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Governing the Domestic Space of the Traveller in the UK: 'Family', 'Home' and the Struggle over Dale Farm

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Abstract

This article contends that domesticity and processes of domestication maintain a central role in the (re)production of British citizenship. Domesticity provides a template for living which shapes the raced, classed, gendered and sexed boundaries of Britishness. Drawing upon William Walters concept of 'domopolitics' the article specifically explores how norms of familial domesticity are used in the marginalisation and regulation of Traveller groups in the UK. Focussing on the eviction of Irish Travellers from the Dale Farm site in Essex, 2011, the article argues that the eviction relied upon the historical mobilisation of Travellers as 'failing' norms of domesticity. However, whilst the destruction of 'home' (domicide) at Dale Farm represented a form of domestication which is enacted in the name of the 'true' domos or the home of the citizen, this did not go unchallenged. The struggle and resistance to the state-led eviction at Dale Farm unsettled the boundaries of contemporary domopolitics by provide alternative claims to belonging and 'home'. By examining the politics of domesticity in the production of marginality, we see how family and home not only act as means of stratifying and governing subjects but also emerge as sites of contestation.

Keywords: British Citizenship, Domopolitics, Dale Farm, Travellers, Eviction, Resistance, Domesticity and Home.

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Introduction

In October 2011, the UK high court approved the eviction of 83 Irish Traveller families from the Dale Farm site in Basildon, Essex. In her account of the eviction, Imogen Tyler describes how the 'Essex police, in full riot gear, employed taser guns, a battering ram, iron bars, batons, sledgehammers and shields to enter the site' (2013, 1). For those present post-eviction, Dale Farm was described as an abject space: 'a place of muddled remains and scars'; 'on par with an asylum seeker-centre, a prison or wind turbine' (Barkham 2011). The authorities' legal justification for the removal of nearly 500 hundred people from the long established site was based on the failure of a planning application - a civil rather than criminal violation. Whilst evictions have emerged as a contemporary technique for regulating both the settlement and mobility of Traveller communities (Kabachnik 2012; Vanderbeck), what is significant about Dale Farm is both the scale and level of violence enacted by the state (and its proxies) in the act of eviction but also the extent of its contestation by protest groups, activists and residents. Over the course of the build up to the eviction, protests amassed on the site in solidarity with the residents, constructing barricades to protect caravans and articulating a counter-narrative to the representation of Dale Farm in the British tabloid Press which sought to describe the site as a place of illegality, squalor and disorder.

Whilst the eviction was legally justified by the sites encroachment on London's 'green belt' (the land was actually formerly a scrapyards) the rationale for the eviction also hinged on the historic representation of Travellers as 'troubling' the order of settled communities through their familial and social difference (Hellenier 2011; Sibley 1980; Ciaschi forthcoming). During the eviction, there was a mobilisation of images of Travellers as anti-citizens, welfare scroungers, present social dangers. They were represented through tropes of criminality, dirt, and a fixation on the caravan as an improper form of 'home' (also see Vanderbeck 2003). Just as the authorities sought to actively destroy the homes that Travellers had built at Dale Farm, the eviction relied on the (unfulfilled) promise that families could be 're-housed' in council properties (Ryder 2011). This reflects a key aspect of the modern push to regulate Traveller mobility and settlement (Kabachnik 2012). What was prevalent in the events surrounding the eviction was how domesticity became a means of both explaining the 'problem' of Traveller lifestyles and provide a set of solutions to it. 'Home', 'family', 'belonging' all became central concerns around which the struggle for Dale Farm was articulated and fought.

What I argue in this article is that Dale Farm and the regulation of Traveller groups more widely provides us with a vital insight into the contemporary politics of 'home' in the UK, a politics which is premised on a fundamental relationship between domesticity, family and citizenship. Drawing on William Walters (2004) work on 'domopolitics', I set out how domesticity and domestication have formed a central part of the architecture of (post)colonial citizenship in the UK. This reveals how an imaginary of familial domesticity stratifies marginal groups (such as Travellers) from the national 'home' – and relies on certain raced, classed, gendered and sexualised co-ordinates to do so. I then explore how the policing of Travellers through anxiety over failed domesticity was actively contested in the acts of protests over the Dale Farm evictions. Whilst domesticity and family have been used as ordering principles in Britain, I suggest that they also provide sites through which the dominant logic of home-citizenship can be challenged. In the case of Dale Farm, the counter-narrative of 'home' provided by the protests worked to refuse the existing codes of sedentary citizenship and the violent process of domestication enacted in its name. This explores how marginality is configured through norms of domesticity but equally the political struggles over home and family life that this also engenders.

As I have begun describing, the home or 'domos' provides a historically contingent assemblage between intimacy, territory, belonging and the state which is frequently drawn upon in the production and regulation of marginal groups. As Walters (2004) argues, what is powerful about the emotional imagery of home is that has come to refer to norms of the intimate, private, familial domestic space in the same instance that it enacts a sense of belonging to the nation-state, domestic sovereignty and the 'homlie' nation (also see Darling 2014). Whilst domesticity relates to a series of historical, spatial, cultural and economic practices (McKeon 2001; Le Baron 2011) it is also formulated through a specific relationship to a model of family life – with the 'white', heteronormative and gendered ideals this also relies upon. Domesticity and the familial are thus wrapped up together in the symbolic order of home. From the late 19th century, a vision of home or homeliness has frequently played a role in the configuration of national belonging (McClintock 1993; Yuval Davies 1997), just as modes of family life, moral behaviours, habitation and reproduction are upheld as the active responsibilities/expectations of citizens (Turner 2008). Through this assemblage the emotional image of familial intimacy has been mobilised in the regulation of subjects who

