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Then there are the Travellers – who gave me friendship, protection, laughter, wisdom and another life. I cannot name them since the majority would prefer anonymity. For some years now I have pondered their words and deeds and am still learning from them. I can name my favourite Traveller children who at the time were still regarded as innocent by the dominant society, since they were not yet adults: Jane, Marina, Caroline, Elvic, Minny, Billy-boy, Jeanie, Lias, Billy, John-boy, Mathais, Toey, Creamy, Dave, Vicky and Lecna. They were also my teachers. In so far as they can choose to continue to be Traveller-Gypsies their future fills me with optimism.

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1 Historical categories and representations

The Gypsies or Travellers have scarcely written their own history. There is a non-literate tradition, so their history is found fragmented in documents of the dominant non-Gypsy or Gorgio society. (Gorgio is the word Gypsies use to describe non-Gypsies and means outsider or stranger. It is often pejorative.) The history of the Gypsies is marked by attempts to exoticise, disperse, control, assimilate or destroy them. The larger society's ways of treating and identifying Gypsies are fundamental constraints on if not determinants of the Gypsies' actions. Persons who live under the shadow of the title 'Gypsy' or its equivalent will make the appropriate adjustments to the larger Gorgio society in which they are embedded.

Some introductory remarks concerning the complexity of locating the persons called Gypsies or Travellers come as a warning. The Gypsies' history cannot be a simple chronology of non-Gypsy written records; these can only provide clues for interpretation. Nor can the complexity be resolved by looking for the 'real' Gypsies, who are usually those who fit best the stereotypes of the observer. The very notion of the 'real' Gypsy raises more questions than answers.

Long-term participant observation among persons called or calling themselves Gypsies or Travellers can however be informative for both the present and the past. In this study, I shall be drawing on the various records and writings concerned with Gypsies or Travellers' mainly in Britain, in order to put my own fieldwork among Gypsies in southern England in the 1970s into context. In turn, such fieldwork should also throw light on the historical records.

The different ways in which Gypsies have been identified and recorded, whether the document be a legal order or a folklorist's piece, have depended on the wider context. The Gypsies' first appearance in the British Isles is defined and fixed by the first written records in the early sixteenth century of a category of persons called 'Egyptians'. The word 'Gypsy' derives from 'Egyptian'. Records of Gypsies are of two broad types: first, the legal definitions, public statutes and later government reports; secondly, by the nineteenth century, the literary and folklore sources.

The legal and government records are witness to the struggles between the state and the minority group. The state has attempted to control

and exercise force against Gypsies, partly because they avoid wage-labour, are of no fixed abode, and because they seek intermittent access to land. Those who confront the prevailing order, be it in small ways, those who demonstrate alternative possibilities in economic spheres, in ways of being and thinking, those who appear as powerful symbols, must, it seems, be contained and controlled. Although in fact the Gypsies' threat is trivial, their presence exposes profound dissatisfactions in the dominant system.

Folklore and exotic literature often convey the ideological and symbolic disorder which the Gypsies appear to represent. The Gypsies are shown in either positive or negative form. Their apparent differences from non-Gypsies are elaborated or simply imagined, for example the beliefs that the Gypsies are 'closer to nature' and 'wild and free' (see Okely 1981a).

Whether legalistic or exotic, all of the non-Gypsy records and representations can be treated as artefacts to decipher. Even when the information appears to be obtained directly from the Gypsies it also requires interpretation. The Gypsies acquire maximum manoeuvrability if they give the outsider that which pleases him or her and resembles his or her presuppositions. The Gypsies appear to conform, while retaining a certain independence. Yet they are never free of the dominant system. For instance, since a travelling people are seen to defy the state's demand for a 'fixed abode', they are seen as both lawless and fascinating. In turn it may suit the Gypsies to be fascinating, while concealing their own way of ordering their lives. Thus stereotypes of Gypsies and accounts from them, whether 'lies' or 'truths', may be inventions or mystifications rather than reflections of 'reality'. Images of and information transmitted by Gypsies to Gorgios may speak more of Gorgios than of Gypsies.

It has been claimed that literate people have history, while non-literate people have myth, but in the case of Gypsy-Gorgio history there is a fusion of the two. The literate tradition of the dominant society has assisted in myth making, especially with regard to the myths of the Gypsies' origins. A number of places of origin have been attributed to Gypsies in the British Isles, as elsewhere in Europe. Gypsies in Britain were at first said to have come from Egypt. Perhaps the Gypsies played along with this. By the nineteenth century, the theory of an Indian origin emerged, thanks to diffusionist ideas and to studies of the dialects or 'secret' languages used by Gypsies mainly among themselves. Whether all those persons calling themselves and called Egyptians from the sixteenth century on were from overseas is a matter of considerable conjecture and controversy. Today, the extent to which Indian origin is emphasised depends on the extent to which the groups or individuals are exoticised and, paradoxically, considered acceptable to the dominant society.

Foreigners and counterfeiters

The 'Egyptians' were first recorded in the British Isles in Scotland in 1505 in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer. They presented themselves to James IV as pilgrims, their leader being lord of 'little Egypt' (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973: 21). In England, this category of persons was first recorded in 1514 in the form of an 'Egyptian' woman who could 'tell marvellous things by looking into one's hands' (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973: 28). One origin for this Egyptian label, both in the British Isles and elsewhere in Europe, is, according to Clébert, that well before Gypsies or 'Tsiganes' were publicly recorded in western Europe (in the fourteenth century) 'all mountebanks and travelling showmen found themselves dubbed "Egyptians"' (1967:27). Persons believed by many Gypsiologists to be the first Gypsies arriving in western Europe presented themselves as pilgrims, some from 'little Egypt', understood to represent the Middle East (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973:13; de Vaux de Foletier 1970: 20-1). Acton, who supports the theory of the Gypsies' Indian migration, nonetheless gives an explanation as to why such 'Egyptians' might be encouraged to feign exotic origins, namely that at the period the stereotype image of an 'Egyptian' apparently fleeing from pagan persecution would have been 'favourable' (1974:61).

The Egyptian connection was further elaborated. It was said that Gypsies had to leave with Joseph and Mary in the flight from Egypt, or that Gypsies learnt their magical arts from a country renowned for such skills. These early 'Egyptians' in the British Isles were associated with exotic occupations, for example fortune telling, which they exercised 'with craft and subtylie' (Statute Henry VIII 1530), and James V paid 'Egyptians' who danced for him at Holyrood House in 1530.

