation in an ethical way.... Ethical considerations permeate narrative inquiries from start to finish: at the outset as ends-in-view are imagined; as inquirer participant relationships unfold, and as participants are represented in research texts' (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.483). In order to attend to my relational responsibilities, I also needed to be aware and in tune with the emotional needs of the research community. I achieved this by being emotionally present to the significant life events which the Traveller parents recalled during the interviews, such as their experiences of losing family members. I reassured the parents that their stories would be used anonymously within the research, by giving each research participant a pseudonym. In addition, it was crucial that the expertise, time and contribution made by the Peer Researcher was acknowledged, as this was in addition to her role as a Community Healthcare Worker. To this end, the Peer Researcher received a fee to cover their time and expenses.

In the Midst

Researchers conducting narrative inquiry enter into relationships with research participants as lives are in progress 'in the midst of researchers' ongoing personal and professional lives; in the midst of researchers' lives enacted within particular institutional narratives such as funded projects, graduate student research, and other research; in the midst of institutional narratives such as university or other organisational narratives; in the midst of social, political, linguistic, and cultural narratives' (Clandinin, 2013, p.43). Once they enter into the research process, both the research participants and the researcher are in the midst as their lives continue to unfold (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This aspect of narrative inquiry research

influences entry to the research field, where the researcher must consider the 'temporality, sociality and places of participants' lives' (Clandinin, 2013, p.43). As the life of the research participants and the researcher meet in the midst, relationships begin to develop which enable both to come together at particular times in spaces where the stories can begin to unfold, and be told and retold (Clandinin, 2013).

I entered into this research study while I was living my own stories within life as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a Family Support Manager and a research student. Similarly, the Traveller parents who participated in the interviews were also living their lives as parents, carers, daughter, sons and workers. I worked in partnership with the Peer Researcher and the Community Healthcare Workers and engaged in conversation with them so as to gain an insight into their experience of being Traveller parents. While maintaining appropriate boundaries, I shared some of my experiences as a mother within the settled community, which allowed me to develop a parent-to-parent trust with the Community Healthcare Workers. Both myself, the Peer Researcher and the Community Healthcare Workers came to the research journey to gather stories and experiences, and while doing so we continued to live in the midst of our own life experiences, which can at times create challenges within research. As the fieldwork took place during the summer months, Traveller parents were giving of their time while also taking care of their children. Additionally, the Peer Researcher and Community Healthcare Workers were supporting this research study while carrying out their daily work tasks. In order to minimise the burden which, the fieldwork process placed on the research community, interviews were scheduled for days, locations and times that were suitable for both the Traveller parents and the Peer Researcher.

While completing this research, I was also working full time and this created challenges in relation to suitable times to carry out the interviews. I overcame this challenge through regular communication with the Peer Researcher to identify possible timeframes within which to conduct the interviews. This allowed the fieldwork to take place with minimal disruption to either the research participants home life, or my working schedule. As I was working within family support while completing this research study, the stories shared by the Traveller parents and the Community Healthcare Workers increased my awareness of the challenges faced by parents from ethnic minorities when parenting their children. This in turn positively influenced my practice, and the cultural factors that I needed to consider when engaging with Traveller families in particular.

Negotiation of Relationships

The relationship between the researcher and the research participants within narrative inquiry remains an ongoing commitment throughout the research journey, where the researcher has an ethical responsibility and a duty of care to the relationships which are developed (Israel et al., 2001). The relationships developed are built on a 'concern and mutual responsiveness to need on both the personal and wider social level' (Held, 2006, p.28). Within narrative inquiry, researchers endeavour to build attentive relationships with their research participants (Shaw, 2017) as experiences and stories are comprehended through relationships (Clandinin, 2007). All aspects of narrative inquiry research are negotiated with the research participants as they 'come to know and see us as people in relation with them' (Clandinin, 2013, p.51). If we acknowledge that we join and create narrative relationships in the midst, and we recognise that we are unable to be independent observers of experience, then we can understand how the research takes place with participants as we continue to live and experience life both independently and together (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Shaw, 2017).

As discussed earlier within this chapter, the relationship that I developed with the team of Community Healthcare Workers within OTM was central in allowing me to gain access to Traveller parents as research participants. The development of this relationship commenced on my initial meeting with the Community Healthcare Workers to discuss the details of the research study well in advance of commencing the fieldwork process. This relationship was further developed with the appointment of the Peer Researcher who accompanied me on the interviews with the Traveller parents. This support of the research study by the Community Healthcare Workers enabled the Traveller parents to trust the interview process. As gatekeepers to the research participants, I met regularly with the Community Healthcare Workers to inform the fieldwork process, and also to update them on the progress of the research study. This regular consultation enabled the Community Healthcare Workers to have their voice heard within the research process. It also served to increase my awareness of culturally appropriate language, and of the challenges faced by Traveller parents, which had a positive influence on the fieldwork journey. The Peer Researcher and the research participants were involved in negotiating when and where we met to carry out the interview. As discussed earlier, I ensured that the research participants were in a position to give informed consent when agreeing to participate, and that they understood how the stories that they shared would be used.

Narrative Beginnings

Clandinin (2013) described narrative beginnings as autobiographical interpretations where the researcher must 'attend to the places in which our stories have unfolded, and we make evident the personal, social, and political contexts that shaped our understandings' (Clandinin, 2013, p.55). This process of reflection places the researcher in the midst, so they too are part of the phenomenon which is under study (Clandinin, 2013). As the researcher tells their story, and attends to the stories told by the research participants, the researcher becomes part of both the past and present landscape (Clandinin, 2013; Shaw, 2017).

As the researcher becomes involved in the journey of narrative inquiry, their reflections of their perceptions and understanding can shift and evolve. In order to engage with readers, the researcher needs to share these reflections as 'readers often understand an inquiry in more depth when they are able to see the researcher's personal justification in the research texts' (Clandinin, 2013, p.36). Narrative beginnings enable the reader to understand the researchers position within the research study, and consider the validity of the research (Shaw, 2017).

When embarking on this research journey, I need to consider who I was within this narrative research. I asked questions of myself in relation to who I was as a woman and mother from the settled community, as a Social Care Worker within family support and as a research student. I was drawn to this research area as my work within the family support area brought me into contact with many Traveller families. It was apparent to me that there were unique aspects of Traveller culture that needed to be considered when delivering parenting support services. As a Social Care Worker, I had always been interested in hearing people's stories, and what it was that had brought them to where they were in life.

Negotiating Entry to the Field

Within narrative inquiry, the field refers to where the experience of the research participants takes place (Clandinin et al., 2010; Shaw, 2017). Clandinin et al., (2010) believed that 'the field can be the ongoing conversations with participants where they tell their stories or the living alongside participants in a particular place or places. Being in the field, then, involves settling into the temporal unfolding of lives' (Clandinin et al., 2010, p.438). Negotiating entry to the field involves negotiation with research participants in relation to their preferences for meeting and engaging in the research in a manner which does not complicate the experience for them.

I was aware that the fieldwork process had the potential to create a combination of excitement and anxiety for the research participants. The involvement of the Community Healthcare Workers and the Peer Researcher was crucial to the success of this stage of the research. As discussed earlier, their involvement served to validate the research study for those Traveller parents who agreed to participate. In order to ensure that the interview process placed the least burden on Traveller parents, the Peer Researcher contacted interested parents to agree possible times for me to meet with them. The Traveller parents were given the option to complete the interview within their home, or the offices at OTM. They also retained control over whether the Peer Researcher sat in on the interview as a support. On meeting with the research participants, I talked through the purpose of the research, and reassured them that there were no right or wrong answers. This allowed the research participants to feel comfortable to share their stories without the fear of being judged.

Moving from Field-to-field Texts

Clandinin (2013) defined field texts as 'co-compositions that are reflective of the experience of researchers and participants, and they need to be understood as such- that is, as telling and showing those aspects of experience that the relationship allows' (Clandinin, 2013, p.46). Field texts can be seen as compositions and co-compositions between the research participants and the researcher, which are developed over time through field notes, interview transcripts, photographs, emails and artefacts such as photographs for example. Each field text is seen as significant for interpreting the experiences within the field (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

The interview recordings were transcribed, and together with the field notes and discussions with the Peer Researcher, these allowed me to reflect on my experience in the field. They also enabled me to put context on the transcriptions as they were being analysed. This process of data analysis required that I move forward and back with the research data, and the stories that had been shared. During the course of the research journey, I created multiple interim texts, which ultimately formed the final research text.

Moving from Field Texts to Interim and Final Research Texts

As Clandinin (2013) explains 'field texts are always embedded within research relationships. Working carefully within the relational three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, we – alone or with participants – begin to shape field texts into interim research texts' (Clandinin, 2013, p.47). Interim research texts are narrative descriptions of stories and experiences shared from

the research field (Clandinin, 2013), which have been considered, reviewed and reconsidered by both the researcher and the research participants (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Shaw 2017). With narrative research, interim research texts are generally shared with the research participants which develops the working relationships between the researcher and the research community as the stories told are relived and retold (Clandinin, 2013). These interim texts are the researchers attempt to answer the initial research question through interpreting the field texts (Shaw, 2017). From these interim research texts, the final research text is composed in the form of traditional academic publications and presentations, and also non-academic publications, reports and summary documents (Clandinin, 2013).

As I began to reach saturation point in terms of the narratives that had been gathered, I embarked on the journey of composing interim research texts. As discussed earlier this involved consideration of the interview transcriptions, the field notes and the reflections that I had recorded following consultation with the Peer Researcher, the Community Healthcare Workers and my research supervisors, together these enabled me to refine the final research text.

Representing Narratives of Experience in Ways That Show Temporality, Sociality and Place

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through 'collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.20). Narrative inquiry is a situated and relational practice, in which stories of experience are understood within a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: temporality (previous experiences shape the present and future experiences), sociality (experiences as a social phenomenon) and space (experience happens somewhere) (Estefan et. al., 2016). Within narrative inquiry, these three key commonplaces create the three-dimensional space referred to within this research study (Clandinin, 2013). Each of these dimensions must be considered throughout the research process as they add context to the narratives which are shared (Shaw, 2017).

In order to attend to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I needed to look forwards and backwards to the stories shared by the research participants. As will be discussed within the findings chapter, the Traveller parents told stories of their own experiences of being parented, while also looking forward to the type of parents they were aiming to be. I listened for and was attentive to how place and sociality were discussed within the narratives. The

research participants gave rich and vivid descriptions of the place and context within which their story took place, while also attending to the social conditions under which their story and experience were emerging. For Traveller parents, this involved a landscape which was marked by social disadvantage, isolation and discrimination.

Relational Response Communities

Relational response communities 'often consist of people the researcher values and trusts to provide responsive, and responsible, dialogue about his or her unfolding inquiry' (Clandinin, 2013, p.210). Response communities serve to enrich the research as they allow the researcher to share and discuss their field texts and final research text (Clandinin, 2013; Shaw, 2017). These communities can provide the researcher with responsive and conscientious dialogue about the emerging research. Response communities also offer support to the researcher which can sustain them throughout the research journey, and celebrate the accomplishments and the relationships developed during the process (Clandinin, 2013). Researchers carry with them their own theories and beliefs (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Having worked in the field of social care, I had some knowledge of the Traveller community parenting values, and the significance placed on relationships with extended family members. However, I needed to be mindful not to allow these opinions and experiences to influence the narratives shared by the research participants. As Burck (2005) argued, it was necessary to scrutinise my own values and preconceptions as a researcher in order to evaluate the impact which they may have had upon the research.

As I began this research journey, my response community consisted of two key groups. Firstly, my academic supervisors provided guidance on the theory, structure, content and methodology of the research study and the final research text. They had extensive experience in the area of narrative inquiry, and they introduced me to new literature and ways of thinking in relation to the research. These supervisors supported me to adhere to a high standard of ethics throughout this research study, while ensuring that the Community Healthcare Workers, the Peer Researcher and the research participants were minded throughout the journey. When challenges emerged, they provided support and feedback.

Secondly, the Health Manager at OTM, together with the team of Community Healthcare Workers and the appointed Peer Researcher provided support and guidance, while sharing their experiences of how best to engage with Traveller parents. They imparted their Traveller specific knowledge with me throughout the research journey, ensuring that the approach that I

used was culturally appropriate and sensitive to the parents that I hoped to meet during the research. During the fieldwork process, I was able to verify the accuracy of details contained within the interviews with the Peer Researcher and also with the team of Community Healthcare Workers. This ensured that I had clarity on the context and meaning of the interview data.

Justifications – Personal, Practical, Social

When embarking on the journey of narrative inquiry, researchers need to consider the justification and purpose of the research in terms of the value that the final research text can bring to the world of academia and also to the research participants as a community (Clandinin, 2013). We must take into account the personal, practical, and social justifications for carrying out the narrative inquiry from the outset (Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin et al., 2010; Shaw, 2017). As Clandinin (2013) noted there are 'at least three ways in which we need to justify our studies: personally, in terms of why this narrative inquiry matters to us as individuals; practically, in terms of what difference this research might make to practice; and socially or theoretically, in terms of what difference this research might make to theoretical understandings or to making situations more socially just' (Clandinin, 2013, p.35).

Personal justifications for the research journey we embark upon 'often fuels the passion and dedication to our work, and it is an important element in the long-term work each narrative inquiry calls forth' (Clandinin and Caine, 2013, p.174). In order to practically justify a narrative inquiry, the researcher must consider the possibility of changing or influencing practice (Clandinin, 2013). These practical justifications highlight why the research is important (Clandinin, 2017; Shaw, 2017), and require the researcher to consider 'issues of social justice and equity (Clandinin and Caine, 2013, p.174).

The social justification of narrative inquiry research can be considered in two ways: theoretical justifications in terms of how an inquiry can influence new methodological and disciplinary knowledge; and social justifications relating to how the research can impact social policies and social change (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin et al., 2010; Shaw, 2017). As Shaw (2017) explained 'when stories are shared, worldviews change, and when worldviews change, new policies and procedures that reflect these changes are created' (Shaw, 2017, p.223).

As a Social Care Worker, I had work in the area of family support for over 20 years, coming in contact with parents from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. I was always interested

in hearing their story, as it was that story which had brought them in contact with the service. I also had an interest in research, and the development of knowledge particularly in the social care arena. It was these joint interests that initially drew me to this research study. On a practical level, this research study facilitated the voice of Traveller parents to be heard and amplified on a topic which is at the centre of Traveller culture – parenting. The sharing of narratives in relation to Traveller parenting experiences created new perspectives, and a new way of understanding Traveller parenting practices.

The area of parenting and family support are politically topical issues within Irish society (Child and Family Agency, 2013). One of the key objectives of this research was to develop Traveller informed guidelines for best practice in relation to parenting support within the Traveller community. The sharing of everyday parenting experiences by research participants served to create new knowledge on the subject of Traveller parenting, leading to the development of guidelines which will be discussed later within this research study. With the emergence of this new knowledge, and the development of the guidelines, it is hoped that this research study may influence future practice and policy development across County Offaly. It will also create a foundation upon which a broader national research study could be carried out in order to further develop this research conversation.

Attending to Multiple Audiences

When drawing together the final research text, researchers must consider both the research participants and also the public audiences. However, it is the voice of the research participants which is the most influential in the composition of the research texts, and it is to these voices that the researcher owes their fidelity (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Caine (2013) remind researchers that the final research texts are 'written with public audiences in mind' (Clandinin and Caine, 2013, p.167). What is shared within the final research text is generally a portion of the stories, experiences and narratives that have been shared and reshared within the field (Clandinin et al., 2010; Shaw, 2017). The challenge for the researcher can be to find suitable forms of presenting the final research text which 'honor the storied lives of both researchers and participants' (Clandinin, 2013, p.206). As the experience of Travellers within Irish society has been one marked by discrimination, it is crucial to respectfully represent the lives and experiences of the research participants in a manner which does not create a further sense of marginalisation.

During this research study, I needed to remain mindful of the multiple audiences to whom the interim and final research texts were being presented. Firstly, it was crucial that the research texts were respectful and fairly represented the lives of the research participants who had given of their time and participated in the fieldwork. The stories shared within the final research text were written using the voice of the individual research participants, reflecting their experience of parenting form the Traveller perspective. Additionally, the Peer Researcher, the Community Healthcare Workers and myself co - presented the preliminary findings from the research study at the Parenting and Family Alliance Conference in Athlone Institute of Technology on the 07th December 2018 entitled Parenting Well in Modern Ireland – Challenges, Rewards and Growth, and also at the Social Care Ireland Conference in Limerick on the 29th March 2019 entitled Caring for Social Care Professionals. Both conferences were attended by academics and practitioners. This further demonstrated the relationship which was nurtured and developed between myself as the researcher and the research community. This co-production of knowledge and joint working received positive feedback at both conferences, as it ensured that the voice of the research community was heard and shared throughout this research study. Finally, I needed to consider the audience of OTM. In discussion with the Health Manager, it was agreed that I would compile a summary report from the overall research study, and present this to the team of OTM and the relevant stakeholders following the completion of the study.

Commitment to Understanding Lives in Motion

Clandinin and Caine (2013) argued that 'there is no final telling, no final story, and no one singular story that we can tell. While this is troubling to researchers who rely on the truth or accuracy and verifiability of data, it is opening the possibility of narrative inquirers to continuously inquire into the social fabric of experience and not lose sight that people are always becoming' (Clandinin and Caine, 2013, p.176). Within narrative inquiry, the stories told are always partial as the lives of the research participants and the researcher are continually moving and evolving. These stories which are told and re-told are descriptions of lives in motion (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Shaw, 2017).

