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Peripheral inclusion? Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association officers speak out

Dr. Anthony Drummond

This research article concerns the experiences of fifteen members of the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA). Following contact via snowball research methods¹ these members, twelve of whom are regular police officers, the remaining three comprising of a retired officer, a civilian member of staff and a Police Community Support Officer, agreed to take part in semi-structured interviews. The majority claimed Gypsy Roma or Traveller (GRT) heritage, and, set against a conceptual framework concerning issues such as stigmatisation, shame and anti-gypsyism the way in which these members are subjected to what is regarded here as 'peripheral inclusion' becomes evident. Even though legislation offers recourse to protection from discrimination to members of the GRT communities, concerns are raised within this article as to the conduct of some police officers towards both GRTPA members, and, the wider GRT communities. This is framed against a background of three specific topics raised as cause for concern by participants in the initial focus group: policing by consent, the policing of Traveller sites, and, the impact of racism on GRTPA members claiming GRT ethnicity. Overall, the findings indicate that anti-gypsyism may be endemic to UK policing.

Keywords: peripheral inclusion, Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, anti-gypsyism.

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Recently Anthony was invited to act as an advisor to London School of Economics Principal Investigator Dr. Coretta Phillips, and, Co- Principal Investigators: Dr. Zoë James and Dr. Becky Taylor on a major ESRC funded project: Gypsies' and Travellers' Experiences of Crime and Justice since the 1960s.²

Introduction and Rationale for this Research

In 2014, one of the founders of the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA)³ PC Jim Davies filed a complaint against Thames Valley Police leading them to: '..establish a

¹ Initially, a focus group was held at a meeting of GRTPA officers.

² <http://www.lse.ac.uk/social-policy/research/projects/gypsy-and-traveller-experiences-of-crime-and-justice-since-the-1960s>

³ Established in 2014

formal review into how their officers engage with Roma⁴ travelling communities' (Pattinson-Brewer, 2014: np; Green 2014). PC Davies claimed that:

....during his career, he routinely heard colleagues making abusive stereotypical comments about Roma and Irish Travellers and [he] also, raised concerns about wider organisational practices⁵ within Thames Valley Police towards these communities (Pattinson-Brewer, 2014: np).

Reflecting PC Davies's claims, during 2014 it is recorded that: '...serving officers used a closed group on [Facebook]...to post racist comments about Gypsies and Travellers' (Green, 2015). Some serving and retired officers are known to have left comments including use of the word 'pikey'⁶ online.⁷

To add to the growing body of works on criminal justice and GRTs (Power 2003; James, 2005; Richardson, 2007; Coxhead, 2007; Mac Gabhann, 2011; Drummond, 2012; Acton, 2013; Drummond, 2015; Donnelly-Drummond, 2016; Traveller Movement 2018; Phillips, 2019) the aim of this research was to ascertain GRTPA officer's opinions as to the relationships between police and the GRT communities. In July 2014 the author attended the launch of the GRTPA held in Parliament, England, and contacts were made that later would prove invaluable. In 2017 the author was awarded a small grant by Leeds Beckett University to undertake this research.

The research questions were based around three broad themes that arose during a focus

⁴ The Council of the European Union use "Roma"...as an umbrella term which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc., whether sedentary or not.' However, the reader should bear in mind that in the recent past the Roma in Continental Europe have faced radically different issues to those experienced by UK and Irish based Travellers such as Communism, and, prior to that, The Holocaust:

https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/139979.pdf Three words are used simultaneously throughout this article to refer to these communities in general: Gypsy Roma Travellers (GRT).

⁵ Unfortunately in neither Pattison Brewer's (2014) or Green's (2014) article was it clear what these wider organisational practices concerned.

⁶ 'According to the Oxford English Dictionary [the first time the word pikie/pikey appeared]...in print was in the Times in 1837, referring to strangers who had come to the Isle of Sheppey island to harvest. Later that century it meant a "turnpike traveller" or vagabond...in more recent years it has become a term of abuse...' Under the Race relations Act '...it can...be deemed a racist offence, given its association with Irish travellers and Roma Gypsies'. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7446274.stm> [Accessed: 24/06/19].

⁷ As of 21/09/19 no information could be found as to the outcome of an alleged inquiry into/disciplinary action taken against these officers.

group: policing by consent (Brogden, 1982; Morgan and Newburn, 1997; Chan; 1997; HMIC, 1999; Foster et al, 2005; Home Office, 2012; The Traveller Movement, 2018) policing sites, including unauthorised encampments⁸ (NPCC, 2018; Barrett, 2018; Hansard, 2019) and, racist anti-Traveller comments (Traveller Movement, 2017; Travellers Times, 2018).

Whilst all GRTs were once nomadic, the majority now live in what is known as settled accommodation (in houses and, on specially provided Gypsy Traveller sites) ‘...and do not travel, or do not travel all of the time, but nonetheless consider travelling to be part of their identity’ (Cromarty, 2019, p. 5). Regarding clarification of the descriptors used to define these communities Cromarty (2019, p. 4) also states:

The term ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ is difficult to define as it does not constitute a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including: Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers.

In addition to the above categories the European Roma share some common ground⁹ with Gypsy Travellers across the UK and Ireland (Gabor, 2017).