Within a few decades, 'Egyptians' were ordered to leave the country, and deportations were carried out. A similar treatment had been imposed upon the indigenous mad in the fifteenth century (Foucault 1971). If not deported, Egyptians were imprisoned and their goods forfeited. By 1554, Egyptians who did not depart were to be judged felons and executed. But the problem for the authorities was that these Egyptians then asserted that they had been born in England and Scotland. In 1562, an order 'for the avoiding of all Doubts and Ambiguities' was introduced so that 'all such sturdy and false vagabonds of that sort living only upon the spoil of the simple people' might be punished, and the death penalty was extended not only to those 'in any company or Fellowship of Vagabonds, commonly called or calling themselves Egyptians', but also to those 'counterfeiting, transforming or disguising themselves by their Apparel, Speech or other Behaviour' (Thompson 1923a). This suggests that the Egyptian title was nothing but an assumed identity for many persons with no foreign origin. Since, in many instances, vagrants were subject to the same harsh

treatment as so-called Egyptians, there was no advantage in dropping the assumed title merely in order to escape the authorities. Moreover, money could be earned from the 'simple people', as well as from royalty, by presenting an exotic identity as fortune teller and dancer. The term 'Egyptian' or later 'Gypsy' could have been useful as a means of self-identification and it was not likely to be just a stigmatic label imposed by persecuting outsiders.

Further evidence collected by Thompson appears to support my suggestion that the foreign origin of many 'Egyptians' is questionable. Thompson's examination of constables' accounts and other sources reveals specific examples of persons recorded as vagabonds but convicted of felony for calling themselves by the name of an 'Egyptian', e.g. Robert Hylton of Denver, Norfolk in 1591 (Thompson 1928:37). Here self-ascription is acknowledged. Earlier in 1549 a John Roland was recorded in County Durham as 'oon of that sorte of people callinge themselves Egyptians' (1928:40). Around 1610 a pamphleteer declared that 'they goe always never under an hundred men or women, causing their faces to be made blacke, as if they were Egyptians' (Thompson 1928:34, my emphasis).

Thus the popular view that the early Gypsies were inherently different in physiognomy or so-called 'racial origin' should be treated with scepticism. It seems that persons calling themselves Egyptians found it useful to adopt not only a foreign title but also a foreign appearance.

Nonetheless, Thompson supported the notion of 'true-blooded' Gypsies who were entirely of foreign origin. He found many convictions of vagabonds recorded under names later recognised by 'experts' or Gypsiologists as 'true gypsy', e.g. Heron, White, Smith, Brown, Wilson and Young. These he suggests were really persons with 'a dash of Gypsy blood' or more, but disguised as vagabonds. Thompson does not consider the possibility that many Gypsy families may have emerged from the indigenous vagrant population as an ethnic group using the principle of descent and other self-defining features.²

Vagrants: an alternative category

The death penalty for Gypsies remained until 1783. However, Gypsies were not so easily eliminated: other measures had to be taken against them. The Gypsies' prosecution as 'vagrants' rather than as foreigners became clearer in the seventeenth century. Special orders were given to parish constables to chase Gypsies from their area, but with minimum success (Thompson 1928). In 1622, for example, the Bishop of Lincoln wrote to the Earl of Shaftesbury and other J.P.s in southern England, near my fieldwork area in the 1970s: 'His majestie is justly offended at you who ... do suffer your country to swarme with whole troupes of rogues, beggars, Aegyptians and idle persons.' The J.P.s were ordered to enforce 'these lawes for ye punishing, imploying,

chastising and rooting out of these idle people, symptomes of Popery and blynde superstition'. On 30 September an order was made for the provision of a marshal 'for the better clearing the county of rogues', and with authority to 'punish and chase away all rogues and vagrant persons'. It was also declared that 'All such persons as shall harbour such rogues and vagabonds shall be prosecuted' (Sessions Rolls 1581-1698:vol. I).

One focus was on the Gypsies' apparent idleness which, throughout Europe in the seventeenth century, was condemned by both Catholic and Protestant ideology and equated with rebellion (Foucault 1971: 56-7). As an alternative to execution, some Gypsies were to be put to 'honest service or to exercise some lawful work, Trade or Occupation' (Thompson 1923a). Those deemed idle were to be sent to the House of Correction established in the mid seventeenth century, and later to workhouses. There are examples of Gypsies being arrested and so punished in 1655, near my subsequent fieldwork area: 'George Brugeman late of little Malvern Co. Worcester, Henry Hall born at Fairfield Co. Derby, Edward Morrell, William Morrell and Alexander Morrell born at Calne Co. Wilts were taken as "Egyptians" and sent to the House of Correction at [—], in order that they shall be "well whipped" and after sent by pass to the places aforesaid' (Sessions Rolls 1619-1657). A non-Gypsy was also punished for associating with Gypsies: 'Recognition for the appearance of John Bourne at the next quarter sessions, to answer for "entertaining and harbouring several Egyptians in his House"' (Sessions Rolls 1619-1657). In March 1703 there is a further record of Gypsies: 'Warrant to the keeper of the county gaol to receive Thomas Ingroom, Margaret his wife, Easter Joanes and Susan Wood, the Head of a gang of about 50 gypsies travelling about telling fortunes and calling themselves Egyptians' (Sessions Rolls 1699-1850).

In contrast to isolated individuals, it seems likely that the Gypsies were (as they are today) a self-reproducing ethnic group with an ideology of travelling (the 1554 Statute describes how they go 'from place to place in great companies' (Thompson 1923a)), a preference for self-employment and a wide range of economic activities. It was however expedient for the state to deal with them as workless vagrants. In 1786, for example, in a special order to constables in my subsequent fieldwork area, Gypsies were classed with other persons also appearing to have lucrative occupations, and likewise condemned for their unconventional or 'unlicensed' form. Those deemed 'vagrants' included: 'Persons going about as Bear wards, or exhibiting shews, or players of Interludes, Comedies, Operas or Farces without authority, or Minstrels, Jugglers or Gypsies wandering in Form or Habit of Egyptians or Persons telling Fortunes ... and all Petty Chapmen and Pedlars not licensed ...' (Sessions Rolls 1752-1799). If such persons were found returning they were to be treated as 'incorrigible Rogues and Vagabonds'.