Our lives and stories are continually evolving. Over the course of the research study, the lives of the research participants, the Peer Researcher, the Community Healthcare Workers and my own life continued beyond the research. Over the research journey, work patterns shifted and evolved, family compositions changed and the Traveller story evolved nationally, whereby for example Travellers were finally afforded formal ethnic status by the Irish government in 2017.

At each meeting with the Peer Researcher and the Community Healthcare Workers, we discussed our thoughts on the research since we had last met, and shared stories of changes in our lives such as children starting school, upcoming weddings and children moving to different stages in life, while maintaining the boundaries within the research relationship. This exchange of stories served to enhance the personal relationships being developed, and influenced how we worked together. There is no final story within narrative inquiry; instead, this method allows me to tell the story of Traveller parenting at a point in time, though the relationship between myself and the team at OTM will continue beyond the research study through the presentation of the research to the OTM audience.

As the research study was guided and directed by these key quality assurance markers, the research that I completed gave a genuine and authentic voice to a group within Irish society who have too often experienced discrimination and marginalisation. Adhering to these quality markers provided a checks and balance system for the research process, ensuring that I completed a quality research study, which provided an understanding of the social construction of Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices.

3.8 Ethical Considerations for the Study

In order to ensure that the research study was conducted in an appropriate and ethical manner, there were a number of factors that had to be considered, in advance of commencing and during the fieldwork process. These included the process of receiving ethical approval for AIT, considerations regarding issues of child protection, the use of appropriate language and supporting parents to give informed consent, the involvement of the Peer Researcher and finally confidentiality. Each of these issues needed to be taken into account when commencing the research journey, and they will be discussed further within this section.

3.8.1 Ethical Approval Process

While the importance of relational ethics for this research study has been discussed earlier, approval from the research ethics committee of Athlone Institute of Technology was required in advance of commencing the field research process. This application was submitted in April 2018 for consideration at the May meeting of the Research Ethics Committee, at which the research study received approval to progress.

3.8.2 Child Protection

As the research focused upon the area of parenting, child protection procedures were also a consideration when seeking ethical approval, as the interviews were focused on the area of parenting. The research was conducted in line with the child protection policy operated by Offaly Traveller Movement, which outlined the process that would take place should a child protection concern become apparent during the course of the fieldwork. While this information was included on the information letter regarding the research, I reminded parents of this when seeking consent to ensure that the process was open and transparent from the outset.

3.8.3 Language and Informed Consent

As this research study explored a highly personal area in relation to family life and the parenting role, consideration had to be given to the language used throughout the interview process ensuring that it was culturally appropriate. Additionally, due to the level of literacy issues within the Traveller community (AITHSS, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Watson et al., 2017), possible issues in relation to literacy needed to be addressed. Language and literacy issues can at times create barriers to meaningful participation (AITHSS, 2010), and can impact upon the research participants' ability to provide informed consent regarding participation. It was essential that the research participants fully understood the research process. The language used on the information letter, consent form and interview schedule were discussed with the Community Health Workers from OTM. At this point the term 'parenting' was replaced by 'child rearing' as this was the language used by Traveller parents (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). This consultation process ensured that plain English was used throughout the fieldwork process as outlined in the AIT Research Guidance Notes. In order to address any literacy issues for the Traveller parents, verbal explanations were given to the research participants by the Community Health Workers when parents were approached to participate in the research. While all parents who participated were able to sign the consent form, I also provided a verbal explanation of the research and interview process when asking parents for their consent, to ensure they understood how their stories and narratives were going to be used. This supported parents to give informed consent to participate in the research study.

3.8.4 Confidentiality

As the area of parenting and child rearing is a personal topic, consideration had to be given the sensitivity of this issue. Discussing such an intimate and personal aspect of life can present challenges and raise issues for research participants (Lee, 1993). It can also carry the risk of research participants breaking confidentiality or becoming upset or distressed, for example in relation to issues of a child protection nature in relation to parenting (Corbin and Morse, 2003; Dickson-Swift et. al., 2009; Glesne, 2006; McCosker et. al., 2001), and possible supports needed should any of the research participants become distressed or upset during the process. As the interview questions had been tested with the Community Health Workers, who are themselves Travellers, this risk was minimal, though could not be overlooked. I met with the research participants in advance of the interviews, accompanied by the Peer Researcher. The research participants had an opportunity to ask questions and clarify information in relation to the interview process, and how the data collected would be used before agreeing to take part, or signing consent, helping to resolve any concerns which the research participants may have had. In the unlikely event that participants became upset, or wished to withdraw from the interview, I made it clear that the interview would end and the Peer Researcher, or the Health Manager from OTM would be available to them. Where participants wished to be interviewed, but did not feel comfortable being interviewed by myself alone, the Peer Researcher was available to sit in on the interview as a reassurance to the participant. The Peer Researcher was required to sign a consent form agreeing that the information shared within the interview was to be treated as confidential to the research process, and they would not be involved in asking the questions, or answering for the participants.

Additionally, the parents were also reassured that the interview transcripts would be anonymised. Each parent was given a pseudonym within the final research text. This further enabled the parents to share their stories without having to worry that their personal story would be linked back to them within the final research text.

3.8.5 Peer Researcher Involvement

While involvement in such research processes can provide opportunities to empower and further develop the skills of the Peer Researcher and the community to which they belong, it is also important that their skills and insight are not exploited (Elliot et. al., 2002). This was an area which required considerable consideration within the ethical framework for this research

study. The Peer Researcher took on the role in addition to their role as a Community Healthcare Worker. In order to ensure transparency, OTM asked their staff team for expressions of interest for the role of Peer Researcher. This ensured that the opportunity was open to the entire Community Healthcare Worker team. The role of Peer Researcher received additional payments for this role. This ensured fairness for the increased work and tasks that the Peer Researcher had to do. An internal interview process followed, ensuring that a fair recruitment process took place, reducing the opportunity for bias to arise in the selection process.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

This research study and the stories contained within it provide a cross sectoral study in relation to the social construction of Traveller parenting. It was carried out at a point in time, and the information provided within this study could be further developed in the future as the foundation for further comparative studies. As society evolves and develops, and time progresses, the lives of Traveller families and the circumstances within which they rear their children will also change and evolve. This research study provided a clear understanding that change is taking place at a rapid pace within the Traveller community in terms of marriage, social media influence and education to mention a few areas. This research study is a starting point in creating research discourse on this topic.

This research study was conducted as a localised case study of County Offaly. The Traveller community are a traditionally hard to reach group in terms of research. OTM provided the researcher with an ideal base for the study. The availability of the Community Healthcare Workers as gatekeepers, and the recruitment of the Peer Researcher enabled me to gain access to the research participants. The involvement of the gatekeepers and the Peer Researcher also helped to validate the study for the research participants. This research provided localised in-depth research findings on Traveller parenting across County Offaly, and will be helpful in forming the basis for broader regional and national research. This case study research could provide the basis for such studies, as the foundations have been developed throughout this research.

One of the key considerations for this research was my background as the researcher. I was a settled person doing research on a closed social group. Significant time was spent developing an open working relationship with the Community Healthcare Workers from OTM. The recruitment of the Peer Researcher was a key factor in managing this issue. The Peer Researcher enhanced the study and helped to attain sufficient 'buy-in' from Traveller parents in order to gather their perspective in relation to parenting. This study set the foundations for research which could be carried out and facilitated by a member of the Traveller community in the future. Follow on research on the area of Traveller parenting could be conducted to broaden this conversation, and be led by a Traveller researcher. Additionally, while it was not possible within this study to identify parents living on halting sites to participate in the research, the voice of the Traveller expressed during this research still provided an insight into Traveller parenting, from a Traveller perspective.

3.10 Conclusion

As has been discussed, the Traveller population is a unique, and 'socially closed' group within Irish society. This research study aims to develop an understanding of how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed. Narrative inquiry was selected as the methodological framework for this research study. It allowed the Traveller parenting stories to emerge, through the use of in – depth interviews. Central to this research study was the relationship building process which enabled me to gain access to the Traveller parenting community of County Offaly. The analysis of narratives approach was used in order to identify and analyse the core categories, and subsequent sub – categories which emerged from the data

collected. The following chapter will discuss the findings from the research fieldwork under key categories which emerged.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The objectives of this research study were to investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting, and to determine Traveller perspectives on what factors contribute towards effective parenting, while developing a set of guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families. This chapter presents a horizontal view across the participant narratives to portray their perceptions of parenting values, attitudes and practices as Traveller parents living in County Offaly.

Following Polkinghorne's (1995) Paradigmatic Mode of Analysis, as outlined in the previous chapter, four narrative threads or categories of story were identified which took account of the temporality, sociality and space of both the story and the teller (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The four categories which emerged were:

- Category 1 – Traveller parenting values
- Category 2 – Knowledge construction about parenting within Traveller culture
- Category 3 – The lived reality of Traveller parenting
- Category 4 – Parenting supports

These areas will be presented, with attention given to the sub – categories which emerged within each narrative thread. The discussion within each of these categories will present an insight into the lived reality of Traveller parenting.

4.2 Traveller Parenting Values

Parenting was viewed as a significant aspect of the Traveller culture and way of life throughout all of the interviews with both mothers and fathers. Parents shared memories from their own childhood, and their experience of being parented, while also discussing how this influenced their own parenting. A number of sub – categories emerged within this area as follows:

- Sharing of Traveller culture and values
- Respect as a core value
- The value of marriage within Traveller culture

4.2.1 Sharing of Traveller Culture and Values

As the parents retold stories of their own childhood, they spoke with pride about their culture and heritage. There was a strong message within the stories told of the significance of family, as Catherine recalled fond memories of growing up a Traveller child and highlighted the closeness that existed within Traveller families:

> *'Em, wow, so I am the eldest, so very chaotic mobile home which is where we lived...lots of kids, lots of noise, lots of responsibility. Lovely memories, do it all over again. Em, loved our closed knit as a family, loved how close we were to one another'* (Catherine 29+ years old).

During the telling of these stories, past experiences were shared in the context of how they have influenced current parenting practices. The temporality and sociality of the stories was shared as parents recounted their surroundings and experiences of growing up on campsites and in houses, while describing how this influenced their own upbringing. Teresa described her experience of living within a housing estate, while still maintaining the tradition of travelling during the summer.

> *'We grew up in a housing estate just over the road, so our younger age would have been just here in another house here. And then we moved for a while, and then came back to here. So, we moved on a bit but not…em yeah but when I look back meself there was never, ya knew you were a Traveller but there was never a distinction between Travellers or settled yourself, you would have been too young even to understand I suppose. Em because we lived in an estate with settled people, we were the only Travellers in it at the time..... we used to go travelling every summer, they'd bring us off travelling every summer, and back to school then, we were back to the houses then for the winter'* (Teresa, 29+ years old).

All parents agreed that stories from the past were shared with Traveller children to ensure they learned about their rich culture and heritage. Parenting was viewed as an important means by which Traveller identity, culture and core values could be shared between generations. All of the parents who participated in the interviews had a strong desire for their children, and grandchildren to understand their unique heritage. As Orla emphasised, she was eager for her children to maintain the Traveller language and culture through their lives.

> *'I just like the whole sense of being a Traveller I suppose I don't want them to lose that. Just the norm of our talk, the bit of 'cant' we have which is a dying thing as well what's*

left of it. I want them to know that's our little bit, I want them to know, to have respect for your parents, I want them to be close to their siblings even though that doesn't always happen either. I hope that I can help them form that long term. Em just our whole Traveller, just the ways in general. I don't want them to forget that that's where they're from' (Orla, 29+ years old).

Similarly, Brendan explained the importance of Traveller children knowing and understanding their heritage, and where they came from. Brendan recalled his own personal experience of growing up as a Traveller child, and the challenges he faced. However, while Brendan wanted his children and grandchildren to be aware of their cultural background, he was also eager that they would progress in life, and not become constrained by their history.

'To make sure you know where you came from, do ya know what I mean. Like even though they're the grandchildren and stuff and me daughters and all like that, to make sure that they know where they came from. Like I often says to them, 'would ya go down to the priest's house and see would ya get an apple.....Anything to do with a bit of the heritage, do ya know what I mean. Like what I would say there was good times, but there was also bad times. Like it wasn't all gravy and stuff like that. Like it could be rough and it could be grand. It's just to remind them, to make sure where they came from, like still get their education go on to be like, just going to put it out this way like solicitor or doctor or something like that, do ya know what I mean. Not to just go alright that's where we came from, but we don't have to stay there we can go on'. (Brendan, 29+ years old).

The dimensions of sociality and temporality were clearly evident from the narratives and stories shared by parents. The parents had a strong sense of culture which they wanted to instil within their children, as a means of maintaining their Traveller heritage and culture. As can be seen from the quotes above, parents' individual experiences of growing up as a Traveller child were also shared within the interviews, where parents, both mothers and fathers shared how these experiences influenced their approach to rearing their own children.

4.2.2 Respect as a Core Value

Respect emerged as a core value for Traveller parents when rearing their children. This was equally as important for fathers as it was for mothers. All parents interviewed spoke of

encouraging their children to have respect across three key areas; for themselves, for others and most importantly for their culture. Maggie explained it as:

> *'I always want them to have respect and know who they are and don't let anyone put them down because of that ya know'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

In addition to this, Jack explained that respect was a crucial value and core belief that he wanted his children to carry through life.

> *'That's, that kind of thing yeah…and how they treat like, a lot of Travelling kids like have great respect for their parent's cos they kind of have to really. And like down the course of years, people kind of tend to lose that, do ya know what I mean like, and I see that every day of the week. So like if they kept a fair bit of respect themselves, they'll respect their parents, ya know that's how I'd see it like'* (Jack, 29+ years old).

This was a commonly held view shared by many of the parents who participated in the interview. Parents across the age ranges believed that culturally it was important for their children to have respect for themselves and those around them. They believed that any deviation from this norm was viewed as reflection of how the child or young person had been brought up, and the values which had been instilled in them within the home.

> *'Respect and manners.....as in respect for elders, respect for one another, cos do ya know they're only one boy and one girl like, do ya know so they should look out for each other more than making little or shows of one and other. So as they're growing up they can be a little bit, do ya know, that would just expect manners for elders and things so. Yeah, because then it's, like if they didn't have respect, if they were going out cursing to every adult out there, its only showing them the way I brought them up, do ya know. They'd be looking, people would be looking down on me then saying you dragged them up not reared them up, do ya know that kind of way.....it reflects on me yeah* (Tina, under 29 years).

> *'Respect themselves and the way they dress…..and how they treat like, a lot of Travelling kids like have great respect for their parents cos they kind of have to really'* (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

> *'Rear them up with respect, respect for themselves and other people, cause you do see an awful lot of Traveller boys that have no respect for a lot of people, ya know what I*

mean. Especially country people like, you rear them up to have respect for everyone like and for themselves' (Betty, aged 29+ years old).

As highlighted throughout the interviews, Traveller parents felt that their children's behaviour within their community and wider society was viewed as a reflection of their parenting practices. This was noted by a combination of older and younger parents, mothers and fathers, who took part in the interviews, as respect for self and others was an aspect of Traveller parenting which was discussed within all interviews completed for this research study. In this way, parents highlighted the significance of temporality on their parenting style in terms of the impact which their own cultural and personal experiences had upon their expectations of their children in relation to respect as a core value within the Traveller community.

4.2.3 The Value of Marriage Within Traveller Culture

As with respect, marriage was also viewed as an important aspect of the Traveller culture. There was agreement between the younger and older parents, the mothers and fathers, who participated in the research study that as Traveller children progress into young adulthood there was a clear expectation that they would marry and have children. As Maggie, a mother of four children explained:

'I find a lot of Traveller kids drop out of school, actually some of them are took out of school to get married or, I know a lot that's took out of school to stay at home and clean all day long ya know and eh that's what they would do until they're married' (Maggie, 29+ years).

Similarly, Kate explained that Traveller families are eager for their children to get married early in life, as once they reach the age of 21 years, they are considered too old for marriage.

'Once you're over the age of 21/22, that's it you're up on the shelf, you're no good anymore, like nobody's going to marry ya. No Traveller man will want to marry them, cos they're all getting married at this stage, like some of them will get married around 18, even girls get married at 17, do ya know what I mean, they go up the north there to get married like.....It's kind of going more because, say like years ago the parents were like, oh we'll meet the boy like and if he treat's her right then yeah grand, but then it's just like, do ya

know what I mean. Young ones are just trying to get married as young as they can, so like they're even going up to the north to get married cos they're not 18' (Kate, 29- years).

John also emphasised this point noting that in some Traveller families, the pressure comes from the older generations to maintain the tradition of getting married at a young age.

'It's coming from their parents, that's where it's coming from, there's too much pressure on them like, that a young Travelling boy in this day and age it's all in the head, getting married, get out and do this and thing is not going right and they can't handle that, ya know that kind of way' (John, 29- years).

While there was agreement between the older and younger parents that marriage was a significant milestone within Traveller culture, some of the parents felt that the attitude towards the timing of marriage within Traveller culture was changing and evolving. Many of the parents believed that Traveller parents were actively trying to encourage their children to delay marriage. Betty, a mother of four young children believed that while many Travellers continued to get married at a young age, attitudes towards marriage were changing within Traveller culture. Betty shared that, in her opinion Traveller parents were supporting their children to delay marriage, so as to allow their children to gain life experiences before settling down to have a family. Betty also explained that some young Travellers were themselves choosing to delay marriage, and they were being supported by their parents in this decision.