As set out by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2017) ‘Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are legally recognised as ethnic groups, and are protected from discrimination by the Race Relations Act (1976, amended 2000) and the Human Rights Act (1998).’ They are also protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁰

Despite legislation in place aimed at protecting minority groups (and others) from discrimination, in 2006, the Home Office were concerned enough about the behaviour of some police officers that a consultation¹¹ was launched into the police conduct rules (Jones and Williams; 2013). Following the consultation, proposals including ‘respect for diversity as a key professional expectation’ (*ibid* p. 5) were ratified within The Police (Conduct)

⁸ See House of Commons Library (2017) DEBATE PACK, 'Unauthorised encampments', Number CDP-2017-0176, 10 October 2017: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2017-0176/CDP-2017-0176.pdf>

⁹ For example: as stated by Marsh (2013) these groups ‘...often have similar occupations, drawing upon traditions of peripatetic and mobile economies that exploit niche markets, such as peddling and trading certain livestock (horses, dogs, and small birds).’

¹⁰ The Equality and Human Rights Commission states that under the Equality Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race religion or belief; sex, and, sexual orientation. See: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> [Accessed: 19/07/2019].

¹¹ This did not specifically concern Gypsies and Travellers.

Regulations 2008.¹² It should be the case that the legislation in place guarantees protection for all members of these communities. Yet, as will be demonstrated, this has not prevented some officers from openly discriminating against members of these groups, including their own colleagues. Moreover, perhaps reflecting peripheral inclusion (to be discussed in due course) it appears to be the case that the establishment of the GRTPA has made no discernible difference regarding prejudiced behaviour towards GRTPA members by some police.

In the first instance a discussion as to theory/a conceptual framework is presented followed by a discussion on the methods. Thereafter, the aims of the GRTPA are considered before reflecting on questions concerning the issue of policing by consent (Traveller Movement, 2018). Officer's answers as to questions on policing Traveller sites are then presented and prior to the conclusion, participants' reflections on racist anti-traveller comments are redressed.

Theory

Within the UK, GRTs '...experience some of the worst outcomes of any group, across a wide range of social indicators..' (Cromarty, 2019: 4). The contributory factors are multifaceted and interconnected including deprivation, discrimination and social exclusion (Cromarty, 2019, p. 4; Clark and Cemlyn, 2005). Realistically, there appear to be few theories that can clearly be applied to the situations of a group of people with cultures that are unique yet so marginalised¹³ (Clark and Cemlyn, 2005; Cemlyn *et al*, 2009; Chakraborti and Garland, 2015,¹⁴ Greenfield and Brindley, 2016). Those theories that come close have focussed on stigmatisation. For example, Powell (2008: 4) raises the spectre of Elias and Scotson's (1994) debate as to the established versus outsider relations characterised by conflict, and Halfacree's (1996) view (cited by Powell, 2008: 7) as to contemporary GRTs not fitting the stereotype of the romanticized image of the true, independent Traveller, the imagined Gypsy residing in lustrously painted caravans whilst selling hand-made crafts and wares. Yet as Powell (2008, p. 89) states these theories '...share a common deficiency in

¹² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/2864/contents/made>

¹³ It may be helpful here to conceive of Gypsy Travellers as ordinarily peripherally included within society as in the case of LGBT police officers and GRTPA officers discussed in due course, and within academia as set out in the following footnote.

¹⁴ Chakraborti and Garland (2015: 22) state: 'The experiences of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma have ...remained peripheral to most studies of racism.' Moreover that 'restrictive policy and public resentment...has resulted in their continual marginalisation ...' including '...their experiences of oppressive and discriminatory policing in states across Europe.'

terms of a neglect of the role of power,...particularly the power differentials inherent in the social relations between the settled population and Gypsies and Travellers.’ Thus, regarding who has the power to stigmatise, the concept of anti-gypsyism (van Baar, 2015; Anti-gypsyism.eu, 2017; European Agency for Fundamental Rights 2018; Lee, 2019) will be applied here. As stated by Lee (2019: np):

...anti-gypsyism is not just expressing anti-Roma attitudes, hate speech or negative stereotypes....[it’s] not just racism; it is a component of Europe, which has grown alongside European civilisation since the Middle Ages. It’s...systematic...It’s absolutely everywhere, impossible to miss,....

In Continental Europe Romani Rose, chair of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma described anti-gypsyism as ‘..an attack on democracy, on the rule of law and our common European values’ (ENAR, 2018). Thus, it is imperative that the concept of anti-gypsyism be drawn on throughout the findings not only to underscore the way in which those claiming GRT heritage remain stigmatised, but also the way in which power appears to be denied to GRT officers at times by some colleagues and superiors, and, the way in which this attack on the rule of law, for that is what it is, undermining the rule of law, carries grave dangers for its victims (whether they be GRT police officers or other members of these communities). As will be made clear throughout this article, when candid about their ethnicity, individual police officers may face attempts to humiliate them by some in-group officers seemingly to remind them of their groups’ outsider position in society. Thus, the concept of shame (Munt, 2007) may usefully complement anti-gypsyism and this is self-evident in many of the findings to be presented.

Munt (2007, p.3) believes that shame is applied noticeably to particular groups such as ‘..the underclass and the urban poor, rural labourers and peasants, “gypsies” or Travellers, homosexuals, sex workers and racial enmities.....(Munt, 2007, p.3) singling them out, stigmatising them. As becomes marked, largely GRTs remain stigmatised and labelled as other, devalued, as an underclass, even when they join the police.