In the nineteenth century, divergent approaches to Gypsies emerge in the literature. Some European scholars had begun to suggest that the various forms of 'language' or dialects found among Gypsies and sometimes labelled Romanes could be traced to a language of Aryan origin connected with early Sanskrit. This was publicised by the German author Grellmann (translated in 1787). In 1816 John Hoyland published the first English survey of Gypsies, using much of Grellmann, together with the results of written enquiries around England and just one visit to a Gypsy encampment.

Hoyland, a Quaker, alongside the Reverend J. Crabb and the M. P. George Smith, supported alternative forms of control to the policies of deportation or dispersal, namely conversion and assimilation into the prevailing order. 'The period in which banishments were generally pronounced on this people was too unphilosophical for any preferable mode of punishment to be suggested' (Hoyland 1816:195). Hoyland considered Gypsies to be 'depraved' (1816:158), and for them philanthropy and education should be the new policies. According to him, their wandering life originated 'in a scrupulous regard to the institutions of their ancestors' (1816:233). Here foreign origin was beginning to be used in the Gypsies' favour in a plea to the state. Since Gypsies had no parochial settlement, Hoyland demanded that they be treated as a special exception under the Vagrancy Acts, but only temporarily; Gypsies who had been introduced to the 'comforts of social order' and acquired 'mechanical professions which would render them useful and respectable' but who still 'indulged' in wandering would deserve maximum punishment (1816:233-4). Meanwhile, Hoyland declared: 'It is worse than useless and unavailing to harass them from place to place when no retreat or shelter is provided' (1816:161).

Hoyland's reprint of correspondence from the *Christian Observer* (1816:199) indicated the popular concern for the 'conversion' of Gypsies. J. Crabb referred to Gypsies as 'these poor English heathens' (1832:ix). Mission schools were established by the mid nineteenth century with uncertain success (see Acton 1974:104, Windstedt 1908:319). Crabb was one of the first to use pseudo-genetical theories to account for the Gypsies' alleged moral decline:

Gypseys which originally came to this country, have been on the decrease in number and are gradually becoming less distinguishable as a peculiar race of people ... A description of vagabonds and itinerant tinkers, repairers of umbrellas and vagrants of the worst character have of late found admission among the Gipsies ... the standard of morals ... is of course much lowered by such intermixtures.
(1830:9, quoted by Acton 1974:89)

Here 'real' Gypsies are distinguished from vagrants and even Tinkers, but due to alleged miscegenation, the categories were no longer distinct sets of people. Elsewhere, Crabb claimed that 'fifty years ago they were considered useful by the peasantry and small farmers ... their outrages and depredations were very few' (1832:23). The theme so familiar today, that in their 'proud' past Gypsies were once tolerated (see the Hampshire Association of Parish Councils 1961, and Okely 1975a:31), had already emerged by the 1830s.

In the 1870s and 1880s George Smith chose to deprecate Gypsies, and partly because of their alleged Indian origins (Smith 1880). Dismissing the early charitable efforts of the missionaries, he believed legislation was necessary to transform radically the Gypsies' way of life (Acton 1974:108-9). Smith failed in parliament to ensure compulsory schooling and the registration of vans. The latter reflected most poignantly the problem for a sedentary society. Although Gallichan, a Gypsiologist, argued much later, 'The Gypsy is not dangerous simply because he has no fixed dwelling place' (1908:358), this appeared to be precisely the point of friction. Perhaps the dominant society's attempts to give Gypsies a single place of origin also reflects this problem.

Cultural differentiation

In contrast to the reformists who tended to deny exoticism in contemporary Gypsies, but who instead wanted them to be converted and assimilated either by charitable institutions or by direct state intervention, other writers elaborated the Gypsies' exotic potential. The full romance of exoticism, combined with the detail and authenticity that comes from first hand experience, are found in the celebrated works of George Borrow, e.g. *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857). His first publication, *The Zincali: Gypsies in Spain* (1841), helped fix the favourable English stereotype of the 'real' Gypsy as Spanish, later assisted by Mérimée's *Carmen* (1845) and Bizet's opera of 1875. Borrow also affirmed and publicised an Indian origin for persons who were in some cases referred to as Romanies in England and Wales. Other 'Gypsiologists' who were interested in Gypsies in England and elsewhere included Leland (1882, 1891 and 1893); and Hindes Groomer (1880). Smart and Crofton compiled the first dictionary of Anglo-Romany, published in 1875. All contributed to the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society (J.G.L.S.)* founded in 1880, the year of Borrow's death. This offers a rich store of Gypsy material, randomly presented - folklore, rituals, details of parish records, first hand accounts, examples of the Romany 'language', genealogies and comparisons with Gypsies beyond the British Isles. The journal also contains some of the fantasy writings by persons who had rarely if ever met Gypsies.

... Some of this literature which emerged in the nineteenth century,

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whether its authors were concerned with Gypsy 'culture' as a means of differentiation, or whether they were concerned with greater external control in order to eliminate difference, should be viewed as a record of collective misrepresentations. The production of these misrepresentations has sometimes required the Gypsies' collaboration. Some of the descriptions of meetings with Gypsies are important because they reveal the gullibility of the authors and the Gypsies' well-developed skills in defending themselves against outsiders.

The Indian connection

Diffusionism underlies the claim that within the British Isles the 'real' Gypsies found in England and Wales, and strangely not in Scotland and Ireland, are the descendants of migrants from India around 1000 A.D. Studies of the language or dialects of Gypsies in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries revealed a connection with a form of Sanskrit said to have evolved around or before 1000 A.D. The different forms of 'Romany' found throughout Europe have also many words from Persian, modern and Byzantine Greek, Slavic and Rumanian. These other ingredients have been perceived by scholars as 'corruptions' of a once 'pure' Indian Gypsy language.

Scholastic weight was given later to the alleged Indian origin of some Gypsies in Wales thanks to the etymological work of John Sampson (1926), who believed that migration routes could be reconstructed according to vocabulary content (1923). The number of loan words in English Romanes, Sampson claims, 'even furnishes some indication of the length of their stay in any particular region' (1926:41). Although Sampson recognises that one group or nationality may simply take over words from others, for example 'in the Balkan provinces we find so many floating loan words borrowed by one race from another' (1926:41), yet he cannot consider that the same could have happened to a form of Indian vocabulary or language encountered on the well-trodden trade routes between East and West.