'I think it's better because you would see a few young ones, a few years back that would be stuck in the house that wouldn't be allowed go no place, they would be stuck in the house allowed go no place, let not do nothing, getting married and some of them mightn't have a good life and I think a lot of parents is after learning from that to give the young ones a bit of life before cause you don't know what kind of life they are going to have when they are married……and then they'll do the one thing all their life…….it all kinda varies, with some people, like some young ones don't want to, they'd rather settle down later in life and there's still more getting married just as young, and younger I think the yoke is 17 now 17 mostly…….some young ones don't want to, they'd rather settle down later in life and there's still more getting married just as young and younger I think' (Betty, 29- years).

Similarly, Tina spoke about how she felt that marriage should be delayed for Traveller young people to allow them to experience life. As Tina explained:

'Well, I wouldn't like them rushing to get married just because it's a Traveller thing, because I think if I had a choice, I would have lived with my husband first to get to know him more, do ya know what I mean…now I know I know him, but you can give yourself more, like if I wanted to get married, I could give myself more than what I got, now I'm very grateful what I did get' (Tina, 29- years).

However, Jackie, a mother of four adult children, argued that while Traveller young people had been delaying marriage until their early 20's, the trend towards younger marriage was re-emerging within Traveller culture. Jackie believed that Traveller teenagers themselves were focused upon getting married at a younger age, and were pressurising parents to support them in this decision.

'I've seen them nowadays getting married at 15 or 16 years of age which is ridiculous to be getting married…...yeah cause the whole idea or thinking out there is that Traveller children got married much younger years ago, and now they are getting a bit older……. Yeah, it has changed in the last 2 or 3 years, before this they wouldn't be married until they were over 20 years of age. Now for the last 3 years I hear of 15, 16, 17 year old's getting married, but I think it's wrong. They are only a child and they shouldn't be getting married at that age…… I think it's the young ones and young fella's that is putting the pressure on parents to do this, to get them married, because if a young one runs away with a fella that's the pressure that she will have to marry him, or I'll be good with him and I'll be bad with him after that and she will have to put up with that life' (Jackie, 29+ years old).

Overall, marriage was viewed as an important aspect of Traveller family life. Stories told reflected upon the temporality of marriage in that the practices and traditions of the past have influenced present expectations that parents have of their children in terms of marriage. While there was a sense that the situation is changing for Travellers young people, overall, there was agreement that marriages occurred at a much younger age for Travellers when compared to their peers within the settled community.

4.3 Knowledge Construction About Parenting Within Traveller Culture

Within this narrative thread, parents shared stories from their own experiences of learning to parent. They considered the key people within their lives who taught them their parenting skills.

The parents who participated shared stories of how they learned what was expected from them as a mother or father within Traveller culture. Three main sub – themes emerged in this area:

- Gender expectations within the Traveller community
- Gender roles within the Traveller home
- Learning gender roles
- Learning from older generations

4.3.1 Gender Expectations Within the Traveller Community

All of the parents from both the older and younger age categories shared stories relating the temporality and sociality of the female and male role within the Traveller community. This was a thread which ran through each interview, where parents spoke of the expectation that Traveller boys conform to the cultural norm of being able to stand up for themselves. These parents shared stories which emphasised the significance of the Traveller cultural space, and the gender expectations which have been maintained through the years. Traveller boys were expected to take on this role from a young age. Maggie, a mother of four young children explained that:

> *'I think in the Traveller community they want like, oh proper little boys ya know being proper like being men before they're even men if ya know what I mean… I find when I look at other families and other kids and that and then little girls, do ya know are like little women, and the little boys they have to go on like men and they're about 7/8 years old'* (Maggie, 29+ years).

Betty further emphasises this point, adding that Traveller boys were taught to 'stand up' for themselves from a young age.

> *'The boys have to stand up for themselves, especially in Traveller community cause you get walked all over, so you don't want them getting trampled all over either for the sake of that ……It's mostly for boys, boys have to stand on their own two feet ya know that kinda way, cause with the girls, when they come to a certain age they don't mix if ya know that kinda way, like when they're married or at home, but the man always kinda.....he can walk*

around the corner, and within one phone call, one conversation there could be 30 men ya know what I mean, that's what I'm saying so they have to be a bit tough' (Betty, 29- years).

In contrast, while the cultural expectation was that Traveller girls were not permitted to socialise or be out alone, many of the parents felt that this was evolving and changing over time. Orla explained that while Traveller girls were being afforded greater freedom, there still remained a stigma for Traveller girls who went out alone.

'I think that children have more freedom nowadays.....when I was growing up, ya didn't get to go, if I wanted to walk to a shop, if I was of age to have a boyfriend supposing, so now I'm 13, 14, 15, 16, supposing whatever I am and I want to walk to a shop, 'Where ya going.....I'm going to the shop' 'Grab your brother there by the arm, there's not a loss bring them with ya' And that was just the way it was. Nowadays I see like social media, I see young girls walking on their own with no siblings with them, and that was seen back then as they would bring back information if there was information to be brought back, like she was talking to a boy, or was holding a boy's hand, or whatever the case may be. And that was their way of getting some form of the path I might take in life. But now like you will see young girls, and not that they're doing anything wrong, don't get me wrong the majority of them, but that's seen as 'ah look at that she's walking down the town with nobody with her, ya don't know where she's off to'. There's speculation there.....then that girl, probably doing nothing wrong, might go on to get married, and it will always be 'I remember she was never outta the town, never a chick or child with her. Ya know what she'd be up to'. So that unfortunately is the stigma' (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

However, there were also parents who felt that the freedoms afforded to Traveller girls had increased over the years across the culture. Betty said she felt that the situation had improved in that Traveller girls were being allowed to spend more time by themselves independent of the family, and particularly the males within the family.

'I've nieces meself now and that day is gone……I think it's better, because you would see a few young ones a few years back, that would be stuck in the house that wouldn't be allowed go no place, they would be stuck in the house allowed go no place let not do nothing, getting married and some of them mightn't have a good life, and I think a lot of parents is after learning from that, to give the young ones a bit of life before cause you don't know what kind of life they are going to have when they are married (Betty, 29- years).

This view was shared by the fathers who took part in the interviews, as Jack explained that:

> *'Like I have cousins, they're still as old fashioned as be f**k do ya know what I mean like, like I say the girls not allowed outside, caught with a boy they'd be nearly quartered out there in the back garden that type of thing, but like then ya look at other families, like the likes of ourselves, and it's not like that so ya know what I mean like, like we don't have those old-fashioned values as much'* (Jack, 29+ years).

There was clear agreement between all parents, both older and younger, that there were specific expectations for boys and girls, mothers and fathers within Traveller culture. These roles were based upon gender, and carried specific responsibilities. However, there were mixed views on whether this situation was changing and evolving for females within the Traveller community. While a combination of older and younger mothers and fathers believed that girls were being afforded a greater level of independence and freedom, other parents were of the view that this new independence continued to carry a stigma for Traveller females.

4.3.2 Gender Roles Within the Traveller Home

Mothers and fathers who were interviewed agreed that for the most part, there were clear and distinct roles assigned to males and females within Traveller households. The Traveller parents who participated in the interviews explained that domestic chores and child – minding responsibilities were assigned to Traveller girls from a young age, while Traveller boys and fathers completed the manual tasks and outdoor work. As Ann, a mother of adult children explained:

> *'Well, when I was very young, I was showed how to wash the cups and plates, now we called them the vessels that time, and Mammy showed you how to scrub her buckets and her pots and stuff like that and you got to learn how to do that……. You'd watch Daddy making the buckets, and you'd watch him and he'd say hand me over that hand stick, hand me over that clips, you got used to all the tools that he was using, or he'd say keep that fire lighting…..the boys were mostly with the horses now and that, or maybe out the country haucking [begging] for their own bits.'* (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

Similarly, Tina a mother of two young children also shared a similar experience as a Traveller child growing up. Tina explained that:

*'Well, ya see the boys kinda get, they kinda think they can get away with more than the girls. Well now I don't me and my sister, now one would be upstairs and one would be downstairs that way, while I was the one always been followed after doing this cleaning thing, so she'd be watching me but the girls do more. But then the boys would help fill the bins, they do help do the boys stuff, with back yards.....just bins, eh…the back yards, cleaning d'ya know the back yards and things, turf and all that' (*Tina, 20- years old).

Many of the Traveller parents who participated in the interviews agreed that while the situation was changing slowly, Traveller children were still expected to take on traditional male and female roles. Helen, a mother of adult children explained this from her perspective:

'There's still more the traditional Traveller fathers there, and you know I can see them there pushing the push chairs, and feeding the child and changing them, but at the same time like they wouldn't be seen putting clothes in the washing machine, or to hang clothes out, you know something like that, or if they were doing house work not them all, but if some of them was doing a bit of house work, and a knock came to the door the hoover or the brush was gone so they wouldn't be called a sissy but it is changing slowly' (Helen, 29+ years old).

This was similar to Billy's experience, a father of adult children, where he echoed what many of the Traveller parents told within their stories. Billy explained that while the situation was changing and evolving for Traveller families, this was often behind closed doors. There was a sense that while men were beginning to take a more active role in caring for their children, there remained a stigma attached to men completing these tasks. As Billy explained:

'They have, they've changed big time.....better so it is, for the women, better for the women cos the men are starting to participate more with helping with the children and stuff, so they are and with the housework, now not every man will do it but.....they lie about it too a lot of them but they do it.....Macho, once somebody else comes in…. "I don't do this, I don't do that", but they do do it' (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

Both older and younger parents agreed that Traveller families were quite traditional in terms of the tasks assigned to mothers and fathers, and boys and girls. This traditional allocation of roles was influenced by the parents own experience of growing up as a Traveller child, and the roles which they had been expected to complete based on their gender. These narratives demonstrated the temporality of Traveller parenting. Stories of change and stigma attached to Traveller men taking a more active part in the household chores and child rearing activities

demonstrated the social context within which Traveller parents were operating. Traveller men were taking a more active role in the practical child rearing practices within their families, though this continued to occur within the privacy of the home.

4.3.3. Learning Gender Roles

All of the parents who participated in the interviews explained that Traveller children learned their roles within the family from a young age. The parents all agreed that these roles were specifically based upon the child's gender, and were learned through observations of parents and older members of the family. Children were also assigned specific tasks from their parents, and these tasks were generally based upon whether the child was a boy or girl. The Traveller parents who participated were in agreement that Traveller mothers were significant role models for their daughters, while boys learned the manual skills required to provide for their family from their fathers. As Shelly a mother of adult children explained:

> *'Watching me mother. Me mother worked hard too, and watching her that's where I got everything I kind of know I learned from me mother'* (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

Similarly, Betty a mother of young children echoed this view when she explained that she learned her role from the older members of the family. As Betty shared:

> *'You learned from your eldest ones you did; you take up where they leave off……. the girls had the house to do, all the cooking to do. The boys were working……. you'd have to hand them out the dinner……. they were spoilt'* (Betty, aged 29+ years old).

Jackie, a mother of four children recalled her experience of taking on the maternal role within the family from a young age, while her brothers were assigned the traditional paternal role of cutting wood and tending to the horses.

> *'Well, when I was 13, 14, 15 they'd be gone out through the country. I would have to clean the house and I would have to put on dinners, and make the breakfasts for the boys if they weren't up, but they would be up cause they'd be gone to school, but when they would come home I would have the dinners ready for them and stuff like that and clean up……Because that was my routine every day and she would tell you what to do…… Yeah, your Mam would tell you what to do, and if she was there, I wouldn't have to do it. She would do it, I'd help her like, I'd clean the house but she'd do the cooking and things, but the days she wouldn't*

be there I would do the cooking……They would have to cut the sticks, no they wouldn't have to do the cooking or cleaning, they'd have to go out to the horses and feed the horses, water the horses, they'd have to bring the fire in and cut the fire up (Jackie, 29+ years old).

Maintaining such traditional gender – based roles had created some challenges for parents, particularly in a culture where a significant amount of the parenting responsibility rested with mothers. As Maggie, a mother of young children explained about her own situation:

'He won't wash up, he won't change nappies, and he won't do that. I think in a lot of Traveller households it's the women…. I think that comes from years ago with them isn't it, and it's all just passed down. Me myself personally, and I've often said it to him, I don't believe in anything like that, I think everything should be 50/50 ……. Yes, you can mop a floor; yes, you can wash up the vessels ya know, stuff like that. Em but from his point of view, he grew up obviously with the women doing everything, he doesn't think that, ya know, he does try to help sometimes but only to a certain extent he won't be like 'oh I'm a molly', he would call it…….. I *think there's a lot of pressure on eh Traveller…like I sure to God that there's other, ya know, there's young Traveller couples out there where the woman would like her husband to get up and do stuff ya know but because that's not the way it works in that community'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years of age).

As some of the parents pointed out during their interviews, such traditional role expectations also created a challenge for Traveller fathers who were willing to participate in completing some of the household tasks. In some situations, Traveller mothers believed that the fathers felt a pressure from the wider Traveller community as they could not be seen to be carrying out tasks that had been traditionally viewed as the maternal role within the family. Orla explained:

'*Within our culture men don't clean, men don't change nappies, men don't cook……but outside work, or cars, or yard, sheds that was his task, and his task to do them would be spotless. He would not, he'd get under a mobile home, for to scrub a bit of tarmac from under that mobile home like. He was a cleaning freak as well. But he'd do chores indoors where no one knew, hence I suppose why the boys were made do stuff which wasn't the norm within the Travelling lads. And even my brothers would be like 'I don't want ta, friends be laughing at me, or looking at me or whatever'. And she'd (mother) be like 'get out and do it now'. Em today, they're grown men now today, only a few of them kept that going, two of*

them kept that going within their own families, and the rest of them are 'I will not do it, she'll do it'. (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

The influence of Traveller culture and family values was evident throughout the stories told by the parents. Stories of strong traditions and expectations in relation to parenting and family roles, demonstrating the social aspect of the narratives shared. The parenting practices of the past continued to have an influence upon the parenting practices of the present. The temporality of Traveller parenting was demonstrated throughout the stories shared, where parents spoke of how they had learned how to be within their community, and how this way of being was carried forward through the younger generations. However, for some of the parents, this influence of the past on their present had created challenges within the parenting role and family relationships. While change was emerging, it was not without its struggles. This struggle to progress and adapt, particularly in relation to gender – based parenting roles was further compounded by the physical and social space within which the parenting role was being conducted; a community with a strong sense of connection and tradition. However, this traditional Traveller community operates within a space and society where Travellers have experienced significant levels of marginalisation.

4.3.4 Learning from Older Generations

All of the Traveller parents who took part in the research agreed that grandmothers were viewed as a source of support, information and advice in relation to child rearing within the Traveller community. As Tina and Billy both explained, it remained the mother's role within the family to seek advice from their own mother, should they have any questions or concerns in relation to the health and welfare of their children.

'Oh, me mother yeah for advice.....I'd go to his mother, but I'd be more to my mother, do ya know, you kind of more go to your own sort, like me mother or sister' (Tina, aged 29-years old).

'We'd sort it ourselves. We sorted everything with our own kids ourselves.....No only her and meself and your mother like. You'd go to her now and she'd sort…she'd go to her mother with it. But me no, I wouldn't' (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

Shelly, a mother of adult children recounted her memories of calling on her mother for advice when her children were younger. As Shelly explained:

> *'My mother was something else, now I wouldn't even put myself in my mother's shoes, she was something else, ya know? But I learned it from her cos me and her was close, and I know how important it is later for girls and boys to be close..... And like that she used to say to me 'Shelly, I don't know everything, and my advice to you is if you're worried yourself, go to your doctor', or go to a nurse of whatever the case may be, and I'll always give mine the same advice and it pays.... well on my side it pays'* (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

All of the parents who participated in the interviews, both mothers and fathers, agreed that they would contact the grandmothers. Betty explained that she felt this was due to the nature of Traveller culture and their sense of privacy in relation to family issues. As Betty explained:

> *'Oh, my mother you would absolutely have to go to her……. if she couldn't give you the advice now you would go along with your own…… Because it's privacy ain't it, Travellers are very, very private about their stuff and about their family and about everything else……. I think I kinda reared mine the way I was reared'* (Betty, aged 29+ years old).

All of the parents who participated in the interviews agreed that Traveller parents, grandparents and the wider family network were viewed as a significant source of support when raising children within the Traveller community. The family network was viewed as holding knowledge and advice which could be called upon as needed by younger members of the family. As Tess explained:

> *'I think there's nothing big enough that your family can't resolve, or you can't talk to yer family about. Now that's what I think it is. There's nothing, there's no problem big enough that you can't go to your family…. they come to me and do ya know like that. We talk about everything, our family does……. As a Travelling mother I'm no different to what you are [settled mother], but as Travellers what we do is different..... I have 8 sisters like you know, my sisters look after my kids, and I look after their kids do you know what I mean'* (Tess, aged 29+ years old).

All of the parents were in agreement on the significance of extended family, and in particular the older maternal members of Traveller families. They were seen as a source of practical

support in terms of minding children, but more importantly they provided advice and guidance to younger parents and family members based on their own experiences.

4.4 The Lived Reality of Traveller Parenting

Analysis of the narratives shared by Traveller parents found that parenting continued to be a role which remained the role of the mother primarily. However, parents explained that external influences are having a significant influence on how Traveller children are being parented. Three sub – themes emerged in this area:

- Parenting practices
- External pressures that influence Traveller parenting
- Changing expectations for Traveller women within Traveller culture

4.4.1 Parenting Practices

There was a shared sense among the Traveller parents interviewed that being present and available to their children was an important aspect of parenting. The majority of the parents placed significant emphasis on listening to their children, and what they had to say. They saw this as a means of growing and developing their relationship with their child, so that in time their children would come back and talk to their parents about their worries or concerns. As Maggie, a mother of young children, and Tess explained:

> *'We try to listen to them and eh, ya know just listen and be there, that's all, ya know, that you can do really, just talk, yeah just be there, ya know and listen to them and we try to spends a lot of time, ya know like days out and ya know we always want to do something with them'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

> *'Make sure a child knows they're loved, and listen to them. Cause a child, like my father used to say 'listen to a child because whatever he tells ya there's this much truth in it* (gesture with hand to show small amount)*, but they'll add this much on to it* (gesture with hands to show large amount)*'* (Tess, aged 29+ years old).