Excluding many (yet not all) Roma who’s skin colour demarcates them as visibly different from the white majority, most Gypsy Travellers in the UK are white and on the issue of whiteness, citing Gray (2002) Munt (2007, p.19) states that ‘...whiteness means “Englishness” [in turn denoting] “manners” [and] reasonableness... which has a moral force that endows both

respectability and national belonging'. Yet, relevant to Gypsy Roma¹⁵ Travellers Chakraborti and Garland (2015: 22) warn of '[T]he failure to recognise prejudice directed towards "undesirable" forms of whiteness' believing this to be quite different in form to that experienced by minority groups that are visibly dissimilar to the majority. Indeed, just like the Irish were regarded (and probably still are today by some racists) as not 'white'¹⁶ enough (Munt, 2007, p. 21) not English as described above, as many of the findings will underscore, it appears that GRTs are regarded as 'off-white' as queer even, queer being defined as: '..odd, singular, quaint, open to suspicion,...' (Munt, 2007, p. 21).

Incited by Renstam and Sullivan's work (2018) on LGBT police officers, another concept that can be applied to the findings to be aired is that of peripheral inclusion. This model is used as a lens by way in which to view and analyse diversity within contemporary organisations. Basically the concept illuminates the fact that (in this particular case) although GRTPA members are formally included within the police service (by recognition of and establishment of the group) when members are open about their ethnicity or speak out against discrimination for example, then they can be met with silence, or ridicule by colleagues. They are included, on paper, so to speak, yet that is the only way they are included, it is peripheral, superficial, seemingly their ethnic status is viewed as unimportant. Thus to muse on the concept of peripheral inclusion is vital as it relates directly to the issue of the stated aims of the GRTPA redressed in due course, and, helps re-focus the lens by way in which to examine the negative reactions of some officers towards GRTPA members and the GRTPA itself as well as GRT communities per se.

¹⁵ Including those such as white European Roma with blue eyes and blonde hair, for example.

¹⁶ Chakraborti and Garland (2015: 22) refer to '[T]he failure to recognise prejudice directed towards "undesirable" forms of whiteness' adding that this 'is likely to have a quite different qualitative dimension from that experienced by visible minority ethnic groups'.

Methods:

Initially, potential participants were contacted at the launch of the GRTPA in Parliament in 2014, and, attendance at an annual GRTPA meeting. Thereafter, in late 2016 – early 2017 employing snowball sampling, participants were identified to engage in semi-structured interviews and later these were held across England lasting up to one hour. Participants were able to withdraw consent to use their interview data at any stage up to December 31st 2017. Across five months in 2017 the interviews were tape- recorded and in line with ethical concerns names and geographical areas have been anonymised. Moreover, the gender of participants is not disclosed throughout due to concern that doing so will make it easier for them to be identified. Given what some participants reveal below, this is an ethical response to their well-grounded fears for their positions should their identity be revealed.

In total, fifteen GRTPA members were interviewed. Aside from one civilian member, one Police Community Support Officer and one retired officer, the remaining participants were full time police officers. This included four officers that formed the focus group. Most but not all claimed Gypsy Traveller heritage (and this is delineated within the script: GT) and only one Eastern European Roma officer was interviewed (yet regrettably, due to quality of recordings in some circumstances not all data could be used here). An advert for the research and request for potential participants was placed on Linked In¹⁷ and the GRTPA agreed to try and generate participants internally. However, no calls/emails were received following this agreement therefore the decision was taken to email forces across the UK.¹⁸ Other than participants generated by snowball sampling methods, this resulted in four officers making contact leading to interviews. Overall, only one of the interviews was recorded in a police station, others took place in council chambers and hotel lobbies (not without some noise leading to interference on some tapes) whilst only two interviews were conducted over the telephone.

The aims of the GRTPA

Chaney (2015: np) revealed that membership of the GRTPA comprised of 111¹⁹ members in various forces and that:

¹⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/call-participants-research-project-based-leeds-gypsy-anthony/>

¹⁸ As time passed and no contacts arose, during questioning on this lack of response in interviews some participants believed it to be the case that emails concerning the GRTPA had most likely ended up being delivered as spam. Therefore potential participants missed the opportunity to take up the offer of interviews.

¹⁹ More recently, Martin Billy Casey Campbell Director of the GRTPA stated that there are now ‘over 150 members across the UK. Communication received via Facebook messenger 20/08/19.

There are many Gypsy Roma or Traveller police officers and staff nationwide. ...[yet] throughout society, such is the level of prejudice towards these ethnic groups, not everyone is comfortable in disclosing their ethnicity.

Chaney (2015) also revealed that GRTPA members wish to be recognised by all Chief Constables adding ‘[W]e believe that the GRTPA links into the Aims and Ambitions of police forces in their diversity action plans.’ The Travellers Times (2020) also carried the citation that the main aim of the GRTPA is as follows:

...to unite and support all Police Officers and Staff who are from [a] GRT background.
...by promoting equality and fairness and by providing a support forum where members can share and discuss the issues which affect their working life.