Language has been equated by the Gypsiologists with 'race'. It has been implied by some that those Gypsies who use the most Romani words (whether or not these have traceable Sanskrit 'roots') have the closest genetic links with India. The underlying assumption is that language is transmitted or learnt only through biological descent. Edmund Leach, in a commentary on my scepticism concerning the Gypsies' alleged single Indian origin (Okely 1979b), presents in my support a convincing parallel: 'Forms of English are spoken in all parts of the world ... We do not on that account try to argue that the native speakers of true and creolised and pidgin English must all be descendants of fifth-century migrants from Jutland!' (1979: 121).

It is not clear how many of the first recorded 'Egyptians' used a second 'secret' language that was nothing more than an indigenous slang,

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an underworld back slang or in some cases a version of Gaelic (later identified as Shelta among Irish Tinkers). There is one early record of some Romani phrases mistakenly called Egyptian collected by Borde (1547), who also travelled in France. It is not known from whom he collected this vocabulary, but the Romani links in his list were only generally recognised in 1874 (Sampson 1930:351). Otherwise Smart and Crofton give records of some Romani vocabulary from the 1780s (1875:1-2). The single case before the late eighteenth century is not sufficient to indicate the speech of all the early 'Egyptians'.

More recently Ian Hancock (1970) has suggested that Anglo-Romany may be a creole. But he still supports the notion of a 'pure' Indian language existing in slightly modified form, perhaps on the other side of the English channel:

Certainly the wave of Romanichals to arrive in the British Isles during the mid-fifteenth century spoke their language in its most conservative form, allowing for the considerable amount of lexical and structural influence which had been affecting it during the three or four centuries of development outside of India; that this was so is indicated by the existence of 'pure' Romanes in North Wales today. (1970:42)

I suggest that the so-called 'pure' Anglo-Romany recorded by Sampson among some families in Wales at the beginning of the twentieth century could also have been imported by Gypsies who migrated from Europe more recently than the sixteenth century. In any case, Hancock's suggestion that Anglo-Romany is a creole could be extended beyond the British Isles. Further research is needed here. Perhaps many forms of Romanes might be classified as creole or pidgins which developed between merchants and other travelling groups along the trade routes. These served as a means of communication between so-called Gypsy groups.

Given the special economic niche of all Gypsies who can never approximate to economic self-sufficiency, but must always trade with outsiders in the surrounding society, their language usages have to be consistent with this position. In order to earn their living, the Gypsies need to be fluent in the languages of non-Gypsies. It would be of little use for Gypsies to tell fortunes in Romanes to non-Gypsies, their major clients. Thus, any forms of Romanes used between Gypsy groups cannot and can never have been the sole nor necessarily the dominant language of a Gypsy group. In the British Isles, for example, English is the dominant language.

The Gypsiologists make the same mistakes as the nineteenth-century anthropologists in the general study of languages and racial distribution. Some believed in the notion of a united Indo-European race with a 'real' language of which many European and Asian forms were considered to be mere fragmentations. Similarly, Gypsy language and

the 'original culture' have been located as things once intact in India. It is assumed that Gypsies existed in India many centuries back as a 'pure' group or separate society with language, customs and genetic structure hermetically sealed, until some 'mysterious event' caused their departure from their mythical homeland. From then on they are said to have been 'corrupted' in the course of migration and during contact with non-Gypsies. Thus any custom which seems strange to the Gorgio observer is explained not in terms of its contemporary meaning to the group, but according to some 'survival' from mythical ancient Indian days, or even the contemporary caste system. Any cultural similarity between Gypsy and Gorgio is explained away and denigrated as 'contamination'.

There are similar problems and claims in discussing the origins of Gypsies elsewhere in Europe. The use of some form of vocabulary, dialect or 'language' identified as Romanes is found in varying degrees among some groups classified as Gypsies. Some 'dialects' are mutually unintelligible. Some groups, whether or not they are acquainted with such dialects or vocabulary, are credited with no Indian origins. For instance, the Yeniches travelling through Belgium and France are attributed with German origins. A group to be found in Rumania, often considered to be the location of the 'real Gypsy', is said to have been formed from members of the indigenous population (Beck and Gheorge 1981:19). The Woonwagenbewoners in the Netherlands and the Landfahrer in Germany are attributed an indigenous origin, and since they are not identified as 'Rom' or by any of the other 'foreign' tribal titles used by some Gypsy groups, and presumably since they do not appear to have any visibly exotic customs, they have been denied status as an ethnic group by a number of social scientists reporting to the European Commission (Okely 1980:79). This was asserted without any apparent investigation into whether any of the Travellers themselves used specific criteria for membership based on descent.

Similarly, the Tattares of Sweden are said to have little or no foreign, exotic ancestry. In his study of the genealogies of the Tattares, who prefer to call themselves Resande, Heymowski (1969) found a high proportion of ancestors of Swedish nationality. These included a few peasants, but were mainly persons with itinerant occupations and also German mercenary soldiers. Heymowski therefore suggests that the Tattares are not really an ethnic Gypsy group. He gives proper status as 'real Gypsies' to those Travellers or Gypsies who identify themselves as Kalderash, allegedly from eastern Europe (see Acton 1974:22). Yet Heymowski admits that the Tattares appear to use the principle of descent to identify themselves in contrast to anyone vaguely called 'Tattare' by the surrounding sedentary population. A later study of Gypsies in Sweden reveals the considerable flexibility in the Gypsies' choice of labels presented to outsiders. For instance, Gypsies originating from Poland, without any previous claims to being

Kalderash, adopt Kalderash names upon arrival in Sweden because such persons are given exotic and favourable status by the dominant society (Kaminski, personal communication 1975). Indeed Tattares were excluded from lucrative welfare programmes (see Acton 1974:22). Elsewhere in Europe, e.g. in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany, it also seems that groups or 'tribes' who refer to themselves as Rom, Kalderash or Lovari are most likely to be credited with eastern, Indian origins and given 'real' status, if only by Gorgio scholars and political representatives.