appear to reject, deny or fail the ideals of 'family life'. Travellers' and 'Gypsies'¹ have been viewed as social problems, especially throughout the 20th century, because they present the wrong type of 'home' and 'household'. This has explicitly referenced (ir)regular mobility, nomadism, caravans, black market labour, criminality, cultural rituals. The manner in which Travellers are marginalised connects them to the historical treatment of other problem groups who are viewed as 'not belonging' because they appear to 'fail' the contingent norms of familial domesticity i.e. migrant families, colonial subjects, the 'underclass', vagabonds, homosexuals. In the case of Travellers such as those at Dale Farm, the 'failure' to follow the cultural script of 'bricks and mortar' home has led to multiple strategies of regulation, from welfare, education policy, policing methods, enforced mobility, containment and equally forms of 'domicide'; the violent destruction of home.

This article contributes to debates in citizenship studies concerning the politics of family (Turner 2008; Yuval Davies), intimacy and reproduction (Hanafin 2013) by exploring how domesticity provides both a normative arrangement for forms of social control and marginalisation but also a distinct site of political struggle through which different modes of belonging are disrupted and claimed. What previous studies have tended to focus on is the capacity for the diagram of family domesticity to act as an oppressive institution (Thorne 1992; Poster 1978) or ideology (Card 1996). Those scholars studying the relations between domesticity, family (Turner 2008), natality (Yuval Davies 1996; Roseniel et al 2013), reproduction (Lee 2008; Halsaa et al 2012) and citizenship have also tended to stress the exclusory nature of this relationship. The fetishiation of the family as the ultimate social and political 'unit' is viewed as providing the conditions for the denial of political, cultural social rights: through norms of gender (Walby 1994; Orloff 1993; Fraser 2009), sexuality (Roseneil et al 2013; Weeks 1998; Richardson 2000; Evans 1993), class (Bertone 2013) and race (Stoler 1997; Lewis 2000). To certain Feminist-Marxists, the quest for emancipation hinges on the active rejection of family life, domestic arrangements, marriage and motherhood (See Card 1996). Whilst post-Marxist accounts have attempted to reveal the complex tension

¹ I use the word Traveller more frequently here as a term which refers to different semi/nomadic groups in the UK: Travellers, Irish Travellers, Romanis, and Scottish Traveller. I have designated a specific affiliation when it appears relevant. As Vanderbeck (2005) suggests, the terms 'Traveller' has been rejected in favour of 'Gypsy', whilst others find 'Gypsy' a pejorative term. This follows the distinctions made by Traveller rights organisations and solidarity groups. The prevalence of the term Gypsy or Gipsy in negative portrayals in the tabloid press also influences my inclination towards the label Traveller, this by no means suggests that the term is unproblematic.

between the desire for family intimacy and oppression (Barrett and McIntosh 1982), studies which appreciate how family also acts as a site for disruption, resistance and alternative claims to citizenship remain underdeveloped (see Hanafin 2013). Speaking to the special issue theme, the article explores how citizenship works as ambivalent process – even in the marginalisation of certain ‘others’ from regimes of British citizenship, there emerges new political possibilities, resistance, denial. The contemporary politics of ‘home’ reveals how familial domesticity works as a site through which the boundaries of citizenship are reconstituted and also interrupted (Isin 2008, 20). Exploring the marginalisation of Travellers provides a significant case for the themes of this special issue, precisely because Travellers in the UK are often formal citizens but normative, cultural and legal codes of citizenship persist to differentiate their way of life as problematic

Domesticity, Family and Citizenship

The mobilisation of familial domesticity is not new; running through modern nationalism are norms of heteronormativity (Evans 1993; Levine 2006; Hanafin 2013), reproduction (Roseil et al 2013; Turner 2008) and home-making (Baxter and Bricknell 2014; Porteous and Smith 2001). The nation has been historically imagined through appeals to the familial (Yuval Davies 1996). Kinship, intimacy, blood-ties, fertility, are used as imaginaries of the cohesive nation (McClintock 1993); just as masculine sovereignty is tied to the protection of the ‘motherland’, the sanctuary of the hearth, the innocence and vulnerability of maternity and childrearing (Rofel 2002, 185-186; Dowler 2012). Exploring the metaphorical connections of domesticity and the nation is vital but it is also important to recognise the relationship between domesticity and social control.

A reading of Walter’s approach to ‘domopolitics’ (2004) provides a way to navigate this terrain. To Walters what defines contemporary liberal regimes of government and social ordering (security) is how the state is governed as a ‘home’ or ‘domos’. The relationship between citizen, community and state is configured through a diagram of home which emphasises the nation as a domestic(ated) space of intimacy, emotional ties and familiarity (Darling 2008). This relies on a particular historical depiction of home as: family, sanctuary, land and place; a depiction that calls upon an unquestionable/commensensical desire or ‘will to domesticate the force which threaten the sanctity of home’ (Walters 2004, 242). The form of social ordering linked to the domos produces strategies which filter, classify and monitor

subjects through their imbrications, ties and familial connections to an imaginary of home, and/or their disturbance of it. Thus regulating “circulations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’” (Darling 2008, 265) means monitoring and fostering the correct morals, behaviours, forms of intimacy, social relations that could emerge in the ‘family home’.