Travellers Times (2020) added that the ‘..the desire to foster good relationships between the Police and GRT Communities’ was also part of the main aim, as well as establishing ‘..a platform for sharing good practice in working with GRT Communities.’ Nevertheless, before reviewing the testimonies of GRTPA officers below the warning by Waddington (2012: 91): “[T]o explain inequalities in police treatment of ethnic minorities, gay men and lesbians, and women generally, one need look no further than ‘police culture’” (Miller, 2003; Couto, 2014) should be borne in mind. The informal aspects of police culture being deemed as cop culture comprising of core characteristics, for example, such as cynicism, suspicion and racial prejudice (Reiner, 2010: 118 – 32).

When asked about perceptions as to the aims of the GRTPA, in a focus group participant 4 (GT) stated:

It’s a... major opportunity to improve the lives of Gypsy Travellers...what better position to come from in which to challenge...stereotypes. You’ve got police, an institution which historically has been...partly responsible for furthering ...negative stereotypes [so]²⁰ what better organisation [to be in] to [promote positive] change.

Alternatively Officer C (GT) said: ‘I think...the GRTPA..was initially set up...to be a support network for Gypsies ...to try and bridge the gap and I don’t think...we have even touched on that at all.’ Meanwhile Officer I (GT) stated:

I think the aim is to try and just break down this barrier between us and the community maybe even more so than just supporting staff... let’s try and engage with the community and....just get rid of this stigma and block we’ve got between us....

²⁰ All words inside square brackets are the authors own words.

Assessing the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Foster *et al* (2005) found that liaison officers could positively impact the confidence of minority communities in policing. Yet, whilst it is evident that not dissimilarly, the GRTPA had a clear positive purpose, as indicated by Officer C it remained to be seen if two of the chief aims set by the GRTPA to promote ‘...equality and fairness’ (The Travellers Times, 2020, np) and ‘..to foster good relationships between the Police and GRT Communities’ (*ibid*) had actually been met, leading to the question: are Gypsy Travellers being policed by consent, redressed below.

Are Gypsy Travellers being policed by consent?

On the website of the Home Office (2012) under the title: ‘definition of policing by consent’ it is stated that: ‘...the police are the public and... the public are the police’. Obviously GRTs are members of the public. Yet, in discussion on anti-gypsyism Lee (2019, np) believes that ‘[O]ur societal identities do not extend to include “gypsies”’ and that ‘...actions which further ...[the] exclusion [of Gypsy Travellers]...strengthen the in-group’s identity’. So, as anti-gypsyism appears as ‘[A] marker for the boundaries of what is [viewed as] civilised and what is wild’ (Lee, 2019, np) there remains a need to scrutinise the concept of policing by consent of these communities, and, to identify anti-gypsyism when apparent in policing.

As advised by Jackson *et al* (2012: 6) the surest way to enhance legitimacy is for those responsible for justice to treat all with respect, to ‘...listen to what they have to say,...to demonstrate procedural fairness and justice’ creating and sustaining trust by the public, generating ‘institutional legitimacy.’ However, the perceptions of some officers were the antithesis of Jackson’s (2012) views as set out below.

In answer to the question: are Travellers being policed by consent? officer C (GT) said:

Well the relationship’s broken. I think the relationship’s been broken for many...years and er I don’t think police have been prepared to try and fix that. And until we fix it they will not be policed by consent. They won’t they just won’t... will they.

Meanwhile Officer D (Civilian GT) believed the relationship has ‘..always has been [broken]’ and Officer G (GT) said:

No...I don’t think they get treated the same at all...[police are] very quick to jump on anything that’s criminal but very slow I think to deal with anything...like the protection side of things. And at the end of the day ultimately police are here to protect the community and give the same level of protection to everybody...

Likewise Officer J (GT) said:

I think the easy issues tend to be over-policed.....and the big issues,²¹ I don't think get looked at all....so are they policed by consent? I don't think so...from talking to people on the sites they [police] only ever go on to enforce something. I don't think there is any....community engagement, there is nobody going on there to talk to them, to gain their trust, or, to build a relationship with them. We only ever go on to lock somebody up or something of that ilk.

Similarly officer M (non GT) said:

I don't think they are policed by consent.....And to say well would Gypsies and Travellers consent? Well, the majority of them do want us to go on site, they like us going on...site, it's the minority that ...are criminals [that very likely, may not consent] that's all I can say.

The officers' opinions above are supported by James (2005) observing that a lack of support has previously been noted by '...Martin (2002) who suggests that the police "over police" New Travellers²² as offenders and "under police" them as victims.' The issue of policing by consent is further underscored in the foreword to the Traveller Movement report (2018:3): Policing by consent: Understanding and improving relations between Gypsies, Roma, Irish Travellers and the police' whereby Lord Ouseley outlines a lack of trust by Travellers in the police with officers having witnessed derogatory and racist language being used against GRTs that were not dealt with properly adding that '...an Irish Traveller woman said she was asked by a police officer – "why are the majority of Gypsies and Travellers criminals?" Aside from reflecting an attack on the rule of law (ENAR, 2018) and underscoring anti-gypsyism the views of officers above are also reflected in the responses of Travellers to a survey conducted by the Traveller Movement (2017, p. 16) finding that more than fifty respondents 'specifically mentioned mistreatment by the police' whilst others reported 'feeling "harassed" [and] having their claims of racism not taken seriously.' This is underscored in the final quote on policing of Traveller sites set out below.