Whilst Shelly, a mother with adult children concurred with this view, she argued that the parenting relationship should not be focused on being friends with your children, but on being their parent. This view was shared by other parents who participated in the interviews also. As Shelly explained:

'Listening is very important and do your best by them, and I think it grows a good relationship…. I'm not talking about friends, there's too many Mammy's and daughters being friends, not parents' (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

Some of the parents also highlighted the need to observe their children in order to get a sense of what was happening in their lives, and to let children know that they were loved and valued within the family. Some of the parents who were interviewed also saw the importance of role modelling behaviours for children. As Billy and Tina explained:

> *'To listen and observe, you have to watch what they're doing, basically for me personally'* (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

> *'If you talk to them, they'll talk back, if you roar at them, they'll roar back, so I think it's the way you speak, your manners ya know respect-wise that tell them even though they don't understand that but it's the way that you treat them that they'll treat you back'* (Tina, aged 29- years old).

Education was cited by many of the Traveller parents as having a significant influence on their parenting values, attitudes and practices. Participation in education was viewed as having a positive impact upon parenting within the Traveller community by both the older and younger parents who took part in the interviews. Many of the older parents who took part in the research recalled their own experiences of education, and of having been taken out of school at a young age. As they explained that was the norm for their generation. As Shelly explained, while she had a positive experience of school, she was removed from school at a young age to stay at home and help her mother with household chores. The cultural and social dimension of Traveller life at that time dictated that young Travellers did not need to remain in education. Shelly recalled:

> *'I really loved school, but like everything else you were taken out of it at a young age as well……My father being old fashioned, you were taken out of school, you were getting too*

old. Then I worked, I done a lot of house cleaning……pretty hard work. And I worked at home, helped Mammy every way possible'. (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

However, the experience of education recalled by Ann was more typical of the experience recounted by the majority of older parents who participated in the interviews. This experience involved Traveller children being placed in special educational classes, and often being left to teach each other. As Ann explained:

'Well like when I was in school, I seen a lot of children like I said being washed and dressed, I seen special classes in my time where children never knew their name……children of all ages, different ages learning the other children, Travelling girls in 14 and 15 being told you're not going to be going to secondary school, you're going to be married and have a family and like never no encouragement what so ever different play in the yard a different lunch time so how is children supposed to integrate……. It has improved' (Ann, 29+ years old).

Billy shared a similar narrative of his experience of education, though he acknowledged that the situation for Traveller children within schools had improved greatly. As Billy shared:

'I think it's changed a bit; I think it's changed a bit now. There not, well when they go into school now; they're not looked at 'oh go back to the back of the class' do ya know what I mean. Or they're not 'I'll have more time for this child here because he's ya know country child or town, country person. Ya know, it's coming together now, ya know what I mean, it's working out cause like, the way I look at it, it's coming together as far as I can see. It's not like you go over there [pointing to one side of the room], *and you go over there* [pointing to the other side of the room]. *I'll spend more time learning you, while you sit over there like at the back of the class years ago'* (Billy, 29+ years old).

However, the younger parents who participated in the interviews shared stories of positive educational experiences. They spoke of having been encouraged to remain in education, and continue through to complete their Leaving Certificate. For these parents, education was seen as the gateway to progressing within society, and was something which they were actively encouraging within their own families. As Tina explained:

'My father wouldn't let ya be home, cos he's very educated, yeah so he.....ya I did me Leaving Cert, ya need your Leaving Cert…. Oh yeah, I'd like them to be going and finish

out school, even college if they want, go and get themselves a job…sure there's nothing else in this town like, sur' you're getting married there and all you're doing is sitting at home' (Tina, 29- years old).

Similarly, Ann argued that education was necessary for Traveller children in order for them to progress in life. While she acknowledged that not every Traveller child would remain in education, Ann felt it was something to be encouraged. Ann shared that:

'What's helped now is their education … education is the way forward now because it is going to come to a time when Traveller children need to be educated. Some will keep it up and some mightn't keep it up do you know but it's just life has just changed' (Ann, aged 29+ years).

One of the mothers who participated in the interviews, believed that educating her children was equally as important as letting them know that they were loved. As Shelly, a mother of adult children explained:

'I stayed put in the one area for to educate them and I think, eh I think always in the back of their minds they'll carry that with them. It's awful important to love your kids, and to show them that love, but it's twice as important to make sure that they get an education. And that they're better than you if you know what I mean, that they're growing up better, so their families grow better' (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

The narratives shared by the Traveller parents demonstrated the influence which past experiences of education have had upon present day parenting. This temporal dimension shows the changes which have occurred both within Traveller culture in terms of changing values in relation to education, and the evolution of the education system to be inclusive of children from ethnic minorities. The space within which education occurs has evolved, as has the space within which Travellers are parenting their children. Traveller parents placed significance on participation and progression within the education system. This was significant for the Traveller parents as it demonstrated a significant shift in where education ranked within parenting priorities.

4.4.2 External Pressures that Influence Traveller Parenting

The Traveller parents who participated described multiple external influences that had created challenges for them as parents. The availability of social media was highlighted by both older and younger parents as a new challenge for parents. Some of the parents felt that it has led to increased access for young people to one another, and was having an impact on family relationships. As Billy, a father of adult children explained:

> *'It's just basically kind of just like a lot of people's going on the phones, and especially now but like, towards where I would have been younger there would have been no Facebook. Now it's like you walk into a house, and you see Mammy one side with her face stuck in a phone, Daddy the other side with his face stuck in a laptop, look at the children and they're all on the same thing'* (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

Jack, a father of young children shared similar concerns. He felt that social media was putting pressure on young Traveller girls to present themselves in a particular manner. Jack shared that:

> *'Like the way a lot of girls dress these days, say this isn't being old fashioned but I'd often be on social media there, and you'd see girls that they be f*****g near naked from head to toe plastering themselves all over line, I'm 100% against that, there's no point in saying like that I'm not'* (Jack, aged 29+ years old).

Comments made by Ann, a mother of adult children demonstrated the changing social world within which Traveller parenting is taking place. The place and world within which Travellers are carrying out the parenting role has changed, and Ann's comments demonstrated the impact of place and sociality on that role when she explained that:

> *'I think it's coming from the way we were reared years ago; do you know what I mean, we were reared years ago that you had no phone for anything to contact anybody……. there is so much there today, there is so much fighting, so much shooting, so much going on, so much drug taking you know like, and then there's intimidating Travellers there who intimidate other people, and that's a big thing do you know what I mean…... It's harder altogether now there's nothing out there for Travellers now; there is nothing they can do, like everything is took away'* (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

A second pressure that many of the parents, both older and younger, identified was the issue of isolation and separation from close family. This arose as a challenge for many of the parents that took part in the interviews, and was highlighted as a significant pressure for Traveller parents, particularly due to the difficulties in relation to Traveller accommodation. Similar to the comments made by Ann earlier, she explained the impact which the place where parenting occurs has upon the parenting role.

> *'Well putting them into standard housing, and isolating the parents into the settled community and the settled community rejecting them, do you know what I mean, that hasn't worked and it has affected Travellers around mental health and suicide big time really has……Being in a place where you're not happy, do you know what I mean, because its bringing it back to you, you have none of your family around you, you've no friends around you. Where if you were with a group of your own friends and Travellers, and you get to the stage where you're not able to do any more, and they're able to mind you, they're able to look after you, they don't put their own in a nursing home, do you know what I mean. And that's the biggest core with the Travellers an ethnic minority group of Travellers because they like to be able for their family to look after them'* (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

The final area identified which challenged Travellers in their parenting role was their experience of discrimination throughout their daily lives. Many of the parents who participated in the interviews explained that discrimination was having a significant impact for Traveller parents. A minority of parents felt the situation was improving, with Maggie, a mother of young children explaining that:

> *'I think it's changing a little bit cos I don't think it's as bad as when I was growing up now…Oh God, it was always knackers and tinkers and ya know'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

However, despite this there was general agreement that there remained a real and obvious level of prejudice and discrimination within the broader community towards Travellers. As Ann, a mother of adult children explained:

> *'There is so much prejudice there, there is so much discrimination there. Like everywhere you go in, you are looking over your shoulder to see is anybody following you, no matter how well you know. And you couldn't pull up now in a motor car at a house, except if you were known, like that fear is in the settled community as well. Like that, like do you know,*

or you go in to a supermarket now and you are bound to get somebody following you around, do you know so that's there. You go in, or you're put into a house then, in a terrace that's all settled community and they know nothing about a Traveller, bring in the first thing that reminds them you are a Traveller, and they are gone to the residence group, is gone to the council and it's not your fault, you're in there, the council are after putting you in there because they don't have anything Traveller specific for you' (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

Similarly, Orla and Tess believed that a level of prejudice remained between the settled and Traveller community. They explained that:

'I can tell ya, the challenge is that a lot of settled people still don't know us, and are afraid of the unknown with us. And there's still racism and discrimination against us. And it's only up until weeks ago, I have experienced it myself. And it's the unknown, I just can't seem to understand why they don't, can't understand, and as much as we talk about it or publicise it, however shape or form it gets out there, good, bad or indifferent, let me tell ya. I feel like we're still, the majority of the Traveller community are frowned on for the minority that's letting us down. And I think em, that's leading to a lot of the discrimination side of things, em and I've noticed over the years though that a little bit has changed a little bit' (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

'Discrimination is big, and its worse, I think it's getting worse now. Maybe years ago, because I was a child, I didn't notice it or didn't see it, or me mother protected us too much, but now it's everywhere, good God its everywhere……. It is it's a big thing on parents, because the child, the child's going looking for work and because they're Travellers they come back and they're upset and the parents. You're fully qualified for this job and everything, but just because of who you are you're not getting it. How do I deal with that when they come back, do ya know what I mean so that's a big thing' (Tess, 29+ years old).

These parents' experiences of prejudice and discrimination highlighted the real pressures that Traveller parents experienced within their day – to – day parenting role. It also demonstrated the environment and culture within which Travellers rear their children, and the impact of sociality and place upon their parenting journey. The experiences described were similar from both the male and female perspective, but differed somewhat based on the age of the Traveller parent interviewed, with older parents having experienced a higher level of discrimination during their formative years, when compared to younger Traveller parents.

4.4.3 Changing Expectations for Women Within Traveller Culture

Some of the Traveller parents that took part in the interviews felt that the Traveller culture was changing and evolving in relation to the expectations placed on women, and the role they play within the family. They explained that while the primary caregiver to the children remained the mother, there was a trend emerging where Traveller boys and men were expected to take on some of the household chores also. As Betty and Billy explained, the culture was beginning to see a shift in the traditional values whereby males within Traveller families were expected to carry out household tasks.

> *'Well, me brother's boys are still the same, just left home and the wives are doing it now. But em, I think it is starting to change a small bit now, even with me own, like mine would have to make their own beds and tidy up after themselves, which my own brothers wouldn't do and now they'll do it. Like they are only small yet, but things like that that would be the start of it'* (Betty, aged 29- years old).

> *'Like I have cousins, they're still as old fashioned as do ya know what I mean like, like I say the girls not allowed outside……But like then, ya look at other families like the likes of ourselves and it's not like that. Like we don't have those old-fashioned values as much'* (Billy, aged 29+ years old).

In addition, there was a sense among the majority of the parents who participated that Traveller girls were being afforded increased independence. While, as discussed earlier, marriage remained a clear expectation for Traveller girls, they were given greater opportunities to experience life before settling down to marriage and family life. As the parents explained:

> *'I think that they have more freedom now because even with us if we try to, if the discos was on, and if I wanted to wear a skirt going then I'd have to sneak out and change up in my friends' house…… I think because of the year now, d'ya know, the year isn't and I think some of the parents, some parents are younger now, ya know and others then, em I think they just want their kids like married……Yeah, my opinion anyways I think that they're dressed up looking for husbands, that's what I think'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

> *'I think it's better because you would see a few young ones a few years back that would be stuck in the house, that wouldn't be allowed go no place, they would be stuck in the house allowed go no place, let not do nothing, getting married and some of them mightn't have a good life, and I think a lot of parents is after learning from that to give the young ones a bit*

of life before, cause you don't know what kind of life they are going to have when they are married' (Betty, aged 29- years old).

'Women, girls yeah for some, I won't say them all, for some it's for the better…they learn how to drive now and they have their own independence, cos it was kind of before the man that got the money to the home, now the woman has it. They have pocket money say, that way I think it's better for women' (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

The stories shared by the parents in relation to the changing expectations for women within Traveller culture demonstrated the temporality of Traveller parenting. The attitudes and values of the past, while being maintained within the present were beginning to evolve, and were likely to influence the role of Traveller women into the future.

4.5 Parenting Supports

Within this category, the stories shared by Traveller parents focused upon their experience of parenting supports available within the area, while also considering the reasons why some Traveller parents may struggle to avail of these supports. Three sub – categories emerged:

- Perceptions of current supports
- Barriers to availing of supports
- Traveller identified priorities for support

4.5.1 Perceptions of Current Supports

All parents who participated in the research highlighted the importance of a trusting relationship between Traveller parents and existing or potential support services. Parents were in agreement that the help and support provided by the Community Healthcare Workers from OTM was invaluable. These workers were trusted by the parents who took part in the research, and were viewed as a source of information and support. As Shelly, a mother of adult children shared:

'Any help I ever got in Tullamore or knew about, the Community Healthcare Workers was the one person to tell me about it, or to come to my door or tell me what was going on and

that. And she would be the only one I'd confide in to say something to' (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

Similarly, Betty stressed the importance of trust in the relationship with support services as a means of enabling a parent to fully avail of a service. Betty explained that:

'For me now, I'd trust the Community Healthcare Workers more than I trust the Public Health Nurse, and she is probably just the same as the Community Healthcare Workers but I trust Community Healthcare Workers more because I know her and you know that what your saying to her is between you and her, you know that kinda way' (Betty, aged 29- years old).

Orla shared her insight into how OTM were able to get families to work with and meet the staff. She believed that the sharing of information was a vital means of encouraging Traveller parents to develop relationships with support services. Orla also gave an insight into the temporality of Travellers experience over the years of working with support services. She identified the fears which Traveller parents had in relation to talking about their family situation, and the potential stigma that was associated with this. As Orla shared:

'I think resources like OTM, because they have Community Healthcare Workers, and they come out with information packs for the families that allow themselves to be involved in it. With information, information packs on immunisations or smears or do ya know, just that general stuff. And I think that, I think that is the pathway to opening up, cause I think for a long time, my mother definitely would have had this image if you let people like Community Healthcare Workers, which we didn't have at the time, social workers, settled people that we had no knowledge of into your home to question stuff, they looked upon as why they asking that question about the child, what does that mean. So, for years I think the problem that was the stigma that was there for us, for Traveller men and women. And I think even if the women wanted to open up, the men wouldn't have it cause they were afraid, afraid of the unknown is the word. And now that has changed, yeah, I think times have changed, and people are talking more. It's not looked upon as we want yer children or we're judging where you're living or we're looking for faults in ya. It's not like that anymore, do ya know, unless they have good due reason do ya know' (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

Traveller parents who participated in the interviews also gave examples of positive support that was available in the area. These included community run youth clubs and family resource

centres. These services were identified as supports, as the parents found these services to be open and genuine in their support of Traveller parents and child rearing practices. Tess shared that:

> *'The youth group, the one up here in (*named the area*) now, the kids go to the club up there as well. And the community centre, they're a great support now. Whether you're a Traveller or not they don't care who you are. If you live in* (named the area) *they're there for ya. Like they're there for your friends so they're a great support.....I know the people that's actually in there. That's how I trust them to let the kids go up, but to let the kids go on their own I wouldn't. No that's why (husband) had to bring them. I wouldn't trust them'* (Tess, aged 29+ years old).

While the majority of parents identified external services that provided support to Traveller families, such as public health, OTM and schools, there was agreement between both the older and younger Traveller parents that grandparents and extended family were still the main source of support to them when they have worries or concerns about their children. As Tina explained:

> *'Just advice and, cos when you have a child, when you're having a child you never expect what you're going to expect until ya have to. Like if I had to go back now on what I thought I would never have a child til I'm 40! Ya know but the fact that I have the 2 of them there it is a big step in things but I think the advice off your mother and maybe your sisters.....so looking at them and my mother's advice helps an awful lot'* (Tina, aged 29- years old).

As discussed earlier, the extended Traveller family was viewed as the primary source of support. Older generations, and the maternal figures in particular, such as mother, grandmothers, aunts and sisters were seen to be invaluable sources of advice and information. This was particularly relevant when parents had queries or concerns in relation to their children.

4.5.2 Barriers to Availing of Support

Parents identified a number of issues that created barriers to Traveller parents availing of support services. Initially Traveller parents spoke about the potential stigma of attending services as being one of the main barriers to accessing support outside the family unit. Parents held concerns over the confidentiality of services. Many of the parents spoke of the fear of being judged by service providers for the differences between Traveller children and other

children accessing services. Some of the parents felt these fears were connected to Traveller parents' level of education. As Shelly explained:

> *'Definitely and truly the stigma that comes with it and it has to be private and confidential…… It's all back down to education though, do ya understand. If they're educated about it, if it started about being educated about it you shouldn't be afraid of it. It's kind of building that confidence the whole way up again…. because you're scared of the unknown, you know what I mean, everyone is, your lack of education you're ten times worse'* (Shelly, aged 29+ years old).