Those observers who seek to prove Indian origin will sometimes attempt to identify traces of Indian 'culture' among European Gypsies. Thus Irving Brown, in trying to prove the links between the Rom and an Indian group called the Dom, whom he visited in the 1920s, naively produced such evidence as; the similar 'musical propensities of the race' (1928:173); ancestor worship; consumption of pork and liquor on all ceremonial occasions; eating of horse-flesh (actually the opposite to European Gypsy beliefs, see chapter 6); bride price (1928:174); 'greater vivacity' than the surrounding population; and their use of a council (1928:176)!³ This highly respected Gypsiologist could not even in this case point to a potentially more plausible trait like language:

The words used by Dom are different from those of other Indian Gypsy tribes and ... are not found in European Romani. [This is] no proof either of a lack of relationship between these tribes or with the Gypsies in the outside world. Like most thieves' cant, such vocabularies are purely artificial, and spring up and die like mushrooms. (1928:175)

Thus the original search for Indian links based on language links is turned on its head when it suits the Gypsiologist!

The theories of race and those concerning both Romanes and Indo-European non-Gypsy languages all rest on the presumption of a single origin in space and time. The Gypsiologists were probably influenced by the more general theory concerning the origin of non-Gypsy Europeans, but although the latter has been discredited, the single 'birth place' for 'real' Gypsies is today still upheld by Gypsiologists, government administrators and some members of Gypsy organisations. Indian origin was used in the 1970s by the World Romani Congress, based in Europe, when requesting special ethnic status within the United Nations.

This uniting theme was exploited in the British television programme 'Romany Trail' (B.B.C.2, The World About Us, November 1981). The extremely varied religious practices and occupations of the groups, who were all identified by the researchers as 'Gypsies' and filmed in Egypt, Europe and India, were given a common eastern and Indian origin. This was asserted despite the fact that aspects of their allegedly shared yet 'isolated' culture indicated many more marked

resemblances to aspects of the culture of the surrounding non-Gypsy population; for example, specific healing practices and dances, and the use of certain musical instruments. Their culture was more visibly syncretic than one which could be explained as random 'survivals' from India.

It was even claimed in the television programme that the Gypsies had brought the 'Punch and Judy' puppet show from India centuries ago. The programme opened with scenes of English Gypsies at Appleby Fair. Viewers were informed that the original Rom who had allegedly migrated to the British Isles were few and far between, having intermarried with the surrounding population. The implication was that the majority of Gypsies in Britain were therefore not authentic. There was little or no attempt to explore the similarities likely to be found between any mobile, non-wage-labour, non-peasant, ethnic groups, *regardless* of their real or mythical origins from a single location.

Paradoxically, there is very little evidence that Indian origin had been indicated or used by Gypsies until it was first given to them by Gorgio scholars (see Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973:16). Even today the title 'Romany' is not generally interpreted at the local level as of Indian origin. The most frequent explanation which I was given by Gypsies was: 'We're Romanies 'cos we always roam.' A nomadic travelling identity was thus given priority over any exotic point of departure. But for nineteenth-century scholars and still today in the ideology of the dominant non-Gypsy society, exotic origin, safely many centuries ago (as opposed to more recent immigration by other persons from India), has become a mythical charter for selective acceptance of members, usually a minority, of a potentially threatening group.

Less interest has been shown in the capacity of a sedentary economy or in the western case a capitalist mode of production to generate and sustain its own nomads. It seems more than coincidence that throughout Europe 'Egyptians', 'Saracens' later called Tsiganes or Gitanes, 'Bohemians' and 'Tatars', and other wandering bands variously named and later identified by Gypsiologists, were officially recorded and were thus made visible at the time of the collapse of feudalism, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. So far this appearance has only been explained in terms of waves of nomads migrating in linear fashion from a single eastern locality. My own suggestions can only be conjectural and abbreviated in this study, and will be controversial to the *aficionados* of Gypsiology. My scepticism about some of the conclusions from the etymological evidence is shared in part by Vesey-Fitzgerald (1973:4-11) who nonetheless supports the Indian origin.

It may be the case that groups of people brought or appropriated some linguistic forms, creole or pidgin related to some earlier Sanskrit in the movements along the trade routes between East and West, but it does not follow that all 'real' Gypsies or Travellers are the genealogical

descendants of specific groups of persons allegedly in India nearly a thousand years ago. It is of course exciting that such linguistic links can be made between some Gypsies and 'magical' Asia. The Gypsiologists have thus given exotic status to persons who labour also under negative and banal images.

A common Indian origin has also been seen, especially by Gorgio members of the World Romani Congress, as a strategy for international solidarity among Gypsies. There are major advantages to be derived from international solidarity among Gypsy groups who face common problems of persecution, but an appeal to non-Gypsy governments in terms of common exotic origins might have negative results. The already existing hierarchy of 'real' and 'counterfeit' Gypsies might be further exaggerated. As already indicated in the case of Sweden and the Netherlands, travelling Gypsy groups without claims to exotic origins risk losing their rights as ethnic groups and may be more vulnerable to assimilation programmes. Moreover, even those groups attributed with 'real' Indian origins might find themselves dismissed as 'inauthentic' or 'corrupted' whenever non-Gypsy observers fail to find sufficiently alluring signs of exotic 'culture' among the persons they actually encounter. The Gypsiologists' emphasis has already led to fictitious divisions in Britain between the 'true-blooded' Romany and the rest, including the counterfeit or drop-out, 'half-blood' or mere 'Traveller'. (The Gypsies have themselves played along with this and indeed those I encountered in fieldwork entertained some ideology of 'pure' blood, but this was not connected with alleged Indian origin.)

In the long run it would seem to be more productive for international Gypsy pressure groups to emphasise the common rights and contribution of all Gypsy groups, regardless of their alleged geographical and 'racial' origins. A sentimental appeal to Gorgio tastes for exotica and based on very speculative evidence is likely to be counter-productive. Moreover, a focus by non-Gypsies on the Gypsies' alleged foreignness and exoticism usually ignores the groups' own criteria for membership and as likely or not neglects the full history of the different groups' appearance and survival within the countries they inhabit.

The following section is concerned mainly with the case of Gypsies in Britain, but some aspects may be applicable to a discussion of the origin of Gypsies elsewhere in Europe.

Some indigenous origins?