On reflection as to interaction between police and Travellers officer I (GT) believed that many police held the view that if they visited sites they needed to:

²¹ The easy issues being incidents such as stop and search and the big issues being those such as domestic violence as indicated by officer C in due course.

²² These are individuals that took up a nomadic way of life in recent decades emulating some of the traditions of traditional Gypsy Roma Travellers.

...look [out...because]...there'll be trouble etcetera and actually in doing that we build them [sites] up to be this big scary place instead of just a street....no different to any other road.... I think it's really important to have links within the community, to have people that are confident in talking to us and they know that we are not there to target or victimise them then actually people would be more likely to share Intelligence with us and just talk to us.

Yet, when Gypsies and Travellers do talk to police the results can sometimes be more than cause for concern as outlined by the officer below.

Referring to a recent incident (a 'big issue' as referred to by Officer J earlier) officer C (GT) recalled a victim of crime being let down by police stating that:

..it doesn't help when...you're a Gypsy and you find the courage to ring the police and you just get fobbed off. I've experienced that. I've seen it happen.....er a lady rang and said that her ex is being violent towards her,.....[he had left the property] she [stated she was] frightened he..[was].. coming back er and then there was something else in addition to that story where she basically reported a hate crime at the same time but it wasn't reported as a hate crime [wasn't recorded by police]...we [the call handler] said we'd get somebody to go and see her and five days later still nobody had been, that's a domestic violence [serious incident] a huge...issue....

Thereafter, officer C (GT) discussed the need for civilian call handlers such as the one mentioned above to be trained stating that they need it:

...absolutely...100% per cent the best training you could ever give: they need it. Because it's at that point when a call hits the police we are losing it there [the job is sometimes not done properly] so bobbies on the street don't have much chance after that because they [call handlers] have already put the wall up.

Given the serious failing outlined above, trust in policing, policing by consent, remains of utmost importance (The Times, 2020). On the issue of policing by consent and minority communities Foster *et al* (2005: 52) stated that staff recognised “critical incidents aren't just about murder and blood and guts”: they are “anything at all whereby you can lose the confidence of community, family, media”. Thus the way in which unauthorised encampments are policed (as well as the policing of authorised sites and any areas where Travellers reside) continues to require scrutiny. As set out below it becomes evident that ordinarily the police as an organisation have largely failed to reflect the main aim of the GRTPA mentioned previously: ‘..to foster good relationships between the Police and GRT Communities.....by facilitating...negotiation and co-operation between UK Police Forces, [and] GRT communities...’(Travellers Times, 2020: np).

Officer's views on policing sites:

Officer H (civilian GT) discussed excessive force used by police when working with the Department of Work and Pensions to investigate a case of alleged fraud (not violence):

...one [incident] that stands out was a raid that was conducted on the X....site in ...[named city] that would be [in] about 2006...it's a tiny little site about twelve plots and we turned up on the day [having already gone to the site with four police officers and identified fraud committed by some residents a week before] ...there was over a hundred officers. There was enough officers there to form a cordon around the entire site. There was a dedicated search team to every plot. There was a dedicated dog search to every plot, erm, there was helicopters, er, the police were all in their full protective armour, it was a complete and utter lockdown and that was excessive. I think in anybody's mind....you could have sent four officers on there and achieved the same [results].

The reader should bear-in-mind that this site is in full view of the public set in the middle of a city centre popular with tourists. As such it could be posited that this response was an exercise in publicly shaming Travellers as well as reinforcing negative stereotypes about Travellers that many witnesses may well have read about in the media (Donnelly-Drummond, 2016) and perhaps believed to be true. Thus the police may have been viewed by many observers to this raid as 'righteous'. Officer H also stated that:

...we have done these hate crime awareness days and you'll talk to a room of one hundred and twenty officers and you'll start off by saying how many of you have actually engaged with a member of the GRT communities?...very few people's hands go up. If you ask the question 'so what are the problems when engaging with GRTs...?' what you'll get is "well they mob you, they are very loud they are very in your face, they can be very aggressive, they can be very oppressive, intimidating, er...will surround you and they are violent" and then you have to revert back to question one which is how many of you have actually engaged...and [how] do you know this and it is, it's hearsay [no officer can provide an answer].

The two views presented above may be deemed as reflecting anti-gypsyism in practice demarcating the boundaries between what might be viewed as civilised and what may be deemed wild (Lee, 2019). They may also be viewed perhaps, as actions that can be perceived as an attempt to bolster the in-group's identity (notwithstanding the harms for *all* involved, especially Gypsy Travellers).

Similarly reflecting anti-gypsyism in action, when asked their view on policing Traveller sites in general, Officer I (GT) said: ...it's just.. not a risk factor that someone lives in a caravan, it doesn't mean you have to send more police officers or you have to be careful it's "them people". Likewise Officer H (civilian GT) had experienced that:

... a site would always be a no go site and you would hear the same rumours, the same myths, oh, you can't go on that site because of this you can't do that because of that and erm when you pressed [for information] there was never ever a genuine witness to these things it was just was just rumour [Interviewer: and hearsay?] and hearsay yes.