In addition, some of the older parents identified literacy issues and fear as a barrier to accessing supports. As Orla shared:

> *'I suppose for other Traveller women though, who haven't the, who are ignorant to the fact, they can't read and write and stuff, I'm sure that is added pressure on top of being a Traveller woman rearing kids. You can't read and write and you don't have the links, do ya know just the supports of em, if your child wants to go to an after club, or even for school. And they're all written paperwork that's brought home from a small child to parents, and you don't have the ability to read these stuff, and then that child goes to school like 'where's your, yer, you can't go because you didn't get it done or you didn't pay the fee or whatever'. That poor child is like 'well I talked to Mammy, I don't know Mammy said she'd be in, or Mammy said she'd whatever'. And part of it is reading, I do think there is still reservations within the Traveller community when its anything got to do with child specific stuff in case they think they're failing as a parent, probably doing the best job that they can do, but they may feel, that if you see the social worker or someone to that standard, saw you not doing that right or that you would be penalised for that, that you'd be questioned and that could bring other people at your door and that would cause issues. And I think that a lot of the Traveller women are ignorant to the fact that it's different now and stuff, and they're not made aware I don't think'* (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

Similarly, Betty further developed this point when she spoke about the fear which Traveller parents have in relation to child rearing practices, and the differences that can exist between settled children and Traveller children. Betty believed that rather than acknowledging these differences as part of a broader culture, Traveller parents were concerned that they would be judged for being different.

'You'd be afraid sometimes going to them people if ya know what I mean, cause sometimes Travellers are a bit rougher than what country people be so you'd be afraid of social services or anything up on top of your back. Traveller children and country children are different, they get reared different so from a country persons perspective of a Traveller child instead of a country child they are completely different' (Betty, aged 29+ years old).

Traveller parents expressed a palpable fear of social work becoming involved with their family. This fear stemmed from the experience of previous generations whereby children had been removed for Traveller families, demonstrating once again the temporality of the Traveller parenting role. Many of the parents who participated in the interviews spoke of their concerns that their children would be taken away from them if social workers became involved with their family.

'Well, I don't think social workers is very good for you, I think more people get a kind of a…like they get all caught up in themselves because they think automatically don't take my child away, that's how they'd make me nervous' (Tina, aged 29- years old).

'Oh, I don't trust them, I think if I had a problem with one of the kids or that and I'd be afraid if I went to somebody else……. I would think that they're going to look down, they're going to look down on me for the way I'm rearing my kids. I think people kind of look down kind of "uhh" like cos he's a Traveller kind of ya know, and I'd be afraid in case like they would think something bad, or they'd go to social services or something just because mine is kind of being reared a bit different to their kids' (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

'It's the fear of social workers there because Travellers always had the fear of social workers and that needs to change…. a lot of them might be out travelling at certain times of the year, they might miss an appointment, they're took off the list because they miss an appointment, OTM are on the phone then 7 days a week trying to get them back the appointment ok and its very strict' (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

While trust was viewed as a means of engaging with support services, some parents also spoke about a lack of trust being a significant barrier to accessing support services. Tess explained that from her experience there have been times where she has found it difficult to trust support services as being genuine in their efforts to support Traveller families.

*'Trust is a big thing, so that puts me off everything. Like even with the grandkids, there going to the clubs, I have to know someone in there before I'd trust them to let them go into it, before I'd let the kids go in there. Trust is a big issue. I don't want to hand me kids or grandkids over to someone I don't know, you don't know what could happen to them.... Some of them come in, some of them are a load of b******t right. They come in 'oh we're great, we're here to help the Travelling people, to help the Travelling people.' They're the biggest load of crap, they're only there to try and get, so people say 'oh look at me I'm great'. They don't like Travellers, they're just there to help themselves basically, that's all. Put it on the CV, well if I can work with Travellers, I can work with anyone. Do know what I mean. It's not genuine, now there's a few people there, it's just horrible. It's not nice they just use ya, cause you're a Traveller they use ya. So, I don't trust them'* (Tess, aged 29+ years old).

From the stories shared by the parents who participated in the interviews, many of the barriers that Traveller parents experienced had stemmed from negative experiences of the older generations in the past. While the social aspect of support services for Travellers was evolving, the experiences from the past continued to wield a significant influence on the younger generations of the present.

4.5.3 Traveller Identified Priorities for Support

There was agreement between all the Traveller parents who participated in the research, both younger and older parents that services need to be non – judgemental of Traveller parents. Parents explained that the support services needed to be aware, and accepting of the intricacies of Traveller parenting. Maggie suggested that support services should work and liaise with existing Traveller supports such as OTM as a means of understanding Traveller culture and parenting practices, while engaging with Traveller parents.

'I would like somewhere ya know you can bring them and they can be themselves without people judging them, and being like they're Travellers yeah, ya know kind of way……. I can talk to the health nurse, yeah she's very nice and I can like if I have a problem, if I do think 'oh God something' ya know I can say it to her cos sometimes she'll pop down, she does help me out and if I have anything, any worries I can just say it to her…..she doesn't look at them as in like ya know 'oh they're Traveller kids' or that, she doesn't treat them any

different, she looks at them probably the way she looks at all the kids ya know that they're only kids.....Build that relationship up and never shoot them (Travellers) *down because your gone if they give you something confidential, its confidential you can't go back and tell anybody else because do you know that's the first trust that they give you they'll say to you do you know…. where if they* (other services) *were working with OTM they could say look these fellas are out travelling at present and it would save a lot of hassle do you know what I mean'* (Maggie, aged 29+ years old).

While parents identified parks and playgrounds as potential practical supports that were needed in the area, one of the main areas of need identified was that of education. Parents noted that the completion of school homework could be a challenge within Traveller families. This connected back to many Traveller parents own experience of education and their literacy skills. The experiences from the past were creating challenges within the current day. As Ann explained:

'*Well, the support they need now is they need their children to be well educated to take up jobs that's a big thing……Children need to be doing like do ya know, homework classes and stuff like that where children can go because remember their parents don't know how to read and write and they're not able to help them with any homework or anything you know'* (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

Ann also spoke about the support that was previously available to Traveller families within schools through the Traveller liaison officer. She felt that this service was very beneficial to Travellers, and was a support which should have been re-instated.

'She was great she was needed and that was money well spent on her…. Well, she'd come and she would visit you every so often if you had a problem in school. They could contact her, if there were books needed that you couldn't cover or you contacted her, she would see what she could do for you. And if your child was after coming from one school to another, she'd get a school to take them in, they wouldn't be any length out of school do you know what I mean and she was absolutely out know she would visit your home on a regular basis so she knew everything that was going on in your home' (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

The parents who participated in the interviews had mixed views on whether supports provided to Traveller parents should be organised and run specifically by Travellers. While some parents

felt that integrated services would be beneficial, the predominant view was that Traveller led services would create better engagement by Traveller parents. As Ann explained:

'Travellers running it and that more of them could come up as well where playschools and stuff could be ran by Travellers and some of these organisations coming up could be run by like you could have a Traveller up there' (Ann, aged 29+ years old).

'Honestly, I think Traveller specific, and only for the reasons of, and even be led by a Traveller specific to be honest, because … like even when you ask me the question, I couldn't even work it for you to express how I feel about being a Traveller woman, so only a room full of Traveller women will get that do ya know' (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

'Yeah, cos like I don't have a problem with settled people, do ya know some Travellers don't like their kids hanging around settled people because they'd say they can lead them to like boyfriends and drinking and smoking, but I think myself that they can do that themselves, it doesn't take anyone else to do that' (Tina, aged 29- years old).

However, despite this Traveller parents felt that the practical arrangements were a central aspect to the success of any Traveller support service. Issues such as the time the service is available at, the location, how the service is advertised and the level of paperwork involved for Traveller parents were key issues that needed to be considered from a Traveller perspective.

'Like getting the word out there I suppose, and then you still have if its paperwork for the families that can't read, that's still the issue like so, how do you publicise like, unless you go like one to one.... if its paperwork but now I believe what the girls (Community Healthcare Workers) are doing these days even if there is paperwork, they read it to you first, and they get what they can get out of the parent at that moment and that time. But then like any parent you need time to think of 'do I want to interact, does she need this, or would I like that, or do ya know'. You need time to think about.... I think when you say parent and toddler groups, or stuff like that even if they were open to it, even if the majority of them have so many kids, the time is of the essence.....what about mothers where her eldest is only 8 or 9 how is she gonna get out in the morning unless she brings the whole clock with her, and the majority mother and toddler groups is exactly what it says 'toddler groups'. Do ya know, so for ones that think well sure I offered that service, and they didn't show up or didn't cooperate, its often because they didn't want to for some of them it's because they

had no one else to baby sit, and as I said the husbands don't step in. That's the case, like you could say sure the husbands at home why can't he mind the kids, it just doesn't happen. That's it with hospital appointments if you don't have kids with ya, you have someone sitting in the car with them when you go in' (Orla, aged 29+ years old).

The Traveller parents identified key areas which they felt parents needed support in, predominantly the area of education. In addition, they also identified key factors which need to be considered in the establishment and organisation of any support service which aims to work with Traveller parents on any level.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the stories shared by Traveller parents were reflective of a culture whose members are experiencing significant challenges while rearing their children. The research found that while marriage, respect, family life and the support of extended family remained significant aspects of Traveller culture, education and the role of parents in supporting their children to progress within education was also a priority. This aspect of parenting brought its own challenges, as literacy difficulties continued to present challenges for Traveller parents. The parents who participated in the research study highlighted the barriers which Traveller parents experience when engaging with support services. These included a sense of discrimination, and a fear of being judged by those professionals delivering parenting support services. In addition, Traveller parents discussed factors which they felt needed to be considered when providing parenting support services within the Traveller community, such as timing and location of service provision, and literacy issues for parents.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the findings from this research within the wider context of information and knowledge garnered from the literature. Irish Travellers have long been marginalised in Irish society, and their parenting practices have often been called into question. The purpose of this research is to understand the experience of Traveller parents within the Irish context. The aim of this research project is to examine how Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices are socially constructed, and from there determine how Traveller parenting can be most appropriately supported, from a Traveller perspective. The objectives of the study are to investigate Traveller views and experiences of parenting, and to determine Traveller perspectives on what factors contribute towards effective parenting. The study also presents a set of guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families.

This chapter will provide a comprehensive discussion on how the findings complement or contradict the catalogue of literature on the subject. A social constructionist approach is used to examine Traveller parenting, values attitudes and practices. Burr and Dick (2017, p. 29) argue that within social constructionist theory the 'concepts and categories we use to think and communicate with are socially constructed rather than 'natural' features of the world'. This is linked with the notion of temporality, sociality and space which was also discussed throughout this study. In other words, stories of experience are understood within a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: temporality (previous experiences shape the present and future experiences), sociality (experiences as a social phenomenon) and space (experience happens somewhere) (Estefan et. al., 2016). The past experiences of Traveller parents influence their present parenting behaviours. While reading the following section it is important to remember that the social and physical environment within which Travellers are parenting influence their practices. It is also important to understand that Travellers' own personal experiences have an influence on their parenting practices.

5.2 The Influence of Culture on Traveller Parenting

One of the objectives in this study is to gain an insight into Traveller views and experiences of parenting. In this Traveller parents are clear that good parenting is about teaching children about culture and passing on ideas about respect and tradition. In the literature review,

parenting was examined in a general sense and then from the perspective of Traveller culture because Traveller culture plays a significant part in how this group parent their children. They come from close knit families and depend heavily on extended family (AITHSS, 2010). It was also explained that they experience discrimination which influences their parenting approach (Harvey, 2013). In addition to this, the research found that with social media Traveller parents are facing challenges connected with their culture. Parenting can be defined as 'the primary means of training and preparing children to meet the demands of their environments and take advantage of the opportunities within those environments' (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016, p. 19). It is a process which takes place within a broader societal and environmental context, which involves both internal familial relationships and networks, and relationships which are external to the family. The findings from the fieldwork aspect of this research study demonstrated that the rearing of children is viewed by Travellers as essential, in terms of passing on cultural values. Therefore, Travellers experience of parenting is closely linked with culture and tradition. Traveller parents believed that the practice of child rearing and parenting ensured that cultural values would be maintained from one generation to the next. Bornstein (1991, p. 6) explored the concept that the 'particular and continuing task of parents and other caregivers is to enculturate children . . . to prepare them for socially accepted physical, economic, and psychological situations that are characteristic of the culture in which they are to survive and thrive'. Traveller culture is steeped in tradition, particularly in relation to child rearing and family life. Some of the research participants maintained that an element of the parenting role was to ensure that children were aware of and educated into their culture, as a means of survival in adulthood. Traveller families are very conscious of the challenges their children will experience as they negotiate their way through life as part of an ethnic minority group, such as discrimination. Traveller parents are faced with the challenge of passing on and maintaining cultural values to their children while also operating within a predominantly settled community.

In this study, Traveller parents were viewed themselves as the conduit through which Traveller identity, culture and core values could be shared between generations. All parents in this study agreed that stories from the past were shared with Traveller children to ensure they learned about their rich Traveller heritage. According to Bornstein (2012) individual cultures are typified, characterised and distinguished from other cultures by established and widely acknowledged ideas on how individuals should think, feel and behave as an active member of that culture. Parenting plays a key part in preparing children for their role within their culture

of origin (Bornstein, 2012). 'Expectations and practices learned from others, such as family, friends, and other social networks; and beliefs transferred through cultural and social systems' shape how an individual approach to the role of parenting (National Academies Press, 2016, p. 22). This is the context in which Travellers experience parenting. Culture can be a means of constructing parenting practices, and maintaining cultural values and norms across generations (Bornstein and Lansford, 2010; Harkness et. al., 2007). This is significant in the case of Traveller parents. A strong sense of pride was conveyed by each and every Traveller parent who participated in the study; pride in relation to the Traveller way of life, heritage and culture for example the importance of connection to the extended family, the importance of marriage and childrearing practices which pass on Traveller tradition and culture. Parents interviewed used stories to share the Traveller heritage with their children, in an effort to sustain and share their culture and maintain their legacy and customs. These stories included vivid descriptions of times past where Traveller families moved from one area to another in line with their nomadic lifestyle. This is very closely tied in with social constructionist theory in that Travellers learn how to parent based on the families and environments they are born into. Culture is viewed as a collection of shared beliefs and behaviours that are held by a group of people which serve to direct their daily routine and interactions and are communicated to younger members of the group (Bornstein, 2012). These beliefs and patterns of behaviour can influence parenting styles and therefore provide children with a unique experience of being parented within their culture. Parenting practices are constructed as a result, by cultural influences and they are maintained across generations (Bornstein and Lansford, 2010; Harkness et al., 2007).

It is clear that Travellers' experience of parenting is connected with the sense that they are custodians of Traveller tradition and heritage. This is understandable as they are part of an ethnic minority group. It is also a challenging position to hold as society is changing at a rapid pace, but this will be discussed later in this chapter. This study was interested in the factors that influenced Travellers approach to parenting, and it appears that handing down tradition is very much part of that. This will be discussed in the next section in more detail.

5.3 Influence of the Extended Family on Traveller Parenting

The views that we hold in relation to parenting are socially constructed and formed based upon a number of factors; the culture within which we grew up, our experience of being parented,

and our position within society. According to Bowlby (1973) and Kothchick and Forehand (2002) the parents own experience of being parented will influence their ability to respond to, and meet the needs of their child so it is important to examine the influence parents have in relation to parenting when trying to gain an insight into parenting experience and practices. In this study grandmothers in particular were viewed as a source of parenting advice. One mother raised the point that she would only go to her mother for advice because she was conscious of privacy. Grandparents and the wider family were viewed as holding knowledge and advice that could be called upon as needed by younger members of the family. The extended family were also available in a practical capacity for example they minded children when they were called on.

I found that within Traveller culture, the older generations played a significant role with the rearing of children and the parenting process. As stated earlier, parents can also learn appropriate social and practical parenting behaviours from those role models within their broader network, such as siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents (Sameroff and Fiese, 2000). Traveller parents continued to look to the older generations as a source of knowledge and guidance. This is the context in which the participants were raised and learned about parenting. Older generations of the one family proved to be a significant support to Traveller parents, particularly due to the cultural difference which existed between Traveller parents and the settled community, as parents must strive to ensure that their children are 'equipped to function in a society where they may be marginalised or experience discrimination' (Breland – Noble, 2014, p.173). The sense of being culturally different had a significant role to play in terms of current parenting practices. Parents learn how to equip their children to cope in a society where they are treated differently. This is important because discrimination and prejudice is part of their daily experience. Boys have to stand up for themselves so they are taught to be men from a very young age. One mother said that Traveller boys have to stand up for themselves otherwise you could be walked over, so they have to be tough. Discrimination is still an issue for Travellers. Three of the older mothers in the study talked about constantly looking over their shoulder and feeling judged in their daily lives. One mother said they feel that the prejudice they experience is based on a lack of understanding. Girls on the other hand are taught to abide by the norms and cultural expectations of their own community by taking on a parenting role from a young age. Traveller girls on the other hand are taught to take on parenting roles from a young age as the expectation is that they will be married and become wives and mothers in their late teens. If they are married young and stay within the own

community, they are somewhat protected from discrimination they could experience in the broader society.