Domestication

The relationship between domopolitics and family is defined by two interlinking processes – one concerns a mode of domestication (Darling 2008, 264), the other concerns the relationship between reproduction and domesticity (Stoler 1997; McClintock 1995, 42). The emergence of a western bourgeois model of family ‘home’ in the 18th and 19th century has been well documented (Hareven 1991; McKeon 2005; Rose 1990; Le Baron 2010). Home was configured as the site of family life, a private space of inner sanctuary, leisure, consumption (McKeon 2005, 101). Whilst feminist scholars have long problematized this persistent ideal (Anderson 2000; Beechley 1977) what is important for this study is how the ‘cult of domesticity’ (McClintock 1995, 35) has been central to the management of subjects and groups who exist in tension with this social formation. The bourgeois household evolved through the integration of different groups into its gendered and class arrangements (domestic work, cleaners, nannies), however throughout the 19th century this model of domesticity was increasingly imposed upon and used to manage certain ‘undomesticated’ groups: the street poor (Donzelot 1980), vagabonds (Dean 1991), elements of the working class (Rose 1990; Steedman 2007, 221-224), Amerindians (Kotef 2015, 102-103), ‘colonised’ subjects (Amadiume 1997, 121-123) and Irish Travellers or Gypsies (Hellenier 2012). McClintock's (1995) seminal work *Imperial Leather* highlights the centrality of domesticity and domestication to British colonialism and the knowledge(s) and practice(s) of gender, race and class. As McClintock (1995, 35) argues:

Through rituals of domesticity, increasingly global and more often than not violent, animals, women and colonized peoples were wrestled from their putatively ‘natural’ yet, ironically, ‘unreasonable’ state of ‘savagery’ and inducted through the domestic progress narrative into hierarchal relation to white men.

Thus domestication the promotion of domesticity across a territory and across a population is inherently tied to the ‘conquest, taming and subduing’ of different ‘uncivilised’ groups who ‘fail’ familial domesticity (also see Amadiume 1987, 119, 121-125). Reading Walters work through these histories means recognising how domopolitics mobilises a certain

(post)colonial arrangement of familial domesticity and a certain conception of sedentary or 'domestic' citizenship. Whilst dominant modes of familial domesticity are imagined through claims to universal inner sanctuary and privacy, these are always etched with a certain ethnocentric, bourgeois and colonising logic. In the case of the regulation of problematic populations within Britain, we can still read this as part of a colonial project or what Foucault termed an expansion of 'internal colonialism' (Foucault 2004).

Reproduction

Domopolitics works to foster the domestic space (both national and private) of the citizen. What is absent in Walters original analysis, is how domopolitics relates to an ideal of family life and questions of reproduction. Drawing upon the recent turn towards reproduction, sexuality and intimacy in citizenship studies (Roseneil et 2013; Halsaa et al 2012; Turner 2008; but also Stoler 2002), it is possible to suggest that what is ultimately at stake in the regulation of domesticity is the moral and biological (re)production of subjects who may be citizens. Reproduction and citizenship presents a complex assemblage. Social recognition, rights and reproduction are tied together: on one hand rights and social legitimacy are accorded through the expectations to fulfil the heteronormative ideals of 'family life' (tax breaks, healthcare, education); on the other hand, as formal citizenship is often inherited, the family as a site of reproduction becomes targeted by fears over 'who' will have access to rights (see Tyler 2010). Racist ideologies are thus very carefully woven into questions of sexuality; anxiety over the 'health', characteristics and composition of the political community is manifest in this site of reproduction (Young 1995). To Roseneil (2013, 901), this means we have to recognise:

The biological, sexual and technological realities of natality, and the social realities of the intimate intergenerational material and affective labour that is generative of citizens, and that serve to reproduce membership of, and belonging to, states, nations, societies and, thus of 'citizenship' itself.

Recent studies of reproductive citizenship (Roseneil 2011; Bertone 2013; Halsaa et al 2012) have focussed on how norms of reproduction problematize 'non-procreative' groups (homosexuals, transgender, single people, the infertile). However, by exploring how domopolitics works to marginalise Travellers, this recognises how the modern British state has been concerned with promoting the reproduction of certain groups, whilst simultaneously intervening in the reproduction of others. Recognising that domesticity has moral, classed as well as sexed, raced and gendered components means we need to see the monitoring of

domesticity along a broad continuum through which the social and political status of multiple subjects and groups is both made possible and denied. In the context of (post)colonial Britain, subjects can emerge as ‘different’ by failing norms of family domesticity (the ‘problem’ families, homosexuals, Traveller groups); equally, ‘difference’ becomes disturbing precisely because it is reproduced in the site of the family (again Traveller families, migrant-families, mixed-raced couples, the intergenerational ‘workless’). This creates demarcations over who has access to state protection and resources which equally complicates the distinction between citizen/non-citizen. This is because, as with the case with ‘failed citizens’ such as Traveller and the ‘workless’, states seek to actively manage such problem groups even though they have formal access to rights (see Anderson 2013).