Thereafter, the reply of officer H led to asking other participants the following question: do you think police might be more frightened of Travellers than anti-Traveller? In answer to this question, once again underscoring anti-gypsyism, officer J (GT) replied:

Yeah I think it's an irrational fear. There is no foundation to it. We did a training day at ..work...they gave an example: if you were going to an incident, a fight in a pub and there was two people fighting, how many police officers would you send and they said oh [for] ...two, I'd send four they said right now your now going to a fight in a pub and there's two Travellers fighting what would you do? And a sergeant said I'd send more I'd send six, I'd send eight. We challenged him and [we] said why? It's not a risk factor that someone is [a] Traveller...

Meanwhile Officer I (GT) said:

...[Gypsies] are just people like anyone else I think people [some officers] get very excited and think that when your going to an unauthorised encampment or when you go on to a site there is a huge risk factor when actually it's no different than driving down a street it's just....mobile homes rather than brick houses.

In another interview Officer J (GT) stated:

I think some police officers are frightened of them, they are frightened to deal with the Gypsies...I'd be no more frightened of a Gypsy than I would anybody else.....if they are 6ft 6 if they've got muscles coming out the top of their head it makes me think twice but it doesn't matter to me whether your born white, Irish Traveller or a Gypsy that to me makes very little difference but you know to some colleagues it does make a difference especially if your going on a site. I mean I would walk on a site on me own I'm not sure there is many others that would.

Meanwhile officer I (GT) made the following observation as to alleged reactions to police by Travellers:

Yeh they [Travellers] can be quite inquisitive....often...lots of people will come out when your on a site but as a child we would do that. I think it's just nosiness but if you went on to any really...tight community like a little cul-de-sac where everyone knows each other the same thing would happen there. In our job there are certain streets you go down where everyone and their dog comes out when the police arrive let alone when you talk to anyone.....If my grandmother and aunty lived on the same street I'm sure they'd come out if the police were to target my house.

The above comment was affirmed by three other GRTPA members in different interviews.

In officer G's (PCSO) experience the difficulty in meeting the aims of their role being both a support officer, and being expected to gather "...evidence for investigations." was aired. This is an aspect of this lower paid policing work that may place an officer in physical and/or psychological danger/distress, or, even, dependent upon the situation, at risk of bribes from any criminally minded individual:

I'm being tasked to go onto the Traveller's site....To take down number plates to see who's on the sites erm whereas my priority is to go on there to see if anybody needs any help, needs any inclusion, needs any help with dentistry all the health side of things [and] schools...If you take 'police' away from my job description it is community support, that's what I am there for. Er but that then gets used because it's [police telling me] put the intelligence in put the intelligence in so I come way from there thinking right ok I have supported that community but at the same time I am shitting on that community....

Perhaps indicative that lessons have not been learned from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, this officer's experience reflects the findings of Foster *et al* (2005: 56) that some liaison officers in the force believed their work was not valued, the consequences being that resulting marginalisation limited the '...officers' ability to liaise between the police and minority communities.' However, the PCSO also stated police are aware that:

....on certain sites there are OCGs [organised crime groups] erm so you know they [seniors] are looking at it as Intelligence. I understand from the criminal point of view but our priority is to be supportive of people....

The last comment underscores the importance of policing by consent and, community engagement (by *all* officers not just PCSOs). Yet it may be the case that the PCSO's views also reflect concerns raised as to confusion as to the purpose of community policing (Waddington, 2012: 93; Cambridgeshire Police Web Page, 2019). Given it is known that many Gypsy Travellers are vulnerable and marginalised though what the PCSO said is also of importance because, as stated already, some Travellers have been left to their own devices as victims of crime. Continuing to reflect concerns as to consent the PCSO said:

....it's got to the stage now where there have been complaints come in against officers because they have been literally just going on to the Traveller sites, they've taken planning officers unannounced from the local council on to the Traveller sites and I'm not being funny but would you do that? If you drove past someone's house and saw their extension wasn't quite right would you take a planning officer? You wouldn't do it. So why do it to the community.....[they use] drones going over the Traveller site to see whether they are breaching planning permission, would you do that? Do you do that for other houses? Do you do that for the Asian community?

Whilst underscoring anti-gypsyism, what the PCSO reported is supported by James (2005: 7) on the policing of New Travellers observing that, not dissimilarly, police helicopters had been used in order to carry out surveillance of New Traveller sites creating extreme disruption to that community. These incidents are further evidence indicative of anti-gypsyism emboldening the attitudes of some officers, acting out this concept as a rationale perhaps to mark out boundaries between what is perceived to be civilised/wild with the aim, perhaps, of strengthening the in-group's identity whilst treating members of this community as second class citizens. Certainly, this appears to be the case as outlined below.

Racist anti-traveller comments rendering the community vulnerable:

When asked how did you find out about the GRTPA/what made you join? officer G (GT, PCSO) said: 'Somebody wrote what I'd class as a racist comment ... I reported it and then I felt I needed to get some support.' Officer G then continued to say that the comment was left on a screen at work, a system that:

...updates where you are on a daily basis and on an hourly basis...it's something when your on duty and they type in where you are and I had gone to one of our Traveller sites and they [other member of staff] had typed in pikey next door to my name and left it there all day.

Interviewer (to officer G): So that was aimed at you?:

I don't think it was aimed at me erm because that person doesn't know me but it was aimed at the community. [Interviewer: So a police officer had written that?] It was a erm police member of staff that worked in control [a civilian]. [Interviewer: And was that resolved?]: It was resolved but it wasn't resolved I don't think particularly well erm I can't talk about the details because I was basically told that if I disclosed what happened erm that I would be on a disciplinary which I find pretty hard to swallow to be honest.