It is important to note the significant role that extended family members play in terms of parenting and family support within the Traveller community. In this study one mother said she had eight sisters and depended on them for advice and practical parenting support. She offered this help in return also. Another woman said she would go to her mother and her sister for parenting advice. The reason Traveller families go to their family members is because they are private about their families. One woman said she would ask her mother for advice and if she could not get advice from her mother, she would make decisions herself as she was conscious of privacy. Another mother said that Traveller mothers talk about everything, she said she is no different to settled mothers but what they 'do' is different. Greenfields (2002) made the point that the role of the extended family in ethnic minority groups like Travellers cannot be underestimated in terms of explaining behaviours. The importance of the extended family is referred to in Irish national policy within the Agenda for Children's Services (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2007). Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020) also places a strong emphasis on parenting. The policy recognises the challenges which raising a family can bring, particularly for communities such as Travellers who already experience significant disadvantage and inequality (AITHSS, 2010; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; Special Interest Group, 2013; Watson et al., 2017). However, it does not focus on ethnic minority groups in any detail relating to their particular experience in terms of extended family support. This research study now adds to the narrative by exploring Traveller perspectives on their experience, and providing a set of guidelines for best practice for working with Travellers in relation to parenting, which were developed by Travellers. A broad network of family support from within the ethnic community is common within ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups as they have endeavoured to maintain their social and cultural identity within mainstream society (AITHSS, 2010). In addition to this family support from within the Traveller community provided parenting advice and the transfer of parenting skills knowledge. It also provided the opportunities for Traveller children to socialise with other Traveller children as they were living in predominantly settled communities. Policy makers can tap into this resource when working with Traveller groups. Family support services use the natural network of support around the person (Family Support Agency, 2013), and Traveller families already use and value this way of working. One of the challenges, however is that Traveller families are very cautious in relation to their privacy as a result of their lived

experiences and may be wary of sharing information with outsiders. Travellers have experienced significant discrimination (Harvey, 2013; Irish Traveller Movement, 2013; Naidoo and Wills, 2000), and as a result they struggle to trust those who might be tasked with 'helping' them with their parenting duties. The parents in this study stated that there was a real and obvious level of prejudice and discrimination towards them. They felt judged and treated differently due to their ethnicity. They were reluctant to seek parenting supports outside of their own communities because of this. It would be important for policy makers to design parenting supports with this in mind as the workers would need to be aware of the lived experiences of Traveller parents in relation to discrimination in order to gain their trust. If the Travellers do not trust them, they will not invite them in to work with them. In this situation an organisation such as Offaly Traveller Movement would prove invaluable as they are a trusted source of knowledge and support which already exists within the community.

5.4 Traveller Parents Reflection on Parenting in their community

As discussed within the findings, family ties are of significant importance in Traveller culture, and the views of the older generations of the extended family members are seen to hold power and authority (McDonagh, 2000). Social learning theory maintains that parenting behaviours are influenced by the persons own experience of having been parented (Dix, 1992; Virasiri and Yunibhand, 2011). A sense of respect and loyalty both for the family, and older generations was viewed as a central aspect of effective parenting in this study. The research found that all parents encouraged their children to have respect across three key areas; for themselves, for others and most importantly for their culture. There is a strong sense of respect for these role models from the older generations within the Traveller community and therefore younger generations strive to maintain the parenting expectations of the culture (McDonagh, S. 2018, Personal communication, 06 June). Parents believed that any deviation from this norm was viewed as a reflection of how the child or young person had been brought up, and the values which had been instilled in them within their family. This expectation leads to pressure on younger generations as they must live up to expectations set out for them in term of respect and loyalty. This is very much linked with the idea that extended family members hold power and authority over the generations. Younger generations work hard to maintain the parenting expectations of the culture (McDonagh, S. 2018. Personal communication, 06 June). Further research would be useful in order to develop our understanding of the importance of these role

models, and could be carried out with grandparents focusing on their views of their role within the Traveller community. When we consider the significance of extended Traveller family support and nomadic lifestyle of Traveller parents (AITHSS, 2010) which have been explored in the literature review, the Traveller community have maintained that sense of respect from one generation to the next. This in turn has remained a central aspect of Traveller life, and the associated parenting practices. This is evident in this study because younger Traveller parents spoke about valuing the opinions of their parents and grandparents and they saw them as a source of knowledge and advice. Any worker who proposes to carry out family support work with Traveller families would need to understand this dynamic, and work not only with the family themselves but with the extended family if they wish to initiate change. It would be important to bring the extended family on board as they would need to accept suggested changes as much as the child's parents.

The Traveller community viewed the behaviour of children and young people as a reflection of the parent's capacity to rear their children, while instilling strong cultural values within them. Traveller parents carried a pressure in relation to how their child rearing and parenting practices would be viewed by the wider Traveller community depending upon the behaviour of their children. This created an additional stressor for parents who were already parenting their children under challenging circumstances in many cases. Parents in this study said that they experienced significant discrimination and felt judged by the communities within which they lived in relation to their parenting practices. Traveller parents felt that their children's behaviour within their community and wider society was viewed as a reflection of their parenting practices. This was a consistent finding across the age groups of parents who took part in the interviews. The research found that there remained very clear expectations of how Traveller children should behave. Traveller men were expected to be physically strong, independent and provide for their family financially (Hourigan and Campbell 2010; Ni Shuineir, 2005). Parents were expected to teach Traveller boys how to stand up for themselves, as had been the specific gender expectation maintained through the years. Additionally, there was an expectation that Traveller parents would ensure that girls were not permitted to socialise or be out alone. The research found that while this expectation was evolving and changing over time, with Traveller girls being afforded greater freedom, there still remained a stigma around this.

5.5 Knowledge Construction and Emotional Support

The findings from this research indicated that Traveller parents valued having a connection with their children. Being present and available to their children was an important aspect of parenting. This included parents being available to listen to their children, and hearing what they had to say. Traveller parents saw this as a means of growing and developing their relationship with their child, so that in time their children would come back and talk to their parents about their worries or concerns. Parenting behaviour is closely connected with both child competence and child maladjustment (Collins et al., 2000). Empathetic parenting practices such as listening to, and sharing a connection with children have been found to foster higher levels of psychosocial well-being during childhood (Baumrind, 1991; Zhou et al., 2002). The research findings indicated that Traveller parents valued parenting practices that fostered positive relationships with their children, whereby they could discuss issues and support their children throughout life. Baumrind's (1991) four parenting styles are highlighted in the literature review (authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved and authoritative). Parents tend to use a combination of the four parenting styles in their child rearing journey. Authoritative parents demonstrate high levels of warmth towards their children, combined with firm and consistent boundaries (Baumrind, 1991; Kopko, 2007; Miller et al., 2012). According to Baumrind (1991) authoritative parenting has consistently been linked to the best outcomes in children. In this study authoritative parenting was identified by Traveller parents to be the predominant style. One example of authoritative parenting in this study can be seen where some of the mothers said the they try to listen to and be there for their children. They try to spend time (days out) with their children and let them know that they know they are loved. Another parent said they would not advocate being friends with their child but they do value the idea of being a good role model. While this reflects the parenting practices of parents in this sample, a national level research study would be necessary to explore this further.

Traveller parents were clear that the parenting relationship should not be focused on being friends with their children, but on being their parent. This involved implementing boundaries, and making the hard decisions. Again, this is linked with Baumrind's (1991) authoritative style of parenting. Cultural norms about parenting practices typically influence what beliefs and values parents teach their children so it follows that this practice of listening to children and sharing connections has been passed on over the generations. As mentioned in the literature

review family relationships have been universally recognised as having a substantial influence on the long-term well-being of society as a whole (Family Support Agency, 2013). The types of parenting practices mentioned above are positive and promote good relationship building and this is good not only for the child but also for society. State led family support services could build on these parenting practices.

As noted earlier, it is clear that Traveller parents looked towards the older generations as their parenting role models. Members of the extended Traveller family act as role models, and can be particularly influential in terms of a first-time parent's approach to child rearing (Bigner,1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002). In particular, the maternal role models of mothers and grandmothers were viewed as a source of significant guidance, support, information and advice in relation to child rearing within the Traveller community in this study. Bigner (1989) advises that one of the factors that impact on parenting style is the availability of role models involved in the parenting role, particularly the influence of one's own parents. From an ecological perspective the parents own experience of being parented and the quality of the relationship which they had with their caregivers influences their ability to respond to and meet the needs of their child (Bowlby, 1973; Kothchick and Forehand, 2002). Social learning theory also maintains that parenting behaviours are impacted by the individuals own experience of being parented and the behaviours they have learned to model. Traditionally it was the mother's role within the family to seek advice from their own mother should they have any questions or concerns in relation to the health and welfare of their children. The family network was viewed as holding knowledge and advice which could be called upon as needed by younger members of the family.

Parental attitudes to the tasks and requirements of parenting have been viewed as a significant factor when considering parenting styles adopted by individuals throughout society (Baumrind, 1991; Bigner, 1989). As this research indicated, parental attitudes towards parenting constituted the main social influence that the child experiences during their early years and impacts significantly on the development of the child's personality. As discussed within the literature the availability of positive role models involved in parenting and children rearing, particularly the influence of birth parents had a significant influence on new parent's own approach to parenting, and the type of behaviours and attitudes they passed on to their child (Bigner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kotchick and Forehand, 2002). As was discussed earlier within this chapter, family life and child rearing were viewed as significant milestones within Traveller culture. The literature in relation to parenting indicates that the predominant view

was that adults tended to parent their children in the way they were parented, indicating that our values, traditions and norms are constructed from our interaction with the world around us (Volmert et al., 2016). Burr (2015) argues that social constructionism involves identifying and assessing the knowledge we take for granted. It also involves being aware of the historical and cultural specificity of how we understand the world, knowing that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and appreciating that knowledge and social action go together. Social construction theory takes the view that knowledge as we know it is constructed within society as opposed to being created (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015). One example of this would be the marriage of Traveller girls at a younger age than their settled counterparts. Marriage is seen as a means of progression within the Traveller culture. In this study one woman said that Traveller girls were sometimes taken out of school to get married, another said they go across to border to Northern Ireland where they can marry before they turn eighteen. Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices have been constructed through both their internal cultural experiences, and their interaction with the wider external community.

Children who grow up having experienced supportive parenting are more likely to connect within their communities (The Parenting Network, 2019). It is apparent from this study that Travellers have very supportive family networks and are very connected within their own communities. Traveller parents, however, must strive to ensure that their children are 'equipped to function in a society where they may be marginalised or experience discrimination' (Breland – Noble, 2014, p.173). This means that Traveller have additional challenges to contend with in their parenting role by comparison to their settled counterparts. As previously stated in this chapter Traveller parents talk about feeling judged and discriminated against. This means Traveller parents are conscious of parenting with the additional pressure to manage the possible effects of discrimination.

Within Traveller culture, family ties are of significant importance, and the views of extended family members are seen to hold power and authority (McDonagh 2000). Parents learn appropriate social and parenting behaviours by being exposed to not only their siblings but also their grandparents from which they learn the norms and skills required within the culture (Sameroff and Fiese, 2000). Social learning theory maintains that parenting behaviours are influenced by the persons own experience of having been parented. It is these behaviours that parents learned to model (Bornstein, 2012; Virasiri and Yunibhand, 2011). The findings from this research demonstrated that Traveller parents agreed that they parented their children in a similar manner to how they themselves had been parented. They followed the examples set by

older members of their family, and their own parents in particular. For the most part, while the cultural expectations were evolving, Traveller parents who participated in the research study held similar expectations for their children as had been set for them as children. So, on the one hand Traveller parents reported felling concerned about their children's use of social media because it increased their access to other young people both within and outside the Traveller community. On the other hand, patriarchal authority remained evident in relation to the selection of partners for Traveller girls. One mother said she was rearing her own children the way she was reared herself. Traveller children learned their roles within the family from a young age. For the most part, these roles were specifically based upon the child's gender, and were learned through observations of parents and older members of the family. This will be discussed further in the next section.

5.6 Gender Based Roles Within Traveller Families

The parents that I spoke with had clear expectations for their children based upon Traveller cultural norms. For example, parents explained that the role of carer and home maker remained primarily the remit of Traveller women and mothers. While there were parents who believed that this situation was beginning to evolve and change, the majority of parents believed that Traveller men continued to hold the role of provider. They reported that Traveller men took care of the practical tasks around the family home, while Traveller women provided the care and nurturing for the children, looking after their practical and emotional needs, in a similar manner to how they were parented themselves. This validated the point made by Weisner (2002), who claimed that parents engage children in certain activities such as chores or taking care of siblings to help them acquire the culturally appropriate skills necessary in adulthood. As deliberated within the review of the literature, Traveller boys and men continued to be afforded a greater level of freedom and independence, when compared to the girls and young women (Helleiner, 2000; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). The findings from this research study consolidate the view that the role of Traveller girls and women continued to be that of carer and homemaker, where they 'were expected to spend a number of hours a day cleaning and / or looking after younger siblings or relatives. Boys and young men are not expected to do any cleaning or child minding' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015, p. 24).

The Traveller community is patriarchal in nature, with the men and fathers seen to be the authority figures both for the children within families, and also in relation to Traveller women

(Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Ni Shuineir, 2005). Traveller men were expected to be physically strong, independent and provide for their family financially (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Ni Shuineir, 2005). They were looked up to within the culture, and seen as a source of authority. Children were also assigned specific tasks from their parents based upon their gender. Traveller girls traditionally learned their role within the family from their mother, while boys learned the manual skills required to provide for their family from their fathers. However, maintaining these traditional gender-based roles had created some challenges for parents, particularly in a culture where a significant amount of the parenting responsibility rested with mothers. The research found that some Traveller parents felt there was a pressure on parents who wanted to develop an alternative model of parenting within their home. Some parents agreed that while the situation was changing this change was taking place at a slow pace. Traveller children were expected to take on gender specific roles. Parents in the study said that Traveller men who wanted to help out with household chores felt a pressure as this type of activity was frowned upon by the wider Traveller community. Helen (age 29) made the point that while there remained a chort of traditional Traveller fathers, some Traveller men were taking on roles in relation to caring for their children and completing household tasks. Helen felt that while these tasks tended to be carried in the privacy of the family home, the situation was slowly changing. Similarly, Traveller parents experienced a pressure from the wider Traveller community as they tried to encourage their children, both boys and girls to complete tasks that had been seen as gender specific. A social constructionist perspective argues that knowledge and the truth as we know it are created by the mind as opposed to being discovered (Schwandt, 2003). Society assigns meaning to certain actions and behaviours and how the world is constructed depends on where one lives at a particular time (Burr and Dick, 2017). Traveller parenting clearly has a gender construction and while this is changing somewhat, traditional roles are still evident.

5.7 Traveller Parenting and Education

While Traveller parents have a strong desire for their children to understand their heritage, they are also keen for them to have opportunities to progress in life. The findings from the research indicated that education was seen as an important factor in relation to how Traveller parents supported their children to progress within society. While the parents who took part in the interviews had mixed experiences of the education system, there was agreement that the

educational opportunities available to their children had greatly improved. Many of the older parents who took part in the research recalled their own experiences of education, and of having been taken out of school at a young age, which was the norm for their generation. The cultural and social dimension of Traveller life at that time dictated that young Travellers did not need to remain in education. The research found that the experiences of younger parents, in particular differed greatly to that of the older parents. They spoke of having been encouraged to remain in education, and continue through to complete their Leaving Certificate. This finding was indicative of the changes which had occurred within the education system in relation to Traveller children. Traveller children were receiving the same educational opportunities as their peers within the settled community. For Traveller parents, education was seen as the gateway to progressing within society, and was something which they were actively encouraging within their own families. As noted in the literature review, AITHSS (2010) revealed that over a quarter of Travellers aged 45 – 64 years had only primary education, with that figure rising to 38.5% for those within the 30 – 44 age group. Additionally, almost one third of Travellers had difficulty in reading, with 50% of Travellers having significant difficulty reading the directions on medicines. (AITHSS, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015; Watson et al., 2017). Education was viewed as having a positive impact upon parenting within the Traveller community by both the older and younger parents who participated in the interviews. While Traveller parents are encouraging their children to engage in education, in some situations Travellers are also being encouraged to marry young. This is a challenge for both Traveller men and women in some cases. In the finding of this research male Travellers have been encouraged to engage in manual tasks and be the breadwinner. These ideas are at odds to some extent with the notion of education which would be the norm amongst the settled population. Traveller children are less likely to complete second level education with only 13.3% of Traveller females progressed to upper secondary cycle by comparison to 69% of the general population (Central Statistics Office, 2017).

Marriage, and having children remains a central aspect of Traveller culture. Within Traveller culture, marriage was perceived as a means of progression. When compared to their settled counterparts, Traveller teens were preparing for marriage during their teenage years as opposed to making plans to progress their education (Helleiner, 2000; Hourigan and Campbell, 2010). As previous research has indicated ‘for Traveller girls, the task of finding a marriage partner assumed a higher position in their priorities than progression into work or education placements’ (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p.39). Similarly, Census 2016 found that 22.6%

of Traveller girls between the age of 15 and 24 years were married, when compared to the general population with a figure of 1.2% (Central Statistics Office, 2017). The significance of marriage is also evident given that only 35.1% of Travellers between the ages of 25 and 34 years were single, when compared to 69.1% of the general population who were within the same age group (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Marriage within the Traveller community provided status for Travellers as mentioned previously, with the boy or young man seeking permission from the girl's father in order for the marriage to proceed. While it indicated that Traveller young people were prepared to take on the adult roles within the community such as homemaking, parenthood and providing for a family, it also allowed Travellers to influence their social, economic and political position within the broader Traveller community and hierarchy where for example 'marrying a partner from a richer or more powerful Traveller family, in particular, offered significant opportunities for progression' (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p.39). As Hourigan and Campbell (2010, p. 40) noted 'for women, if you're not married and a mother, you're no-one. If you talk to the young girls, they don't have any ambitions or dreams other than getting married'. According to the participants in this study the trend towards younger marriage was still very evident in the Traveller community. One parent commented that she believed Traveller teenagers themselves were focused on getting married at a younger age and they were pressuring parents to support them in this position. Again, it is worth noting that our objective realities are constructed through complex two-way interactions between individuals and their surroundings, this results in developing routine behaviours as well as expectations and values (Allen, 2012; Berger and Luckmann, 1991; Burr, 2003). It follows then that younger generations of the Traveller community accept that marriage is an important of their culture, identity and part of growing up or reaching milestones. This is an area of research that could be further developed, in order to further develop the findings of this research, and gather an insight into this aspect of Traveller culture on a national scale.