Having set out some of the historical and conceptual links between domesticity, family and citizenship I now turn to how the marginalisation of Traveller provide one manifestation of the will to domesticate. After providing some historical context surrounding the emerge of a governmental focus on domesticity, I explore some of the strategies that have targeted Travellers in the UK. This recognises that the regulation of Travellers is racialised but this works through the mobilisation of both class, gender and sexuality. In Britain, the contemporary neoliberal mobilisation of ‘home’ (the dwelling of the citizen) is presented as both a space of sanctuary and productivity, which corresponds to a certain composition of fixed territory, intimacy and belonging. This is symbolised in the ‘bricks and mortar’ family home or the abode of the ‘working family’. By looking at practices which target Travellers I argue that there is a constant fixation on Travellers as failing this particular domestic order. That is by living in unsuitable conditions, the use of land, a fixation on hygiene, household governance, child rearing. Whilst Travellers are marginalised through strategies of forced mobility (such as eviction), containment and settlement, the target of these practices is arguably a push towards domestication – fostering the rhythms of a sedentary, ‘bricks and mortar’ home, or a denial of ‘improper’ domesticity. As with other historical examples of failed domesticity (problem families, ‘welfare scroungers’, migrants families) what authorities are often anxious about is the (re)production of certain forms of difference in the family ‘home’.

This history of marginalisation is important to detail because it also helps us recognise how political struggles also emerge. The last section of the article explores the evictions/protests which occurred at Dale Farm in more detail. Whilst the activism to protect large parts of the

caravan site were ultimately unsuccessful, it offers insights into the presence of counter-claims to domesticity and family life and the complex threads of resistance within contemporary domopolitics. The protest formed temporary solidarities which were not only orientated towards existing 'rights' claims but focussed on contesting the destruction of alternative form of family life and home.

Travellers, 'Problem Families' and Domopolitics

The events surrounding Dale Farm in 2011 hold a significant place in the recent history of neo-liberal Britain. The eviction has been heralded as the largest mass eviction by the British state. It is also revealing of the UK authorities' human rights record towards Traveller communities, who constitute one of the most discriminated ethnic minority group in the UK (Tyler, 2013 133; Hellenier 2003). However, the event mirrors other evictions of Travellers sites and other unwanted 'neighbours' which have taken place in recent years (Flint 2004). Equally the practice of eviction itself relies on a longer history of discrimination which works to make Travellers 'evictable', alongside a string of regulatory strategies which have intensified the regulation of Travellers since the 1960s. By exploring these links we can see that whilst the regulation of Travellers is historically specific, the focus on 'improper' domestic arrangements which is used to define Travellers parallels the treatment of other 'problem groups' such as migrants and different renderings of the 'underclass' or 'workless' poor.

Estimates put the 'nomadic' population of Britain between 45-100,000. This reflects the problematic nature of defining 'nomadism' along with the varied composition of different groups who have been identified or identify as 'Traveller' or 'Gypsy'. Some individuals and groups travel occasionally or throughout the year, others choose to live in a caravan rather than a 'bricks and mortar house', others have settled (or have been settled) into more sedentary housing arrangements. In Britain, nomadic or semi nomadic ways of life have been increasingly controlled post-World War Two but equally so has the conditions for living semi/permanently in a caravan (Kabanchnik 2012, 212). Planning legislation, policing practices, environmental policy have all amassed to limit the stopping places for caravans, this is paralleled by campaigns to domesticate certain groups into the cultural practices and physical spaces of the 'settled community' (Greenfields and Smith 2010). Since 1994 the most pervasive measure to deal with semi/permanent Traveller sites has been eviction, after

the 2010 Decentralisation and Localism Act, the legal aspects of eviction were strengthened making it easier for the local councils to deny planning applications and bolstering police and private security services to destroy 'illegal' dwelling (Ryder 2011 31; Ciachsci forthcoming). So whilst state practices have also increasingly attempted to assimilate Traveller and Gypsy groups into sedentary life, this is paralleled with the criminalization of caravan sites and stopping places thus enforcing movement. As one Dale Farm resident declared in frustration, revealing the ambiguity and misconception of the label of Traveller: 'People say we are Travellers and we should travel but the world is changing, our kids need to go to school. They keep pushing us on the road, but where does the road end?' (Tropping 2011).

Whilst a body of critical scholarship has argued that modern states control 'nomadism' through a will to monitor mobility (See Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Kotef 2015; Procacci 1991; Basaran 2008; Friese and Mezzadra 2010, 302), Kabanichnik suggests that Travellers are problematized through their perceived inferior emotional attachment to, and 'civilised' use of, place (2012, 222). Under contemporary domestic politics, Travellers are often represented as threatening because of how they 'impact' on a place. Racist tropes of pollution, animalism, degeneracy, criminality and invasion are often used to reveal the absence of domesticity, care and civility towards both land and household (Kotef 2015, 104).

Domesticity, Social Control and Citizenship

To understand the relationship between domesticity and Traveller marginality it is worth considering how domesticity emerged as a target of government practice, its connection to the ideals of family and citizenship. As I have noted, to McClintock and Stoler (2002) the management of domesticity and intimacy was central to how colonial authorities produced and sustained racial claims to European superiority in the late 19th century. A particular configuration of white, bourgeois family life became defining of the 'European self' (see Turner 2014; Grewal 1997; Stoler 2002; Mills 2005). This drew upon the imagined failed domesticity of other social groups. Across the British Empire in the early 20th century loose family structures, lack of formal lodgings, uncleanliness were all used as examples of social and moral failure of the colonised and lower classes. In Britain especially, welfare authorities began to target the domestic arrangements of the poor specifically because they saw this as the way of improving the 'stock' of the British race (see Soloway 1990). As Stoler argues:

At the turn of the century, in both metropole and colony, the liberal

impulse for social welfare, representation and protective legislation focussed enormous energy on the preparatory environment for civic responsibility: on domestic arrangements, sexual morality, parenting, and more specifically on the moral milieu of home and school in which children lived.

