

**International Institute of Restorative Practice
Conference, Hull, 13-15 October 2010**

**Gypsies and Travellers: Tackling
the Last 'Respectable' Face of
Racism**

Dr Tim Brown & Dr Jo Richardson
Centre for Comparative Housing Research
De Montfort University
14 October 2010

tjb@dmu.ac.uk & jrichardson@dmu.ac.uk

Discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers appears to be the last 'respectable' form of racism.” (Sir Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, 2004; now Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission)

“...to judge by the levels of invective that can regularly be read in the national press, Gypsies would appear to be the last ethnic minority in respect of which openly racist views can still be acceptably expressed.” (Alvaro Gil-Robles, 2005, former European Commissioner for Human Rights)

“There is evidence that both the local and national media may, in some instances, issue reports linking Gypsy and Traveller communities with rises in crime rates on the basis of conjecture, rather than evidence, seek to draw a specious distinction between ‘real’ and ‘fake’ Gypsies, and in general terms present the nomadic lifestyle as a problem.” (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010, *How Fair is Britain?*, London, EHRC, p 35)

Issues

- Gypsies and Travellers : Disadvantaged and Marginalised Group
- Conflicts and Tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the Settled Community
- Site Provision and Policy Making
- Reassertion / Increasing Use of the Criminal Justice System (S.61 CJPOA)
- Restorative Justice / Restorative Practice / Mediation as an Alternative or Complementary Approach?

Topicality & Contradictions

- International : “Discrimination against the Roma is a Europe-wide problem” (Guardian, 20 September 2010). Examples in Italy and France in recent years.
- National : Coalition Government abolishing site provision targets under the banner of ‘localism’, Circular 1/06 to go. Also discussion on 75% threshold community to vote for and against local developments (Shapps twitter October 2010)
- Local :
 - Proposed refurbishment of Eppleworth Road site in Cottingham
 - Hull Fair (8 – 16 October) : One of the largest in Europe – Promoted as a major visitor attraction

What Relevance For Restorative Practice?

- Coalition Government Policies
- Toughening Up of Public Attitudes to Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour e.g. Zero Tolerance

BUT

- Growing Interest Among Practitioners & Policy Makers (and Academics) in Restorative Practice
- Philosophically, Restorative Practice relates to
 - Liberal values and less punitive justice system
 - Conservative values and victim empowerment
 - Coalition government and big society
- ‘Restorative Cities’
 - Hull and Centre for Restorative Practices, Goodwin Trust etc

Gypsies and Travellers

- Marginalised and Disadvantaged Group nationally and internationally (lack of access to accommodation, education and health)
- Hull : Gypsy and Traveller Health & Lifestyle Survey (2007)
 - Poorer Health and Prevalence of Health Risks
 - Fair or Poor Health : 33-38% of respondents compared with 14%-17% in Main Survey
 - Limiting Long Term Illness : 39% compared with 16%
 - But Strong Social Network
- Hull Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – 53 pitches over 10 years + 5 transient pitches

Conflicts and Tensions :

Example

- Basildon: 2 High Profile Unauthorised Sites:
 - (1) Dale Farm
 - Largest Gypsy and Traveller Site in the UK
 - Authorised Part of Site
 - Unauthorised Part of Site in Green Belt (but not picturesque – old scrap yard) – Example of Self Help and Big Society?
 - Why Unauthorised Site? Inadequate Provision, Enforcement on Other Unauthorised Sites, Travelling...
 - Views of Some of the Settled Community
 - (2) Hovefields
 - Forced eviction in early September 2010, Human rights organisations filmed the eviction footage on line.

Different Types of Conflicts

- Other Similar Examples e.g. Meriden (near Coventry)
- Conflict Arising Just From Debating Potential Future Sites (South Cambridgeshire)
- 'Media Common' Situation : Temporary Unauthorised Use of Sites
- Hidden / Unreported Types of Conflict e.g. Housed Gypsies and Travellers and the Settled Community
 - Social housing and allocations
 - Access to services
 - 'Home' : Caravans, Businesses, Horses
 - North Hull and Horses

Site Provision and Policy Making

- Consensus on Importance of Increased Site Provision
- 'Industry' of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs)
- Limitations of Technical Policy Making e.g. Statistical Accuracy
- Difficulty of Implementing Additional Site Provision – NIMBY (not in my backyard), BANANAS (Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone) & NIMTO (Not in my term of office)

Criminal Justice

- Coalition Government and Reassertion of Criminal Justice Approach
 - ‘Stronger Powers for Councils to take action on Unauthorised Encampments’ (August 2010)
- Government Guidance on Managing Anti-Social Behaviour Related to Gypsies and Travellers
- Association of Chief Police Officers Guidance on Unauthorised Encampments
- Toughening up of Public Attitudes to Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Failure of Site Provision and Criminal Justice Approaches

- Continued Failure to Meet Site Provision Targets ...So, Abolish Regional Targets and Promote Localism!
- Cost of Repeated Criminal Justice Actions to Tackle Unauthorised Encampments (Briscoe, 2007 - £18m annually)
- Failure to Tackle Racism against Gypsies and Travellers (Delaney case)