Having joined the GRTPA this officer's experiences, as in the case of some other officers here are echoed in the findings of Mawby and Zempi (2018: 527). In discussion as to whether or not police officers should be considered as victims of hate crime, and, avail of protection from hate crime when owning more than one identity Mawby and Zempi (2018: 257) consider that in general, whilst police officers tend to:

...lack many of the characteristics that have been attributed to more traditional victims. [generally] They are neither marginalised nor disadvantaged and they do not lack power and authority.

Mawby and Zempi (2018: 527) add that typically police officers are not viewed as ‘ideal’ victims of hate crime but as ‘...overly-powerful’ contributing to frameworks reproducing ‘...relationships of power and privilege.’ Clearly however this is not entirely true in the case of GRTPA officers (and other minorities) within the police. Whilst overlooking the possibility for hate incidents arising/hate crimes *between* officers (underscoring officer G’s threat of a disciplinary for disclosure of what may, theoretically at least be considered a hate incident)²³ Mawby and Zempi (2018: 527) assert that ‘...cultures within increasingly diverse police organisations can be both forces for good – a dimension of coping with hostility, and bad – reproducing inequality and isolation.’ In fact, off record, reflecting the concept of peripheral inclusion, this is an issue that officer G expressed concerns about: basically, that the GRTPA was not able to protect them from discrimination leading to officer G feeling isolated. Whilst mirroring issues raised by Mawby and Zempi (2018) officer G’s experiences also affirm ‘...the power differentials...between the settled population and Gypsies and Travellers’ (Powell, 2008, p.89). What is also echoed by officer G’s experience and of other officers here is that as identified by Cashmore (2010: 652) when subjected to racist comments, ‘...challenging racism requires the officer to make a type of cost-benefit analysis to determine whether his or her protest will prove expensive in career or personal terms.’ Additionally it is apparent here that even in comparison to non GRT civilian staff GRT officers can be regarded by some superiors as ‘off-white’ perhaps (Munt, 2007, p. 21). Moreover, silencing by ‘suppressing’ (Renstam and Sullivan, 2018: 2) GRT issues remains clear.

In another force it was evident that the term ‘pikey’ will *not* be tolerated as officer E (non GT) said: ‘...if your ever heard using that word kiss your pension goodbye. Cos your not going to be staying in the police. It’s just one thing that we won’t tolerate so it’s not to be used...’. Yet, the opinion of officer E is in stark contrast to what a senior officer reportedly said in an extract below from an interview with Participant 1 during the focus group interview:

I had an experience, I had asked for a day off and someone told the Inspector why I wanted the day off (to attend a GRTPA meeting) and [in front of other officers] my Inspector said to me “what, your not a fucking pikey are you”. [Interviewer: and no action was taken against the Inspector?]: No but if I were Black or Asian that would never have happened.

²³ For example: ‘...displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters’ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/hate-crime/what-are-hate-incidents-and-hate-crime/> (Accessed: 02/06/20).

Participant 1's experience of what should rightfully be recorded as a hate incident if not a hate crime, underscores starkly the concept of peripheral inclusion (Renstam and Sullivan, 2018). The Inspector appears to have attempted to silence the voice of the GRTPA by shaming (Munt, 2007) the officer. Unfortunately, this officer's experience shows clearly that police culture may not have changed discernibly since 1993 when Burke discussed gay and lesbian officers owning two identities, facing difficulties irrespective as to whether or not they disclosed their minority status. If left unresolved, like other forms of discrimination, anti-gypsyism, just like homophobia, will remain damaging and GRT officers (and others from these communities) may continue to face discrimination whilst bearing in mind the fact that, as stated by the OECD (2019, p.1) '...discrimination is not only ethically unacceptable, it also entails substantial social [including psychological] and economic costs' to organisations and society in general. In addition to the experience outlined above Officer G (GT and PCSO) also recalled:

Well I've worked with a rural team and when I first went there none of them knew [I'm a Traveller] and the word pikey was chucked around the room pretty much on a daily basis until I... challenged each and every one of them face to face there and then ...[Interviewer: These were all PCSOs?] No, police officers, face to face, that was pretty interesting...

Elsewhere, reflecting canteen culture (Reiner, 1992) in another interview Officer J (GT) considered:

'I think...there's a van culture where ...I think some things are said when testosterone is flowing and...it's...hard when your trapped in that van and somebody makes a comment [about Gypsy Travellers] it was difficult to swallow and prior to the GRTPA I was on me own I thought I was the only one.'

Continuing, officer J (GT) said:

...a lot of police officers will be quite professional when they've got somebody stood in front of them...[yet] when they are in a van then they feel they are in a private space then sometimes other things come out and that was really what I first talked about with [named colleague and member of the GRTPA]. I just heard some comments and you think, your talking [negatively] about my grandma pal.