This focus on domesticity was justified by both progressive and conservative reforms alike (Cruikshank 1999, 54). The nuclear family household was presented as the site for proper and necessary socialisation of children who would be British citizens (Rose 1990). Thus expanding welfare provisions were focussed on fostering and promoting the domestic arrangements of bourgeois households, especially onto the poor but later on commonwealth citizens, migrants and Travellers (Stoler 1997; Lewis 2000; Welshman 1996). A central feature of this push towards domestication was the discovery of 'problem families' who failed to conform to the domestic ideals of the white, middle-class family and were 'held back' by their inability to govern their households. As Welshman argues they were defined by 'their inability to benefit from education, by the dirt and chaos of their homes, and the high number of children' (Welshman 1995). Through such a script we can see how the raced and classed borders of true 'Britishness' were in part constituted and played out through representations of failed familial domesticity: errant fathers, overcrowded housing, poor hygiene, chaotic lives of the poor and 'non-whites' (Webster 1998).

Amidst the persistence focus on domesticity as a mode of belonging, authorities in the mid-20th century became increasingly concerned with the 'living conditions' of Traveller settlements as well as the economic relations and forms of governance apparent in Traveller families. This formed as part of the wider dynamics of domestic welfarism but took on its own unique trajectory. Authorities anxious about the Travellers modes of domesticity frequently focussed on the caravan as a form of failed household, in need of active governmental intervention. For instance, in the 1960's authorities began a programme for the formalisation of traveller sites to be provided by Local Councils in England. As Sibley argues such sites were specifically designed to create an architecture of Traveller life in keeping with the rhythms, rituals and spatial order associated with sedentary domesticity (Sibley 1981, 26). In the contemporary discourse on Travellers, in both governmental and media accounts, the Traveller caravan, the stopping place, the semi-permanent site are persistently cast as spaces of disorder: defined by dirt, litter, poor sanitation – foremost lacking the proper practices and domestic rituals of cleanliness, order and household governance (Sibey 1981,

31). Judith Okley (Okley and Houtman 2011, 26) discusses in her ethnographic work with Travellers how local councils and officials have been historically obsessed with an imagined lack of hygiene at Traveller sites, fixating on the (lack of) provision of bathing facilities over any other amenity. Traveller children in particular are the target of this obsession with dirt, often depicted as grubby, unkept, or in a feral state (Okley 2014) – thus both constituted as victims and sites of future social anxiety (see image 1 below).

(insert image 1)

The 1967 Ministry Gypsy Census report

This focus on dirt is significant in the regulation of Travellers. Following Mary Douglas, (2002, 41) if cleanliness is the defining feature of order, care and correct use of place, then dirt corrupts and pollutes. This symbolic register is apparent when Travellers are treated as an 'invasive' presence; 'polluting' a place and threatening its true inhabitants (settled citizens) thus demanding government intervention to be moved on, evicted - thus preventing contamination. The failure to live up to imaginaries of hygiene and order was central to the constitution of Dale Farm residents as 'evictable'. In the lead up to the eviction of Dale Farm, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Eric Pickles (2011) talked of how Travellers were being allowed to 'trash' London's green belt, which is often depicted as a rural idyll of 'middle England' – the heart of the British domos (Bhopal and Myers 2008, 150-153). In the 2005 run up to the general election The Sun newspaper ran a prominent campaign called 'Stamp out the Camps' which called upon the government to evict Traveller sites without initial planning permission. The iconography of the campaign was significant, focusing on Dale Farm as the 'largest Gypsy camp in Europe' the paper utilized blurry images of young Traveller men standing round camp fires, roaming dogs, rubbish strewn pitches, as telescopic lenses focused on residents at a 'animal photographer' distance. Tyler (2013) suggests that the campaign's significance was how it was taken up by elites in the Conservative Party; the promise to 'control' Travellers access to land was central to Michael Howard's election pledge and influenced the Conservative-Liberal coalition position in 2011. For The Sun (2005), 'Gipsies' presented a form of intolerable 'lawlessness', dirt and filth which carefully recoded racism through the prism of domesticity. It argued that: 'Communities do not want people setting up illegal sites in their midst because the camps are dirty, cluttered, insanitary and an eyesore.' Dale Farm was 'a squalid eyesore – blighting the

lives of villagers...each morning gallons of sewage over flows into the roads. Stray dogs roam in packs feasting on rats in the makeshift estate.’ (Cited in Tyler 2013 136)

Domesticity and cleanliness frequently function to stratifying Travellers as failed families and thus failed citizens who needed to be regulated for the good of the domos (the ‘villages’, ‘tax payers’ and ‘communities’ who belong). This also links to questions of economic productivity. In similar ways that the late Victorian cult of domesticity focused on economic relations of the nuclear family, in neo-liberal Britain the normative claim to citizenship is often presented through the ideal of the ‘working family’. This fetishisation polices numerous swathes of social life from the access to welfare benefits, the criminal justice system (Waquant 2009), visa applications (Turner 2014) and the naturalisation process. Whilst Dale Farm was presented as a place of squalor and chaos in the lead up to the eviction, this was equally linked to further moralising questions of dependency, of ‘feckless’ and ‘idle’ individuals (Fairbairn and Snell 2011; O’Shea 2011). As with historical representations of the problem family and underclass, ‘primitivism’ and backwardness were revealed by an apparent absence of wage labour. The moral failure to care for place (dirt, trash, chaos) was paralleled to a lack of work ethic and the historical link with Travellers surviving through the black economy and petty crime (Oakley 2014). As the patriarchal management of home is composed around and in relation to the responsibility of ‘hardworking’ and breadwinning parents, the symbolic economy of the caravan appears to deny these norms of proper domesticity. It is cast as beyond the norms of the liberal relationship between ownership, property and production (Kotef 2015). Travellers are thus made evictable through failing the responsibilities of the ‘good’, ‘working’ and property owning citizen (Garrett 2007).