It is not clear whether the first recorded 'Egyptians' in the British Isles, nor indeed many of their equivalent on the European continent, were all foreign immigrants. Within the British Isles in the fourteenth century, there is plenty of evidence of large numbers of 'wayfarers' or 'rovers' (Jusserand 1889). These included performers, pedlars, peasants out of bond, preachers, mendicant friars, and pilgrims. The Gyp-

siologists acknowledged the presence of 'Tinkers' (not necessarily from Ireland) before the first records of Egyptians (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973; Acton 1974:66; McCormick 1907:394). Shakespeare's Henry IV refers to Tinkers and their 'language'. 'Tinker' and 'Tinkler' were recorded as trade names or surnames as early as the twelfth century (*Oxford English Dictionary*). But the first mention of 'Tinkers' as a group appears in a statute in the mid sixteenth century (Jusserand 1889:128).

What does seem clear is that there were plenty of indigenous recruits for nomadic groups who could have chosen to organise themselves to exploit economic opportunities on the road. In addition to earning a living as pedlars and performers, and as casual agricultural labourers, 'Egyptians', seemingly from a mysterious foreign land, could present themselves most successfully as exotic fortune tellers and gain freedom of movement as pilgrims and penitents. There were more likely to be opportunities of this kind for groups of persons who were brought up as nomads within kin based groups using the principle of descent than for isolated individuals and families. The most successful would be self-producing and able to use kinship connections for group cooperation, mutual aid, and protection against rivals or the persecuting authorities.

Already in the fourteenth century, there were increasing numbers of 'rovers' who had fled the village or the farm to which they belonged. Escaped villeins or serfs provided the 'wandering class' with most of its numerous recruits. If not practising a 'definite craft, nor having wherewith to live', they were vulnerable to conscription of labour (Statute of Labourers 1351). At the same time as state legislation was initiated to prohibit any persons going out of their 'own district', labourers were actually sought out by landowners who paid them by the day and at wages other than those of the tariff (Jusserand 1889:144-8).

Later, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, throughout Europe the uprooted population of the middle ages was considerable. This population has been counted among the ancestors of the modern proletariat. I am suggesting that some might also be considered as ancestors of many Gypsies; for instance, those who were neither bound as serfs, nor absorbed into the trades and guilds, and who, like the rovers or escaped villeins found in the fourteenth century, were selling their labour on an hourly or daily basis (see Mandel 1969:34).

Marx gives another origin of the modern proletariat, which might also suggest the origin of some Gypsies; a group which chose to reject wage-labour rather than be proletarianised: 'The prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production, was played in the last third of the 15th and the first decade of the 16th century. A mass of free proletarians was hurled on the labour-market by the breaking-up of the bands of feudal retainers' (1887:718). Thus, former servants and clerks to the feudal nobles became wander-

ers and beggars. A third origin of the proletariat, and possibly of Gypsy groups, was from dispossessed peasants, after their land had been changed from agricultural cultivation to grazing for sheep, during the development of the wool industry (Mandel 1969:35).

It seems not impossible that this mass of potential free labourers, the majority of whose descendants were to become wage-labourers, might also have provided the majority of recruits, through association and incorporation by marriage, into groups who were identified and who identified themselves as 'Egyptians'. Elsewhere in Europe, for example in France, historians have noted that 'the arrival of some "Bohemians" coincided with the establishment of the "corporations de gucuserie", or "guilds of beggars"' (Clébert 1967:63). Although it is argued by Clébert that the beggars, pedlars and 'Bohemians' remained distinct (1967:65), it does not necessarily follow that all these peoples were of entirely different origins. Moreover, people could still cross the boundaries of each group without weakening the organisational and ascribed boundaries (see Barth 1969).

Since beggars and others banded together for survival, it may be the case that groups of so-called 'Egyptians' were composed also largely of disenfranchised and indigenous persons. In this case they may have adopted an exotic nomenclature, parts of a second secret 'language' — either a creole or pidgin which had crossed many national frontiers of Europe; and exploited certain occupations, such as fortune telling and entertainment which were consistent with a magical, mysterious nomenclature. In so far as there may have been some foreign immigrant families it would have needed only a few to introduce some 'Roman' creole into the argot and thus consolidate this novel identity. The newcomers would in any case have been compelled to make close liaisons with the indigenous population, including wandering vagrants, and learn the dominant non-Gypsy language in order to tell fortunes and to earn their living in other ways within the larger economy.

My suggestions will appear controversial. Obviously more research would be necessary to confirm the sources of recruitment to various Gypsy groups. At this stage I remain sceptical concerning some of the exotic criteria for identifying the 'real' Gypsies. I question the implicit assumptions that an ethnic group needs to be defined on the basis of its claims to foreign origins and claims to any vestiges of exotic 'culture'. An ethnic group's right to self-determination should not have to rest on that kind of romance. The following sections show the confusions concerning the identification of the 'real' Gypsy by even those persons who considered themselves to be the Gypsies' supporters in the British Isles.

Romanies or half-castes

Both in the nineteenth century and after, the Gypsologists claimed the existence of a 'pure-blooded' minority who had almost never married

Gorgios. It was no accident, and indeed part of the logic of Gypsy-Gorgio interaction, that the Gypsies who chose to befriend the Gypsologists were classed as 'real Romanies' while others who perhaps chose to avoid them or who offended them in some way were rejected and branded 'didikois' or some other pejorative term.

In the 1870s, Smart and Crofton first recorded the word 'didikois', referring to a group allegedly consisting of 'half-breed' Gypsies who were said to mispronounce a Romany word (1875:51). Their racial mixture was by implication the cause of their misuse of the 'traditional' language. The Gypsologists appeared to believe that 'racial purity' and knowledge of the most archaic Romany were closely connected. In the 1920s, John Sampson also presumed a similar relationship (1926:xi). Racial 'outbreeding' was believed to bring proportional cultural decline.

The Gypsologists' racial theories conflicted with their own evidence; the 'pure-blooded Romany' was nothing more than a category. Hinde Groome was to some extent aware of these problems. While he supported the notion of 'full-bloods' and 'half-bloods' (1880:249) and classified 'Gypsies' by 'the Romani look, language, habits and modes of thought' (1880:252), at the same time he noted the difficulties in equating specific physical or 'racial' attributes with knowledge of the Romany language and traditions. Moreover, he recognised that Gypsies married outsiders (1880:250), and drew attention to the *pedigrées* of the Romany families recorded by Smart and Crofton. In one, marriages with Gorgios actually outnumbered those with Romanies (1880:251). The pages of the *J.G.L.S.* also give frequent examples of Gypsy-Gorgio marriages. Nevertheless the majority of Gypsologists used the category 'pure-blooded' or 'true Romany' as if empirical fact. As recently as the 1960s, Duff classified British Gypsies into four social groups on the basis of their alleged genetic inheritance (1963:260-1). Paradoxically, the least sociable group in his Gorgio terms were considered to have the least Romany 'blood'.