The Potential of Restorative Practice

- Inadequacies and Failings of Existing Approach
- Better Way Forward
- From an Adversarial and Retributivist Approach to One Based on Understanding
- Restorative Cities

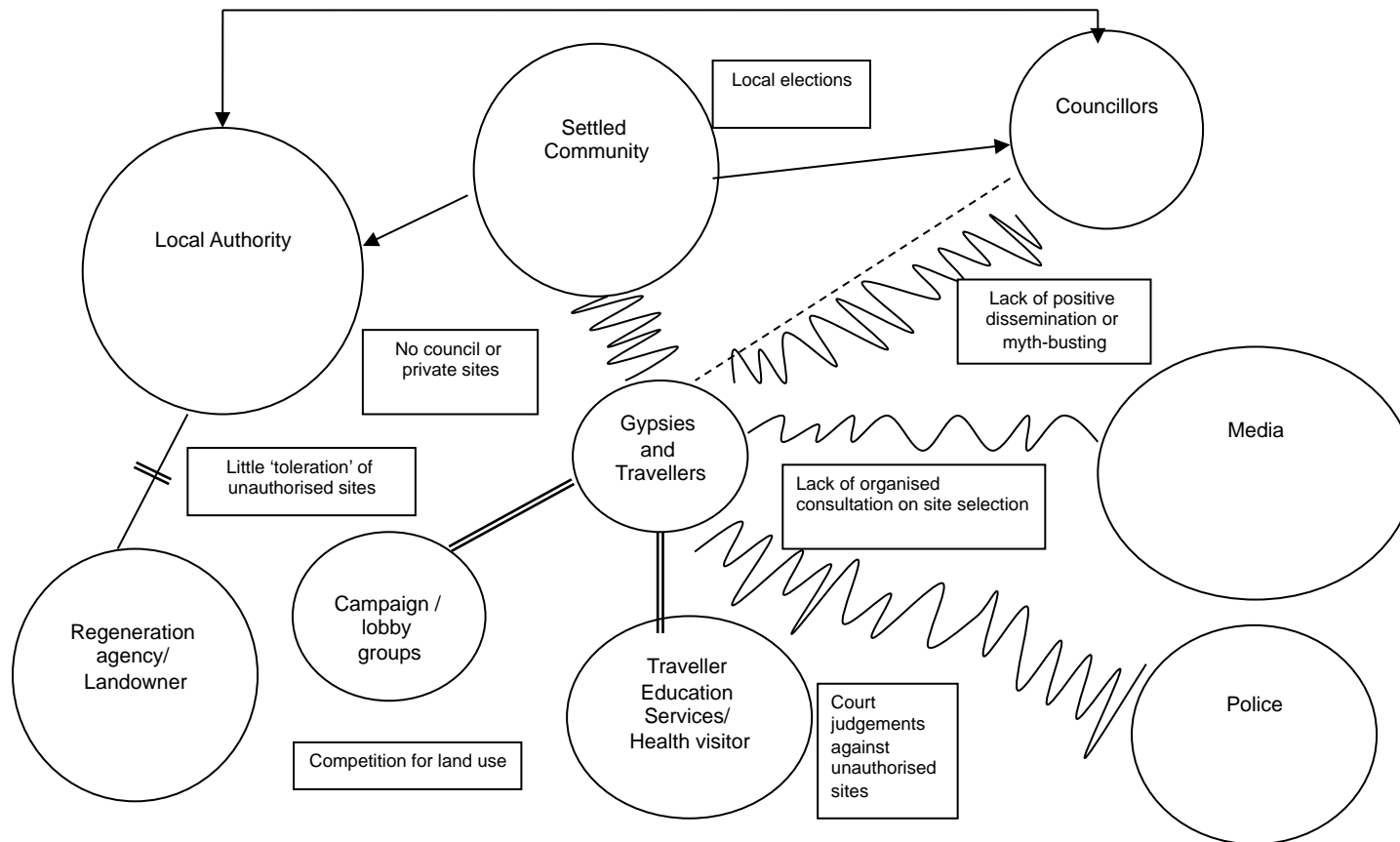
But...Big Issues with Restorative Practice e.g.

- Imprecise Term: Many Overlapping Guises e.g. Restorative Justice, Restorative Practice, Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Alternative or Complementary to Traditional Approaches
- Regulating Restorative Practice
- Societal / Group rather than Individual Conflict ... Equity and Social Justice
- Public Support : Legal, Moral & Business Cases
- Application to Socially Excluded Groups
- Does it Work?

Taking Forward Restorative Practice

- Operationalising Restorative Practice Process : A Mixed Method Approach?
 - Culture Change : Leadership
 - Dear and Three Stage Cycle in Locational Conflict Resolution
 - Wachtel's Continuum of Practices
 - Activities such as Conflict Mapping

Example of Conflict Mapping



Will It Work?

- Evidence-Based Research
- Lessons from Other Services (e.g. Housing & Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour) and National Conflicts (e.g. Bosnia)
- Successful Examples from Gypsy and Traveller Studies

Questions & Discussions