The representation of Travellers as failing to live by proper domestic codes is keenly highlighted in authorities’ focus on children as the bearers and victims of Traveller life. Mobility is often narrated as problematic because it disturbs the ‘natural’ and healthy rhythms of family life and child rearing. So are the spatial and domestic arrangements of living in a caravan. The ‘deviant’ lifestyles of Travellers has sometimes lead to state social service intervening and removing children from their parents (Mayall 1988, 101; Vanderbeck 2005 78). Education policy similarly reflects an anxiety surrounding Traveller children who are frequently treated as ‘victims’ in need of saving (Vanderbeck 2005, 79). In this context, school is often treated as an opportunity to socialize Traveller children into ‘mainstream society’ (Sibley 1981, 41-42) - just as settlement in a ‘bricks and mortar’ house is viewed as

in the 'interest of children'. When Traveller parents refuse to send their children to school this is frequently presented as a sign of incivility rather than resistance to cultural assimilation (Kenny 1997; Kabanichnik 2010, 220). As Vanderbeck (2005, 73) argues, 'child rights discourses are often employed to construct Traveller parents as obstacles to their children's development and well-being and thus serve to legitimize various forms of state intervention.' The mainstream discourse of 'child rights' does this whilst equally silencing the damaging effects that institutional racism, forced mobility, evictions and coercive settlement practices have on children (Tyler 2013, 128; Greenfields and Smith 2010). Casting Travellers as failed parents is equally tied to anxiety over the risk that problem children pose to future society order through: anti-social behaviour, crime, delinquency – all at the cost to the 'public purse' (Gardener 2008, 59). In the absence of proper domesticity, schooling is viewed as the last hope for future social order (Groom 2008). This is because as Gardener (2008, 59) argues: 'Not only is problem behaviour stable across the life course, it also affects the next generation. There is compelling evidence from intergenerational studies showing that problem behaviour is one of the key ways in which disadvantage is transmitted across generations.' Disadvantage here is addressed as a moral question that is passed on and learnt through family structures and socialised through the child's intimate environment.

The targeting and representation of Traveller children (as both victims and threats) illustrates how anxiety around reproduction is re-assembled in the contemporary domestication of Travellers. Contemporary liberal policy still treats the Traveller family as the site of social reproduction which can create the conditions for 'intergenerational disadvantage', linked through lack of wage labour and hygiene (Cameron 2011). This is revealed again in the prioritization of Traveller families to be housed in council properties. Akin to other policies which have historically restricted the possibility of reproduction, the Traveller family remains a site for the transference of morality, behaviours and culture (which again are linked to the environment of the caravan). Through the persistent representation of dirt, poverty, informal work is viewed as culturally determined, rather than seen in terms of Traveller group's marginal position in regards to, say, the structures of late capitalism or the active destitution brought about by historical state policy. The anxiety surrounding Traveller difference and strangeness is found in their proximity and intimacy to those 'citizens' they are said to threaten; articulated through a concern regarding 'un-neighborliness' and invasion (see Fortier 2007). Marking out Travellers through their failed domesticity articulates their otherness through a link to both private and national conceptions of home. Viewed through

the lens of contemporary domopolitics and the wider history of domesticity, events such as Dale Farm can be seen as acts of violent domestication which herald both the return of place to proper domesticity and care (the green belt, the protection of the property and rights of citizens), whilst guiding Travellers towards sedentary forms of spatial and cultural practice through the removal of alternatives.

Protesting the Eviction

The events at Dale Farm are remarkable in terms of the activation of state violence, of which they form part of a much longer history, but the protests against eviction are equally significant in terms of their performance of activism (Isin 2008). Dale Farm was rendered a space of incivility by the authorities, removed from the dominant familial and domestic conceptions of British citizenship (relating to my analysis above). However, this was directly challenged by the protests against eviction I argue that the protestors counter-narrative reveal the multiplicities of claims over 'home' which disturb the rigid understanding of domesticity and family life. If ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the evictions, these 'acts' opened up space for the contestation over a more ambiguous form of citizenship (Ní Mhurchú 2014).

Under the label of 'Dale Farm Solidarity', protesters from both within the Traveller and settled communities descended on the site throughout October 2011 to show support for those threatened with eviction. Significantly, non-resident activists were drawn from organisations such as No-borders which linked the Travellers predicament to other struggles over 'home' and belonging at various border sites. As part of the emergence of what activists would call 'Camp Constant' protestors and residents erected extensive barricades against the private bailiff company who, under the protection of the police, intended to seize the site. Importantly, what the protest relied upon was the construction of a powerful counter-narrative, made possible through an online media presence (see <https://dalefarm.wordpress.com/>), which disturbed claims that Dale Farm represented failed domesticity. In the same way that the authorities relied on a vision of illegality and disorder, the counter narrative relied on central appeals to the history of the Dale Farm site: the caravans and the relationships constructed over a ten year period as a different rendering of home and belonging. This described family as a space of extended communal affiliations, of the warmth and close-knit ties that transcended the ideal of an autonomous family household. Denying the co-ordinates of the 'working/wage labour family', this activated a claim to home which was described as networked through trust. As one resident put it: 'This is a safe

community. When my baby gets bigger I'll know that if he goes outside someone will bring him back.' Kathleen McCarthy, a resident and campaigner speaking to the Guardian Newspaper described the eviction notice in similar terms - ending the possibility of networked affiliations of family life:

My whole family is here, and just about everyone here is family. There's my children, grandchildren, my sisters and brothers, my mother, my aunts, my uncles. How can we all live together again? Would they do this to any other group of people? Any other community wouldn't be treated the way we are being treated (Walker and Barkham 2011).