The beliefs in a mythical minority of 'real Romanies' and a genetic explanation for culture were recorded in government documents through the 1950s and 1960s. For example, the first government survey of Gypsies in Kent in 1952 considered that only 10% of its eleven hundred Gypsies appeared to be 'members of the Romany families' (Adams 1952). The Gypsologist Vesey-Fitzgerald was brought in for advice, thus making a direct link between the concerns of government and those of Gypsology literature. He affirmed the distinction between 'Romanies' and 'Travellers', using the traditional but unscientific category 'full-blooded' to describe the Romanies for whom he advocated preferential political support. He argued that 'any attempt to abolish nomadism in Romany families (I am not of course referring to Travellers) would have disastrous consequences both in health and morals' (Adams 1952: Appendix III).

This survey set the tone for other local authorities. The fiction of the 'full-blooded' Romany was used to condemn the majority, if not all of the Gypsies in the locality, and even to justify making no site provision when the 1968 ruling required it (see Okely 1975a:33). In practice of course it has been impossible to identify 'Romanies' by their physical or 'racial' features. The physiognomy of the majority of Gypsies is very

much like that of the average English Gorgio. Although the occasional individuals with dark hair and brown eyes might attract attention, the favoured 'real Romanies' are just as likely to have blue eyes and fair hair. But these facts are not 'seen' by the Gorgio observers for whom the racial theory offers a pseudo-scientific basis for social selection. 'Real Romanies' are those families who reflect best the observers' preferences (Okely 1975a:32).

Travellers, Tinkers, Gypsies and exotic origins

In the sub-classification of groups of Gypsies or Travellers within the British Isles and Ireland, a mythical Indian origin has been invoked to discriminate between the 'real Romanies' or 'Gypsies', and the 'Tinkers'. The English and especially the Welsh Gypsies are given the exotic Indian or Romany origin, while it is said that the Irish and Scottish Travellers or Tinkers are 'merely' descendants of vagrants and victims of the Great Famine or the Highland Clearances. It is conveniently forgotten that the first 'Egyptians' were recorded in neither England nor Wales, but in Scotland.

Sometimes, the evidence presented for this classification is linguistic. The Tinkers frequenting Ireland and Scotland have their own Cant or 'secret language' including 'Shelta' and 'Gammon', which linguists have sometimes contrasted with 'Romany' or 'Anglo-Romany'. But whenever Romani words are found in these other 'languages' or dialects, they are dismissed as the result of English influence. My own evidence indicates that the use of Romani vocabulary varies within each group, and that there is both short- and long-term movement of all Travellers or Gypsies between territories within the British Isles and Ireland. This was especially the case during the two world wars.

There is considerable inter-marriage between groups. Moreover the incorporation of Gorgios or 'Flatties' occurs in all groups. The Travellers or Gypsies do tend to identify themselves according to one of the four national divisions of the British Isles, but this does not mean that one is more 'Indian' or Romany than the other. National labels are manipulated according to context, as is the 'real Romany' identity.

The term 'Traveller' does not imply a drop-out from the sedentary society, as is so often supposed by outsiders, but full membership of an ethnic group using the principle of descent (see chapter 5). The term emphasises a travelling, nomadic identity. Those Travellers who associate themselves with Ireland or Scotland tend not to adopt the nomenclature 'Gypsy'. They are labelled 'Tinkers' and, although they may use this among themselves, they frequently use the less pejorative term 'Traveller', especially in communications with outsiders. McCormick employed the term 'Tinkler-Gypsies' to refer to Travellers in Scotland (1907).

Generally the term 'Gypsy' is more frequently given to and adopted

today by Travellers associated with England and Wales. Gypsies may use this title privately, but, like the Tinkers, often prefer the less stigmatised term Traveller, again especially when relating to outsiders.

During the 1960s, among some authorities, the label 'Tinker' completely replaced the 'didikois' or alleged half-breed as one of contempt (see Acton 1974:206-11). As with any Gypsies, the Irish Tinkers of the present were unfavourably juxtaposed with 'authentic' ones of the past. Worcester County Council reported that the 'Irish Tinkers' in their area bore 'little resemblance to the tinker of Irish legend who seems to have been something of a character and as such regarded with affection' (Worcester County Council 1966). In practice, the Irish label was conveniently attached to any Travellers coming up against the authorities (Okely 1975a:33). The Tinker became synonymous with every unpopular or stigmatised aspect of any Gypsy groups: scrap work, travelling, urban proximity, law breaking, elusiveness and independent life style.

This view of the Tinker appeared in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (M.H.L.G.) report on Travellers in England and Wales. Whereas the English-born Gypsies were defined in terms of 'racial' types (revealing the familiar conceptual muddles), the Irish Tinkers were defined in terms of their alleged living patterns which, by no coincidence, were those most offensive to the sedentary authorities. The author(s) moved from merely recording others' allegations to presenting them as objective description (M.H.L.G. 1967:3, quoted also in Acton 1974:202).

The policies of deportation and banishment of Gypsies prevalent in the sixteenth century also reappeared in the twentieth century. Enoch Powell, calling for the abolition of the 1968 Act, suggested that 'alien Gypsies or Travellers should be dealt with through the laws of nationality and immigration' (*The Times*, 12 December 1970). Given the limited movement of Gypsies from the continent, it is unclear what 'foreign' Gypsies Powell was concerned about. Here the romance of foreign origin was used against Gypsies.

Non-ethnic, 'universalistic' categories

In the 1960s, liberal 'universalistic' categories competed with the racial and genetic ones. This cannot be explained by any greater enlightenment about the 'chimera of race' (Bohannan 1963:185). Certainly Dominic Reeve had repudiated the Gorgio discussion of 'didikois' as 'just racial nonsense' (1960:ix-x), but reviews in the *J.G.L.S.* reaffirmed the Romany myth. Moreover, Reeve still gave credence to the terminology associated with racial theories. 'Many of the "flash" travellers are of the deepest and most pure-bred Romani blood in the country' (1960:104).