This aspect of cop culture (Reiner, 1985) has been referred to as the solidarity/isolation issue (Waddington 2012: 90 citing Reiner, 2010). All officers are fully aware that race is now a central concern of police occupational culture (Cockroft, 2013) and they must not discriminate. It is unclear as to whether or not officer J challenged anti-gypsyism/racism directly as it occurred in this particular case. If not, a reason for that may be as found by Cashmore (2010:

653) concluding that not reacting to such incidents may be a decision considered as expedient for ethnic minority officers fearing their safety may be compromised whilst on duty/in future if they report a racist colleague. However, it is known that such an incident encouraged officer J to register with the GRTPA and raise this as an issue/seek support. Elsewhere though in discussion of a ‘new breed’ of police officers Charman (2018, np) identified there are limits to solidarity finding that many officers stated they would not protect fellow officers if their behaviour was considered wrong, that unacceptable behaviour would not be tolerated and that it was important to perform their roles with integrity. Similarly and earlier on, Foster *et al’s* (2005: 94) findings on the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry on policing (see also Bowling and Phillips, 2003; Bowling and Phillips, 2007) were that racist language and behaviour was scrutinised closely, ‘...that explicitly racist epithets would not be tolerated and, if used, would lead to disciplinary action.’ It may in fact be the case that in general the ‘new breed of police officer’ (Charman, 2018) has changed police culture for the better yet the findings of this research suggests this is not the case for GRTs. In fact, lending strength to this notion, officer H (civilian GT) stated that, nationally:

..the police have...used the terms TGB which is thieving Gypsy bastard....instead of referring to pikies or Gypos you’ll hear TGBs. Er DTGB: dirty thieving Gypsy bastard. [Interviewer: so that’s the abbreviations used to tell someone, another officer what’s going on]: Yeah.²⁴

Given the information presented so far, it is timely that just prior to the field research for this project the Traveller Movement (2018: 6) submitted Freedom of Information requests to all forty five territorial police forces across England, Scotland & Wales asking for information on whether or not they employed Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers and/or a special point of contact (SPOC) for engaging these communities. All forty -five forces replied to the question with only twenty-three stating they have either GTLOs or officers in dedicated Special Point of Contact roles (Traveller Movement 2018: 6-7). Overall, the results indicated that provision is cause for concern: it was found that only two out of forty three have a targeted strategy and/or plan for improving relations with GRT communities and only twelve of forty three police forces have wider Community Engagement, Equality and Diversity and/or Hate Crime Strategies in place.

²⁴ In interview for my PhD: Irish Travellers and the Criminal Justice Systems Across the Island of Ireland (2008) Ulster University, an officer recalled the term ‘TGB’ being used in Northern Ireland by police.

Conclusion

The establishment of the GRTPA should have heralded the chance to improve and enhance relations between police and GRT communities. Yet, whilst it is evident that the GRTPA had a clear positive purpose, many of the findings set out above reflect the fact that two of the chief aims set by the GRTPA to promote ‘...equality and fairness’ (Chaney, 2015: 1) and, ‘..to foster good relationships between the Police and GRT Communities’ (*ibid*) have yet to be met. The findings make clear the relationship between Travellers and police requires urgent attention and that Travellers need to be policed as any other community might generally expect to be the case. As suggested by participant H there is no need for any site to be considered a no-go site, and in general, no need for excessive force to be employed in the search of a site. No officer should be afraid of any Traveller, as suggested by at least one GRTPA member.

It is evident that many of the quotes above underlined concerns as to anti-gypsyism: ‘..an attack...on the rule of law...’ (ENAR, 2018). In addition, derogatory comments made towards some GRTPA officers by colleagues in vans and in the work-place underscore the way in which GRTs may be regarded in some instances as ‘off-white’ (Munt, 2007, p.21). In particular, Participant 1’s experience (focus group) underscores concerns as to peripheral inclusion (Renstam and Sullivan, 2018) as the Inspector appears to have attempted to silence the voice of the GRTPA member by shaming (Munt, 2007) referring to the officer as a ‘fucking pikey’. Also, the concerns of others left vulnerable due to lack of proper resolution regarding their experiences such as officer G being threatened with a disciplinary should they attempt to raise their concerns again as to the same derogatory term: pikey, being left on a computer screen, and, the same officer witnessing colleagues referring to GRTs as pikeys should not be overlooked.

Overall, the findings underscored that whilst the GRT community appear not to be policed by consent the situation for GRT officers also seems to be precarious. Gypsy Roma Travellers are reported as being commonly viewed as ‘dirty thieving Gypsy bastards’ by some police. Thus, this is one example of how GRTPA officers are left with the dichotomy whether or not to be open as to their discredited ethnic status. Perhaps, as the term anti-gypsyism gains currency, the shaming inherent to it will properly, deservedly, become the shame of those guilty of it. How long this may take is open to question though. Nevertheless as raised by Mawby and Zempi (2018: 527) it may be the case that whilst recognition of diversity, as exhibited in the establishment of the GRTPA can be a force for good within police organisations, with the aim of enabling individuals to cope with hostility, as especially underscored by PCSO officer

Gs experiences, and, that of Participant 1 they can also be ‘...bad – reproducing inequality and isolation.’ Therefore the concept of peripheral inclusion has underlined that urgent meaningful action is required to redress discrimination within police organisations against GRTs and amend feelings of isolation for GRT/GRTPA officers. Overall though it appears clear that as was the case for LGBT officers set out by Burke (1993) discrimination is not only unethical, it entails considerable social and economic costs (including psychological ones) to policing and society in general (OECD; 2019, p. 1) not forgetting that this issue is a matter of health and safety for *all* police officers, and, victims of discrimination.

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