The claim that 'just about everyone here is family', posits a different conception of the boundaries of family than the norm of contemporary rule. It performs different codes of affiliation and solidarity which work in a different register of space and intimacy. Such a discourse relied on a central tension; between upholding a heteronormative and gendered narrative of familial relations, whilst rejecting claims of the 'bricks and mortar' diagram of home. What vexed so many observers of Dale Farm was that whilst upholding an identification to forms of nomadism the residents protested being moved, as Leo McKinstry commented in the Daily Express 'if they are travellers, they should travel'. Whilst this shows a blatant disregard to historical and often violent re-appropriation of land, practices of enclosure, and legal restrictions on temporary stopping places, it actively misconceives the claim of Travellers to multiple sites of occupancy and to multiple spaces of cultural and social significance (which could be called 'home'). Significant, those resisting eviction did not purely make a claim to Dale Farm through the territorial links of ownership/private property definitive of liberal citizenship but instead because eviction represented the state sanctioned death of Traveller life itself - because there was 'nowhere to go'. The spaces and possibility of traveller life was being enclosed and destroyed. It represents a form of what Porteous and Smith (2001) call 'domicide'. Patrick Barkham (2011) described this effect:

Life in a house is a claustrophobic prospect when all you have known is a caravan. The children sleep at one end, their parents at the other; everyone worries they won't be able to sleep in bedrooms. More importantly, the plots allow the Travellers to live in extended families. Everyone feels safe. The children bounce between aunts and grandparents, roaming free, playing among friends; their mothers knowing that they are among friends and someone is looking out for them.

The utilisation of the narrative of family, security and paternal care not only appealed to the existing register of (gendered) family life and citizenship (which the Travellers were described as 'outside' of) but in doing this opened up space to embolden resistance to the

eviction. However, it is important to note how this networked deployment of family and community emerged precisely because the traveller's site was rendered as an abject failure of home and domesticity. In doing so the domopolitics provided both the scope and the possibility of resistance. Tellingly, the acts of counter-narrative which troubled the idea of Dale Farm as a failure of home actively sought out the claims of 'community' central to the broader appeal of British citizenship idealised in the politics of the 'working family'. To some protestors, Dale Farm represented the promise of communal citizenship and caring which was supposedly absent in the rest of 'Broken Britain': As Barkham (2011) again argues:

Dale Farm's residents gave a glimpse of the kind of community that everyone living in houses and flats in towns and cities bemoans the loss of. Now it will be smashed up by bailiffs and bulldozers.

The multiple strategies employed by those resisting eviction utilised the norms of family and citizenship but, through opening up the claims of home, activated the possibility of different forms of familial life. Rather than a claim to territory, or to reclaim a strict ideal of familial domesticity, the protests acted as a struggle against the destruction of a way of life. The enclosure of Traveler mobility and its criminalization which the Dale Farm eviction represents, reveals the contemporary shape of domestication, the taming and subduing of those forces that 'threaten' the domos. However, rather than merely controlling the dangers of mobility this represented a will to unmake and destroy alternative forms of home (domicide) - committed in light of the need to foster and protect the historical ideal of the heteronormative, settled home of the citizen. One of the most haunting photographic images that came to define the last day of the protest and the process of eviction was that of a burning caravan, with the word 'our home' etched out across rubber tyres strung out across the barricade in front of it (see below). This image arguably became the aesthetic of a different claim to home which was made even in the presence of its destruction.

(Image 2 insert)

The politics of home articulated in the protests was continued in the memorialisation of Dale Farm. Artistic projects such as Soil Despositions (SD) actively sought to highlight the (im)possibility of a nomadic claim to home in contemporary Britain (<https://soildepositions.wordpress.com/>). A year after the eviction of the site, artist-activists began the project which used soil donated by former female residents collected from their one time caravan pitches. The soil was then 'deposited, framed and documented' at other sites

which held cultural and political significance for the evicted women and for practices of nomadism. This dispersal was international, from the Westway Traveller Site in London (also threatened with eviction), the former protest site in Parliament Square, to other places of dispossession/displacement such as favelas in Rio de Janeiro and Palestine (McCarthy 2015). By removing and dispersing the soil the project sought to reveal the ambiguity around territorialised and fixed notions of home and the materiality of the ‘dispossession and liquidation of property’ that Travellers continue to experience. In the temporal dispersal of the soil connections were made with global struggles for land and movement but equally, this dispersal revealed a central paradox, as McCarthy (2015) argues ‘the person who drops the soil is operating through a mobility and a freedom of movement that is assumed to be attributed to Travellers’ lifestyles (nomadism) but which has largely been curtailed’ (81). In this way the project set to highlight the extreme marginalisation experienced by Travellers through the government of domesticity, but equally the multiple directions and movement of the soil symbolises the ‘diffuse’ possibility and desire for different forms of home and belonging which Dale Farm also presented.