The research found that while marriage remained a significant aspect of Traveller culture, parents were attempting to encourage their children to delay marriage until they had gained some life experiences. While marriage and having children remained a priority within Traveller families, and was viewed as a rite of passage, some parents had concerns about the impact which marriage at such a young age had upon Travellers. There was a conflict within the stories for some parents. These parents shared their concerns for the re – emergence of marriage at a young age despite parents' efforts to encourage their children to delay making the commitment.

Parenting is constructed by the influence of cultural norms and values within families and communities (Bornstein, and Lansford, 2010; Bornstein, 2012). Education had become a priority for Traveller parents as they were trying to encourage their young people to delay marriage. For parents, this had created struggles in terms of trying to maintain their Traveller heritage and culture, while also supporting and encouraging their children to progress alternative avenues within life. Additionally, some young Travellers were themselves choosing to delay marriage. In some situations, this decision was supported by their parents. One parent said she wanted to give their young person a 'bit of a life' before getting married. Another said they would not like to see their children rush to get married just because its part of the Traveller culture and they would like to have been given the opportunity to live with their husband before they got married. However, the research findings revealed that there was a strong influence from the older generations to maintain the tradition of marriage at a young age within the Traveller community. This had the potential to create a struggle for those young Travellers who wished to progress an alternative life path in advance of getting married, and settling into family life. In terms of parenting in general terms this creates challenges in relation to the passing on of Traveller culture. Professionals who work with Traveller families across the range of services would need to have an awareness of this intergenerational conflict when they are dealing with issues relating to education. Practitioners working with Travellers would need to understand the significant role played by the extended family network and the specific cultural norms and values that influence family life in the Traveller community. This will be explored in more details in the guidelines for best practice in the final section of this chapter.

5.8 Parenting Challenges

The research found that Traveller parents experienced a number of significant challenges when rearing their children. The world within which Traveller parents were carrying out their parenting role has changed significantly, particularly in relation to the accessibility of children and young people to each other. The research findings highlighted that Traveller parents were challenged by this accessibility. The availability of social media was highlighted by both older and younger parents as a new challenge. Traveller parents believed that young people had increased access to one another through Facebook, and other social media forums. This increased social access added to the pressure on parents in terms of maintaining cultural expectations regarding marriage. Family relationships were negatively impacted at times, as

parents struggled to monitor their children and young people's contact with young Travellers from other parts of the country and Traveller families. Another finding in this study was that Traveller parents felt that social media was putting pressure on young Traveller girls to present themselves in a particular manner, which at times was at odds with the expectations of Traveller culture. Parenting has become more challenging for most families due to the increase in use of social media but Traveller parents have an additional challenge as they are concerned that social media may impact on their cultural heritage. Young people have more access to other young people from communities outside of Traveller culture.

This is complicated by the fact that family honour is seen as a significant cultural value within Traveller communities, particularly in relation to Traveller girls and young women. Patriarchal authority was particularly evident in relation to the selection of partners for Traveller girls (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010; Ni Shuineir, 2005). Traveller young people were restricted from forming relationships with each other prior to marriage. This had significant implications for Traveller girls in particular (Hourigan And Campbell, 2010; Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015). Traveller parents held the view that 'if a couple 'ran away' together they would have to get married and if they didn't, it would bring shame to her family and have significant consequences for her and future marriage prospects' (Offaly Traveller Movement, 2015, p. 24). This view was shared by Community Healthcare Workers within OTM (2018) and is supported by the research participants in this study. Couples marriages are often required to have their parents blessing and permission, and relationships are not built between the couple prior to the marriage. When these couples marry, they set up home together and begin a new life somewhat separate to their parents. This often brings with it issues in terms of accommodation which will be discussed next.

Many of the parents who took part in the interviews, made the point that they experienced challenges in relation to Traveller accommodation. The participants in this study lived houses but Anne (age 29+), a Traveller mother argued that trying to force Traveller parents to live in houses within the settled community has affected the mental health of Travellers. She felt it led to Traveller feeling very unhappy, and becoming isolated as they did not have their family around them. Traveller parents were often forced to live in houses, which did not allow them to be within close proximity of their family network. This lack of appropriate accommodation forced Traveller families to physically distance themselves from the support network of their close and extended family (AITHSS, 2010; Watson et. al., 2017). The importance of the broader family network cannot be underestimated when we discuss parenting and child rearing

practices. This is proving to be a significant issue for Traveller families. As Bronfenbrenner (2002) argued, we do not parent in isolation, but within a wider social context. As for all communities, this social context assists Traveller parents to maintain and transfer their unique cultural values, beliefs and behaviours from one generation to the next. Our parenting practices and expectations are socially constructed through a complex set of interactions and cultural expectations long before a child is born (Bornstein, 2012). As stated previously Traveller parenting practices are promoted and reproduced culturally, with cultural values and attitudes having a significant influence upon these parenting practices (Jackson, 2016). Traveller parents' social interaction within their community and family networks had been impacted by social isolation and the issue of proximity to each other. This clearly reduces Travellers access to their family support network. Traditionally Traveller families live in close proximity to each other but the accommodation issue is pushing families into a different situation. AITHSS (2010) and Murray (2014) argue that Traveller families are being forced to live in the general population. This means they have limited access to extended family networks and this diminishes the Traveller Tradition of living close to their extended family.

As mentioned previously in this study social construction theory puts forward the idea that all knowledge originates from social interaction, and is maintained and reproduced through social interactions (Descartes, 2012). This close family support and connection is something that is often also seen in ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups as they endeavour to maintain their social and cultural identity within society. The research found that while parents identified external services that provided support to Traveller families, there was agreement between both the older and younger Traveller parents that grandparents and extended family were the main source of support to them when they have worries or concerns about their children. This lack of culturally appropriate accommodation impacted Traveller parents and children's human rights, and also parent's ability to perform their parental responsibilities (Child and Family Agency, 2013). If Traveller families are forced to live apart from their extended family, they are also living away from their family support network. While the parents who participated in this study were all living in houses, and provided Traveller insights in to parenting, a comparative piece of research looking at parenting on serviced and unserviced halting sights would also be useful to ascertain Traveller views on living environments and how that affects Traveller parenting.

Discrimination is a daily experience for Travellers throughout their parenting journey. The research found that Traveller parents faced prejudice, stigma and discrimination on some level

throughout their daily lives. Many of the parents who participated in the interviews explained that discrimination was having a significant impact for Traveller parents. While a minority of parents felt that the situation was improving slightly, there was general agreement that there remained a real and obvious level of prejudice and discrimination within the community towards Travellers. Traveller parents shared stories of feeling judged and a sense of being treated differently due to their ethnicity. As discussed within the literature review, public perception of the Irish Traveller community has been marked by discrimination and social exclusion (Harvey, 2013; Irish Traveller Movement, 2013; Naidoo and Wills, 2000). Travellers have long been viewed as 'different' within Irish society. Hayes (2006) explained that the Irish Traveller had been 'othered', as a means of understanding their culture and population, and setting them apart from the settled community because they were seen as different. 'Those who are Otherised can both become society's scapegoats, and simultaneously the objects of pity and compassion' (Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2016, p. i). The identity constructed by the settled community in relation to Travellers has been one steeped in prejudice and negativity (Murphy, 2016), which increased the challenges faced by Traveller parents.

As the research findings have indicated, Traveller parents continued to experience significant discrimination and prejudice within their communities, while carrying out their parenting role. Travellers were reluctant to seek parenting supports outside of their own communities as discrimination in the outside community creates a barrier. Parenting practices are strongly influenced by the environment within which we exist (Connolly and Devaney, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016). The wider environment or service provision for Traveller children is marked by a sense of discrimination and prejudice. Traveller parents were fearful that services would judge their parenting skills and abilities without taking account of their Traveller culture, and the norms and values of their way of life. In this study, Traveller parents reported feeling fearful of external services or social work services becoming involved with their family. This fear was grounded in the experience of previous generations whereby children had been removed from Traveller families. The parents who participated in the research shared their concerns that their children could potentially be taken away from them should social work services became involved with their family.

The research found that Traveller parents felt there were differences between Traveller children and their settled counterparts, increasing Travellers parents fear of being judged negatively when accessing services such as parenting support. From the research findings this potential stigma in relation to attending services was one of the main barriers to accessing support

outside the family unit for Traveller parents. Parents also held concerns over the confidentiality of services. Traveller parents operate within a closed social network and do not feel comfortable talking about family issues to professionals from the settled community. This is a significant finding and it is clear that family support services would need to be acutely aware of the unique aspects of Traveller culture in order to work successfully with Traveller parents.

It became apparent in this study that there is a need to extend the working relationships between services and consider the provision of specific parenting supports to Traveller families. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures recognises the family as the 'natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of children' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p. 2). However, little consideration has been given to the challenges faced by parents in minority groups such as Travellers (AITHSS, 2010; Central Statistics Office, 2017; Watson et al., 2017). Tusla acknowledged the uniqueness of Traveller culture specifically, and advised practitioners to be aware of the shared culture and value system which exists (Child and Family Agency, 2013). Traveller parents in this study feared being judged by service providers when attending services. This demonstrates that practitioners may not be in tune with the needs of Traveller families. All parents who participated in the research highlighted the importance of a trusting relationship between Traveller parents and existing or potential support services. OTM is a community – based service which has a proven track record of working with Traveller families across a range of issues from mental health to education. While it is not a parenting support service, Traveller families trust and engage with it so my view is that it would be worth considering extending their service to include parenting support. Parents in this study were in agreement that the help and support provided by the Community Healthcare Workers from OTM was invaluable. These workers were trusted by the parents who took part in the research, and were viewed as a source of information and support. I would propose that funding and training should be provided for OTM to take on a parenting support role within the Offaly area. This role could be expanded in the future, where OTM could become involved in training Travellers to support parents in a similar model to how the Primary Healthcare projects were established in the past.

In a recent position paper, the Parenting Network (2019) argued that work must be carried out by the state and those who provide services to families around engaging parents in the consultation process. They argue that younger and marginalised families are at risk of 'dropping out' or not engaging fully with services such as parenting supports because they have no access, or are in some way blocked from participating. A model whereby existing services

which emerge and engage successfully with Travellers are funded and supported to provide parenting support services would address this issue.

Given the points above and the findings from this study, in the following section I am proposing a set of Traveller informed guidelines that could be put in place by agencies as they deliver parenting supports to Traveller families.

5.9 Traveller Informed Guidelines for Best Practice when Delivering Parenting Supports to Traveller Families

5.9.1 Trust

It became apparent in the study that participants valued trust if they were to engage in any support service. One respondent suggested that OTM were able to get families to work with staff because they trusted them. Trust is clearly important in any new model of practice to support Traveller parents. One way to build trust would be to consider how information about a new service is shared. Participants suggested that OTM provide information about their service in a way that Travellers understand. This participant felt that the sharing of information was a vital means of encouraging Traveller parents to develop relationships with support services. I would suggest that a set of guidelines for best practice to support parents of Traveller children, across all developmental stages, would be conscious of how it would disseminate information. When I first embarked on this research study, I was advised to reconsider using the term 'parenting' and consider the term 'childrearing' instead as this term would be more familiar to the participants. This level of scrutiny and background information would be useful in the set – up stage of any service to Travellers. Parenting support information is often distributed in the form of leaflets so for Travellers who have literacy issues this system will not work. Traveller parents already feel they are different to settled parents so any new model to support them would need to be conscious of providing information in a way that is accessible. Providing clear and transparent or accessible information helps to build trust with this group.

Trust is important; however, it is more complex than providing information and being tuned in to confidentiality, it is linked to genuineness and authenticity. Traveller parents who participated in the interviews gave examples of the positive supports available in the area. These included community run youth clubs and family resource centres. These services were identified as supports, as the parents found them to be open and genuine in their support of Traveller parents and child rearing practices. One mother in this study explained that from her

experience there have been times where she has found it difficult to trust support services as being genuine in their efforts. This notion of genuineness and providing a genuine service to families in their parenting efforts is significant. It suggests that this participant does not trust the authenticity of services. All participants reported trusting OTM workers. To replicate this approach in relation to parenting would mean engaging Travellers themselves to provide parenting supports. Travellers have a unique knowledge of parenting strength and challenges within their community. Traveller Primary Health Projects recruited and trained members of the Traveller community to provide the primary health care service nationally. A model of co-production of parenting knowledge and information could be established with organisations who work directly with Travellers to give full ownership to Travellers and also the organisation. This model could be piloted for the provision of parenting supports for Traveller families.

5.9.2 Non-Judgemental Approach to Practice

Services that currently provide parenting support services should liaise with existing Traveller support services in relation to culture and Traveller parenting practices. One of the challenges Travellers face is discrimination and stigmatisation. In fact, Hayes (2006, p. 137) argues that Traveller identity is defined 'in terms of reductive essentialism based on a series of mostly negative stereotypes'. There was agreement between all the Traveller parents in this study, both younger and older parents, that services need to be non – judgemental of Traveller parents. A set of guidelines for best practice to support Travellers in relation to parenting would need to take into account and be accepting of the intricacies of Traveller life according to participants in this study. Organisations who work directly with Travellers are in a unique position in terms of its relationships with the Travellers in its catchment. They would be best placed to provide information or support to any agency who would be rolling out a parenting support service. I would suggest organisations who work directly with Travellers could be trained to provide this support onsite. These organisations understand Traveller culture and parenting practices and are already engaging with Traveller parents.

Currently, parenting support programmes tend to be generic and aimed at the wider population. Tusla's Parenting Support Strategy (2013) sets out to support parents as a main priority according to Gillen et al. (2013). 'Tusla's programme of work in this area is upholding this ethos by supporting the mainstreaming of parenting support and parental participation

throughout the agency and across external organisations' (Cross and Devaney, 2018, p. 31). I would recommend that Travellers and other ethnic minority groups need specific parenting programmes if Tusla's goal is to be achieved. Tusla acknowledged the uniqueness of Traveller culture specifically, and advised practitioners to be aware of the shared culture and value system which exists (Child and Family Agency, 2013). Traveller families have to weigh up decisions around education, employment and marriage when they are supporting their children. They also have to think about accommodation and its link with Travellers extended family support. In some cases, parenting means helping children cope with discrimination and the feeling of marginalisation.

I would propose that parenting support programmes, should consider parenting support from an ethnic minority or indeed a Traveller parent point of view. It is not so much that the material within the parenting programmes is in any way lacking, but those delivering them need to understand how extended family support works in the Traveller community. Professionals need also to understand the difficulties Traveller parents and children experience in relation to schoolwork. Practitioners should also understand the intricacies of the issue of third level or continuing education, marriage and parental roles within Traveller families. The information within the programmes must consider the unique challenges that Traveller or ethnic minority parents face, particularly around the use of social media and their experience in relation to discrimination. They could be adjusted to take literacy issues into account and support parents to help children engage with homework.

As noted earlier, literacy issues can create barriers to meaningful participation (AITHSS, 2010). The dissemination of advertising information for Traveller parents should also be examined more closely. Traveller parents tend to be private and less trusting of mainstream services as mentioned previously so sending a leaflet home in a child's schoolbag or a poster in the Primary Care Centre may not be enough to engage Traveller parents. Therefore, issues in relation to literacy means advertising information in leaflet format may not be accessible to some members of this group. Infographics and local radio advertising would be useful, but more importantly existing Traveller support services should be used as a means to verbally disseminate information.

5.9.3 Education

Parents of children from ethnic minority groups tend to hold lower educational expectations regardless of the child's actual ability in school (Alexander et al, 1994; Goldenberg et al, 2001; Trusty, 2010). This is linked with parents own experience of school, and I would suggest it is linked to parent's own literacy levels. Participants in this study stated that literacy issues negatively impacted their ability to support their children with homework and school activities. This is connected to Traveller parents own experience of education and their literacy skills. The experiences from the past were creating challenges for parents in the current day. In a set of guidelines for best practice, I would put forward the view that offering support to parents to help their children with homework should be considered. Support used to be provided to Traveller families within schools through the Traveller Visiting Teacher (Department of Education and Science, 2002). This role was traditionally a teaching role. Participants in this study valued this and said it was very beneficial to Travellers. Traveller specific support could be provided in a model similar to this. In fact, Travellers could be trained specifically to do this work. This role could be re-introduced and piloted amongst Traveller parents. The link between schools and parents would help children to keep up to date with their work and support parents to help children with their homework. In this study, participants said that services need to be accessible both in terms of the materials they provide but also in terms of the location of services. A Traveller Visiting Teacher would provide a service that is accessible and perhaps work on homework and discuss the child's progress in school with their parents. This could be done in a familiar environment where the parent feels at ease and at a time that suits them. This person may also be able to provide a wider range of parenting supports at other times where necessary. Any such programme could be piloted, with an evaluation completed with all stakeholders, including Traveller parents, children and the relevant school staff.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

This research study set out to complete a social constructionist examination of Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices, and develop guidelines for best practice when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families. What became apparent from reviewing the literature is that while parenting and the provision of supports to ethnic minority groups such as Travellers is on the political agenda, the voice of Travellers has been seldom heard within these discussions. Travellers are considered a marginalised group within Irish society, and they experience significant challenges within their parenting role. Traveller families are endeavouring to maintain their cultural identity while parenting within a predominantly settled community. As has been outlined within the findings and discussion chapters, this challenge needs to be taken into consideration by policy makers and service providers when delivering parenting supports to Traveller families. Workers in this area need to be aware of the specific challenges that Traveller parents face on a daily basis, such as discrimination, literacy issues and the pressures associated with increased social media use by their children.