‘Acts’ and Disturbances of Domopolitics

Speaking of ‘activistic’ citizenship, over active citizenship, Isin (2008, 22) suggests that moments of ‘activism’ that disturb and make possible new sites and scales struggle cannot be reduced to a totality of ‘success’ or ‘failure’. We should instead read interruption, disturbance and resistance as the emergence of others ways of being political (White 2008, 44). The Dale Farm activism failed to stop the eviction; however it reveals the extent to which the contemporary government of the domos remains contestable and contingent. Whilst heavily limited through relations of power, the process of marginalisation that we see in Dale farm was ‘interrupted’ by alternative claims to home and this produced openings in the composition of domopolitics.

In its appeal to a different form of home, outside of the neo-liberal focus on autonomy, internal governance and wage labour, the acts of protest and memorialisation reveal a different claim to ‘belonging’ in contemporary Britain, one based on fractured appeals to solidarity and temporality. Furthermore, what is significant is that the central claim to affiliated family life rescripts the territorialised sovereign notion of home through the struggle over keeping the possibility of nomadic movement and different cultural affiliation alive. The protests created new assemblages between Traveller and settler groups and the ‘Traveller

Solidarity Network' which emerged out of the resistance, and although not unproblematic, this did provide an agonistic space to challenge the dominant notions of 'domesticity' and citizenship. Equally, networks of international activist across Europe have shown solidarity with the eviction by appropriating the symbol of 'Dale Farm' as a call to arms and, as the SD project articulated, making connection with other forms of violent dispossession of homes and the control of movement globally. What these solidarities and the counter-narrative of Traveller claims to home does is disturb the smooth operation of domicile. In doing so, such 'acts' can be read, in the words of Ranciere, as 'represent(ing) ongoing effort(s) to create forms of the common different from the ones on offer' (Ranciere, 2011, 80).

Viewing the protests as acts which disturb the fabric of violent domestication and domicile allows us to see these struggles as alternative claims to home without treating the counter-narrative of the protesters as fully emancipatory or utopian (Darling 2014, 83). Instead, they remain interruptions and openings. The counter-narrative of home remained firmly grounded within a heteronormative and highly gendered register of the family (which may account for some of its emotive traction in parts of the media). The tragedy of the eviction was precisely represented through the horror of the destruction of a family life: 'there are families here' read one banner (see Barrett and McIntosh 1982). In understanding the politics of the Dale Farm we need to avoid romanticised and the idealisation of the 'Traveller home' as a site of further resistance. Firstly, this risks homogenising the Traveller community and covering up many problems with the protest movement itself. For example, the organisation of the protests tended to operate around male figures in the solidarity movement, often denying both female voices and, ironically, residents themselves (see anon 2015). Equally, many Travellers have criticised the conduct of the media campaign which tended to focus the protest on the 'politics of identity' and cultural preservation rather targeting the active destitution which has lead from historic state practice. To idealise the Traveller home as a site around which new co-ordinates of domesticity can be configured could also risk obscuring power relations within Traveller families, for instance obscuring high levels of domestic abuse – which are in no way isolated to Traveller communities (Allen 2011 7). Instead, exploring the co-ordinates of the protests reveals an event of contestation and contestability, the interruptions of Dale Farm need to be read as part of the ongoing struggle over domopolitics, not its zenith.

Conclusion

By exploring the struggle over Dale Farm I have sought to understand one way in which domesticity and home is central to strategies of regulation and the politics of citizenship in contemporary Britain. Rather than viewing the regulation of Travellers as linked to the question of mobility, this needs to also be understood in relation to domesticity, the apparent failure of Travellers to follow norms of domestic practice – ‘home-making’, household governance and wage labour, hygiene, use of place and territory. Situated in a wider history of domopolitics there is a push for authorities to domesticate Travellers into the rhythm and life styles of the settled community or protect areas from their ‘invasive’ presence. This links to other acts of domestication which have historically targeted the underclass, poor and racialized migrant, ‘problem families’. The case of Traveller families reveals how both disciplinary (eviction) and empowering (education) strategies coalesce to monitor domesticity. In that anxiety regarding improper domesticity is focussed on children and the familial this reflects the persistence of fear regarding reproduction of difference within the national domos. Domestication in this sense works to both deny certain forms of life whilst equally protecting the dominant link between citizenship and home. The fabric of these shifting re-deployments are drawn from historical legacies of the raced and sexed assemblage of British nationhood and its ideal of white, bourgeois, family life.

However, this is never exhaustive. Domopolitics is shaped by the enduring presence of difference which reveals the overdetermined nature and uncertainty of the dominant claim to home. The example of the Dale Farm protests brings to the fore how the need to regulate and restrict are conditioned by the enduring presence of others. The temporality and nomadism that disturbs the sedentary claim to home is targeted in attempts to transform and discipline it, yet the activism around the Dale Farm protests reveals how this is always, in part, a failed project. As I illustrated with the counter-claim to family life in the protests, this provides (limited) space for the emergence of political challenge from spaces of marginality and the ever present possibility of disruption and alternative claims to citizenship. Ultimately, the continual presence of Traveller ways of life, cultural forms and their resistance to following the dominant script of the domos has led to increasing levels of state violence (as revealed in the intensification of evictions). However, rather than seeing this as the strength of contemporary domopolitics we can perhaps view this in terms of its weakness. The marginalisation of certain groups provides the grounds for different claims to belonging, care and home; but this actively rests on de-centering the model of white heterosexual familial home and its attachments to nationhood. If neoliberal citizenship as a racialized assemblage

focusses on domesticity, then this also provides material for thinking through and keeping *alive* different ways of living.

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Image 1.

Ministry of Housing and Local Government
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Gypsies and other travellers



Image 2



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