While the delivery of parenting supports varies greatly in terms of the agencies that deliver them, and the type of support provided, this research study found that parenting supports tend to be generic in nature. They do not consider the unique aspects of Traveller culture, specifically the significance of the extended Traveller family, and the support they provide. Travellers young people marry and have children younger than those in the settled community (Central Statistics Office, 2017), and may at times need additional support as they embark on their parenting journey. While Irish parenting policy values the role of the extended family, it does not consider this in relation to the specificity of Traveller culture when delivering parenting supports. As noted in the guidelines, this needs to be considered in the overall development and delivery of parenting supports on both a national and local level.

The research study found that Irish Traveller families are going through a period of change. Young Travellers are being supported to engage more in education, and in some cases are also being encouraged to delay the age of marriage. Additionally, Traveller children are exposed to social media and connecting with both Traveller and settled families outside of their communities. Accommodation continues to be an issue for Travellers, and is drawing Traveller families away from their extended family as they need to move to where the accommodation is. All of these factors create challenges for Traveller parents on a daily basis as they carry out

their parenting role. Policy then would need to recognise the need to adapt their services to make them more accessible to this group. We need to understand Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices from the Traveller perspective, and this research study has gone some way to address the current knowledge gap that exists in relation to parenting supports.

While I was undertaking this research study, I was working within a family support service predominantly. The research process, coupled with the discussions with the team of Community Healthcare Workers and the Peer Researcher at OTM, and the interviews with the Traveller parents enabled me to reflect on my own practice. As a family support service, we worked with parents from multiple ethnic backgrounds including Travellers. The research process allowed me to consider how as a service, we engaged with Traveller parents and parents from other ethnic minority groups. I used the research to enable a reflective discussion within the team, when considering how we made contact with and introduced the service to Traveller families. I found that one of the key pieces of learning from the research in terms of practice is the importance of the language that is used to describe a service, or a parenting support service. This became very apparent during the discussions with the Community Healthcare Workers when they explained that Traveller parents referred to child – rearing as opposed to parenting. This was an important learning point from a practice perspective as so often the term 'parenting' is used within family support services, and we presume that parents understand what is being referred to.

Additionally, the issue of literacy gave rise to reflective discussion within the service also, and was raised as a consideration for practice during the research process. As mentioned in the previous chapter, literacy is a significant issue for Travellers, and can create practical challenges in relation to privacy and self-preservation. As a service, we were mindful of parent's literacy abilities. However, at times appointment letters were sent to Traveller parents for initial and follow up appointments. On reviewing this practice, it became apparent that such written appointments often led to missed sessions. In order to address this issue, I altered my practice, and was more aware of the need to carry out a home visit to set up the appointment, if telephone contact could not be established with the parent to set up the meeting. In this way, I was in a position to introduce the service to the family, while also agreeing a suitable meeting time and date.

Overall, during this research study, I considered and reflected upon the attributes of Traveller parenting values, attitudes and practices that emerged. I also considered the struggles and

challenges that Traveller parents face on an almost daily basis in carrying out their parenting role. Traveller parents have maintained core parenting values such as their closeness to the extended family, and the significance placed on child – rearing. What struck me throughout the fieldwork journey was that while some of the challenges faced by Traveller parents in relation to social media for example were similar to those experienced by parents within the settled community, Traveller parents had to contend with these issues against the backdrop of discrimination and marginalisation. These issues increase the pressures on Traveller parents, and amplify the challenges which they face within their parenting role.

The shift in government thinking on Travellers as an ethnic group is a sign that policy change will follow. Once the state recognised the unique ethnic status of Travellers in 2017, and the level of inequality they experience in terms of health, education, employment, accommodation and employment there is no question that they must act to support Travellers. Government policy is beginning to change, and the hope is that appropriate parenting and other supports will follow. This research has provided the foundations for a broader national discussion in relation to the specificity of Traveller parenting, and the need for parenting supports services to understand the uniqueness of Traveller culture and child rearing practices. The study has also highlighted the need for the development of bespoke parenting support services for ethnic minority groups such as Travellers.

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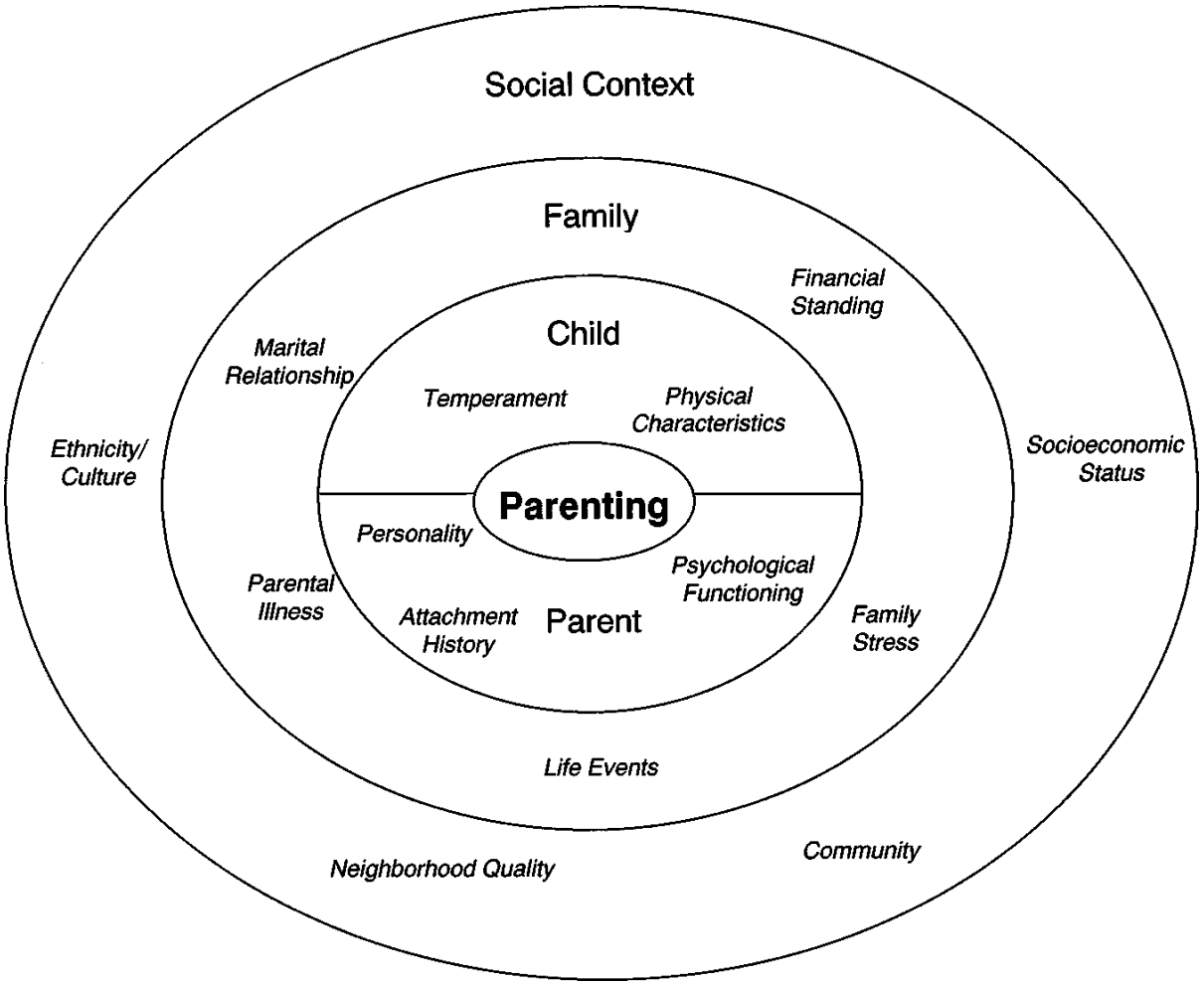
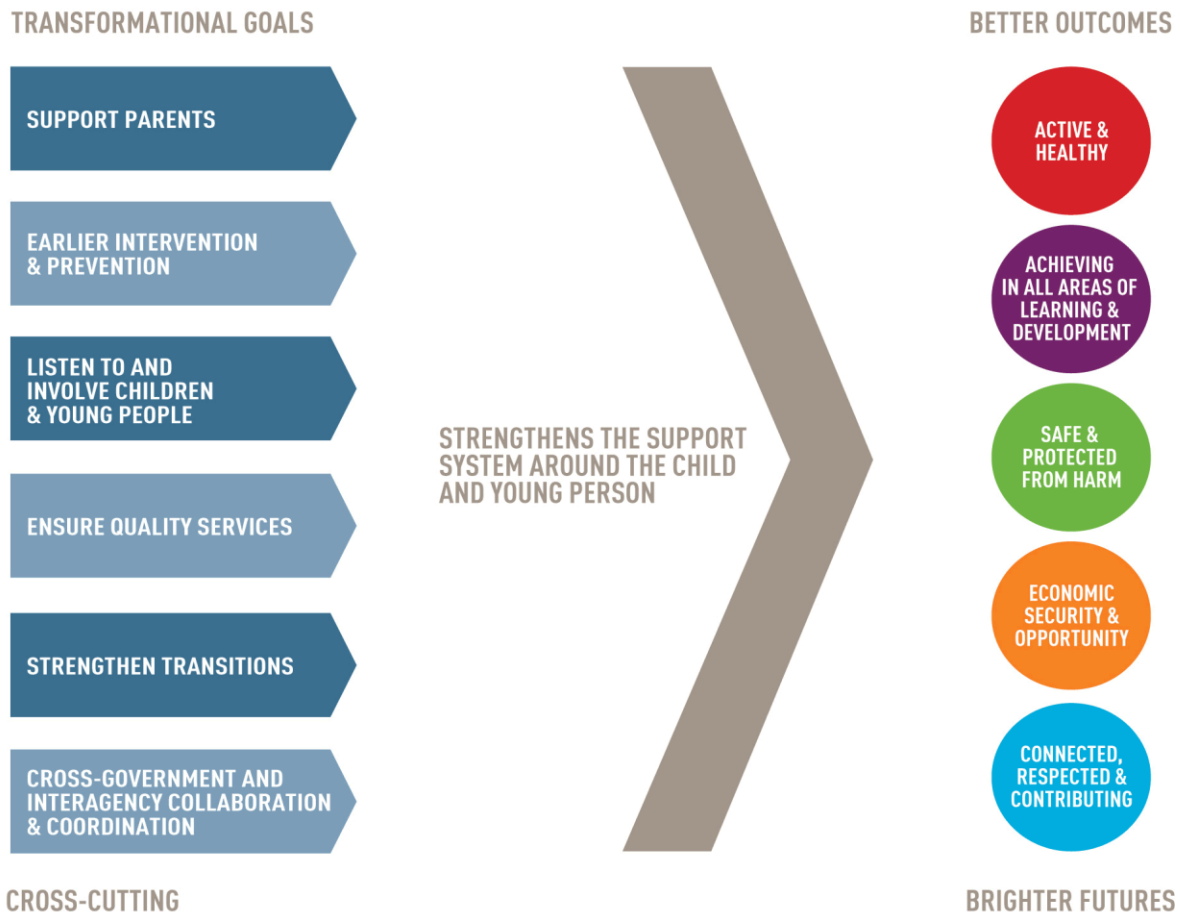
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - The Ecology of Parenting (Kotchick and Forehand, 2002).



APPENDIX 2 - Framework Overview for Improved Outcomes for Children and Young People



The five national outcomes that we want for all our children and young people are that they:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.

2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.

3. Are safe and protected from harm.

4. Have economic security and opportunity.

5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

Through the implementation of this Framework and supporting strategies, the Government aims to achieve the following 'shifts' over the 7-year period 2014-2020 to support the achievement of better outcomes for all children and young people:

1. Support parents

• Parents will experience improved support in the important task of parenting and feel more confident, informed and able.

2. Earlier intervention and prevention

• Lift over 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020.

• Children's learning and development outcomes will have been assisted through increased access to high-quality, affordable early years education.

• A focus on health and wellbeing will have permeated throughout society and positive progress will be made, in particular in relation to childhood obesity and youth mental health.

• Emphasis and resources will have been rebalanced from crisis intervention towards prevention and earlier intervention, while ensuring an effective crisis intervention response at all times.

3. A culture that listens to and involves children and young people

• A culture that respects, protects and fulfils the rights of children and young people will be evident and the diversity of children's experiences, abilities, identities and cultures will be respected.

• The views of children and young people will be sought and will influence decisions

about their own lives and wellbeing, service delivery and policy priorities.

• Ireland's democracy will actively seek the contribution and engagement of young people.

4. Quality services – outcomes-driven, effective, efficient and trusted

• Government investment in children will be more outcomes-driven and informed by national and international evidence on the effectiveness of expenditure on child related services, with the aim of improving child outcomes and reducing inequalities.

• Resource allocation within services will be based on evidence of both need and effectiveness, and services that are not working will be decommissioned.

• Irish education will stand up to international benchmarks and our young people will be leaving school with critical life skills, resilient, confident and adaptable to the changing world.

• Agencies charged with safeguarding the welfare of children will be trusted and their contribution to improving the lives of children valued.

5. Effective transitions

• Transitions at key developmental stages and between child and adult services will have been strengthened.

• Young people's prospects will have improved and the trend of significant outward emigration stemmed through a coordinated programme supporting youth employment opportunities.

6. Cross-Government and interagency collaboration and coordination

• The public sector will have reformed substantially, resulting in improved implementation, greater cross-Government collaboration and coordination, increased accountability and resource efficiency.

• The State and its partners will work better together and plan service provision in a way that is child-centred and benefits from interagency and multidisciplinary working.

APPENDIX 3 - Information Letter

Information Letter

I would like to know if you would help me with a piece of research I am completing for my Masters in Applied Social Studies with Athlone Institute of Technology. The purpose of the study is to explore Traveller views on child rearing values, attitudes and practices. It will also focus on supports that Traveller parent's need.

Sarah McDonagh, a Primary Healthcare Worker from Offaly Traveller Movement will be involved in helping me to organise the interviews. The interview will last about one hour. The interviews will take place in the offices of Offaly Traveller Movement, or a location agreed with you beforehand. I will tape the interviews, and the information which you share will be treated with the strictest confidence. Your name will not be used within the research. As the research is being carried out in partnership with Offaly Traveller Movement, the Child Protection Policy of OTM will be used during the process.

It is your choice to take part in the research study, and you can withdraw from the research at any time. I have included a consent form with this information letter, which I will ask you to sign before the interview starts. If you have any questions regarding the research or the process please contact me on *** *******.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information letter.

Regards,

Pauline Clarke Orohoe

APPENDIX 4 - Consent Forms

Parental Consent Form

I agree to participate in the interview for the research study being carried out in relation to Traveller child rearing, and the supports Traveller parents need.

Please circle:

Yes **No**

I agree to the interview being taped, and the information being used for the purpose of this research study.

Please circle:

Yes **No**

Signed: _____

Date: ___/ ___/ _____

Primary Healthcare Peer Researcher Consent Form

I agree to sit in on the interview as a support to _____ (parents name).

I understand that the information shared during this interview is confidential, and is to be used only for the purpose of this research study.

Please circle:

Yes **No**

Signed: _____

Date: ___/ ___/ _____

APPENDIX 5 - Research Guide Notes for Peer Researcher

Research Guide Notes

The purpose of the research is to explore Traveller views on child rearing values, attitudes and practices.

It will also focus on the supports that Traveller parents need when rearing children.

The aim is to interview Traveller mothers and fathers to get their views and experiences of rearing children.

The interviews will take place in OTM or the home of the parent taking part, and they will be recorded. All names will be changed when the interviews are written out.

The interview questions will focus on the following three areas:

- Traveller views and experiences of parenting
- Traveller perspectives on what makes for effective parenting
- Supports Traveller parents need when rearing their children

Information Schedule

Profile information

Age of Participant:

No of Children:

Age of their children:

Type of accommodation:

Employment status:

Objective 1 – Traveller views and experiences of parenting

Can you tell me about your experience of growing up as a Traveller child?

How did you learn about what was expected from you as a child?

Do you think this is different for Traveller children in 2018? How has this changed?

As a parent, who or where did you go to for advice/ information about rearing your children?

What are the two most important values/ rule you want(ed) to teach your children?

Objective 2 – Traveller perspectives on what constitutes effective parenting

What do you think makes for good child rearing?

Do you feel that there are pressures on Traveller parents within the community?

In your opinion, what has worked well for Travellers in the community regarding rearing their children?

In your opinion, what hasn't worked so well for Travellers in the community regarding rearing their children?

Objective 3 – Supports Traveller parents need in order to be able to parent effectively

Thinking of being a parent, is there anything you need/ needed in the community to help you rear your children? If yes, can you explain?

Are you aware of any supports that are available to Traveller parents in the community?

What type of child rearing groups/ supports are used by Traveller families in the community?

Are there any support services that you think Traveller families are reluctant to use?

Is there anything that stops Traveller parents getting help in relation to rearing their children?

What do you feel is the view of Traveller parents towards child rearing support services/ groups within the community?

Additional

Is there anything else you would like to add?