At a public health inspectors' conference on Gypsies in 1968, a lec-

turer in education reaffirmed the existence of three racial categories: pure-blooded, mixed and housedweller drop-outs, but at the same time emphasised the educational 'disadvantages' of all and suggested no discrimination in new government measures towards them (Wade 1968:117). The honorary assistant editor of the *J.G.L.S.* endorsed the differentiation between groups, but regretted that this led to a 'kind of inverted racialism' when local authorities justified the closing of stopping places (Wade 1968:120).

The shift towards an all-embracing category rather than the repudiation of the theoretical foundation of racial categories coincided with renewed interest in integration or assimilation programmes for Gypsies. Here recognition of the Gypsies as an independent ethnic group would be under-played. The advisers to the Plowden Committee on primary school children asserted that Gypsy children 'are probably the most severely deprived ... in the country' (1967:vol.2, Appendix). The category 'deprived' had replaced Hoyland's early-nineteenth-century 'depraved', and both were associated with rather similar policies of assimilation, once called conversion. Sartre provides a useful parallel to the case of the Gypsies in his *Réflexions sur la question juive*, where he discussed the 'bad faith' of the democrat who wishes to universalise and humanise all groups:

There may not be so much difference between the anti-semitic and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leave nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man. (1973:57)

Interest in policies of integration, if not complete assimilation, coincided paradoxically with increasing awareness of the rights of 'racial' minorities as embodied in the 1965 Race Relations Act which hardly benefited Gypsies; they were merely redefined. The 1959 Highways Act section 127 had stated: 'If without lawful authority or excuse ... a hawk or other itinerant trader or gypsy ... encamps on a highway, he shall be guilty of an offence.' This could clearly be challenged on the grounds of racial discrimination. Therefore, in 1967 three High Court judges ruled that a 'Gypsy' is 'a person leading a nomadic life with no fixed employment and with no fixed abode' (*Mills v. Cooper*, Queen's Bench Division, 9 March 1967).

The non-ethnic definition of a Gypsy as a person of no fixed abode was merely the old category 'vagrant' in a new guise. Although Gypsies and their supporters were able to take action with the Race Relations Board against publicans who banned entry to Gypsies, they were not able to challenge the Highways Act, and later the discriminatory clauses in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act.

The link between Gypsies and vagrants took a peculiar turn at a

meeting of an urban council in 1967. It revealed that even a demand for concentration camps was not considered illegal under the Race Relations Act, so long as Gypsies were given a non-ethnic label. A councillor vigorously opposed provision for a permanent Gypsy site and was reported as follows:

'It's not gypsies we are talking about. We are talking about vagrants - relatively and basically worthless people' ... When he was a young man, he said gypsies were hardly ever seen throughout the country 'But today, you will see many thousands of vagrants ... They are beatniks of the worst possible type ... If you had to ask not just a German, but any other national in Europe today, as to what he would do with these people, he would give you one answer. He would say a concentration camp until they had mended their ways.'

(*Hitchin and Letchworth Pictorial*, 28 April 1967)

When the Secretary of the National Council of Civil Liberties complained to the Race Relations Board, the Attorney General rejected any prosecution: 'No matter how inflammatory and intemperate words are used they must be directed against an ethnic or national group ... the words used in this context were directed against "vagrants, worthless people and beatniks" ... the problem did not involve gypsies' (Letter from the Greater London Conciliation Board, 20 October 1967).

The non-ethnic definition was sustained in the 1967 Ministry of Housing and Local Government census and report on Gypsies. The racial categories were not discredited by the Ministry, but they were considered 'of little practical importance: information was needed about the entire traveller population ... who in large measure follow a common way of life, making the same demands on land' (M.H.L.G. 1967:3, my emphasis). The last phrase reveals one of the major concerns of the sedentary society and of the state, and which was masked by the general theme of the Gypsies' 'deprivation', thus echoing the Plowden Report. The Ministry suggested that improved 'amenities' might 'exert a growing pull on the persistent travellers so that they will choose gradually to settle down, first on a site, and eventually in a house' (M.H.L.G. 1967:67). Thus the non-ethnic definition of Gypsies was associated with a policy of assimilation, at Whitehall, while at local authority level, it was used to justify non-provision, if not dispersal and harassment.

Laws and policy in the twentieth century

In the first half of the twentieth century, attempts to pass legislation concerned specifically with the control of Gypsies, namely George Smith's revived Moveable Dwellings Bill, failed on several occasions.

However, there were a number of Acts not specifically addressed to Gypsies, which offered a potential means of control. These included Planning and Public Health Acts in the 1930s. Emphasis was on living space and sanitation. Acton states that these had 'very little effect on the Gypsies' (1974:120). After the Second World War, however, such legislation was often used against Gypsies or Travellers, as a means of dispersing them (see chapter 7 and Acton 1974:133). Earlier, thanks to the informal intervention of a member of the Gypsy Lore Society, Dora Yates, the 1908 Children's Act excused Gypsy children from compulsory school attendance during the summer term, if their parents were travelling (Acton 1974:121).

From the late 1940s, coinciding but contrasting with the nostalgic rural literature on the 'real Romanies' (see below), the M.P. Norman Dodds showed an interest in the living and working conditions of Gypsies, and in conjunction with Gypsy representatives, and some evangelists, formed a 'Gypsy Committee' with a Gypsy Charter (Dodds 1966:39-40). In 1951, the new Conservative government agreed to a pilot survey in the single county of Kent.

The 1959 Highways Act had specifically singled out the Gypsies for prosecution for camping on the roadside. The 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, although not specifically addressed to Gypsies, radically affected them. Tighter controls were introduced for private sites, all of which now required planning permission. As a consequence, many Gypsy encampments, used for either short- or long-term stays, were closed (Adams *et al.* 1975: 9-10).

The same year, planning permission was given for the first official site for Gypsies run by a district authority in West Ashford, Kent. By 1962, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government had begun to recognise the Gypsies' problems in finding legal sites. A Ministry circular of 1962 encouraged local authorities to conduct surveys and provide sites. It was even acknowledged that Gypsies had 'the right to follow their traditional way of life' (quoted in M.H.L.G. 1967), although only those whom the Ministry labelled the 'true gypsies and romanies'. A few sites were opened, but prosecutions against Gypsies continued on a large scale (Adams *et al.* 1975:11).

Partly in response to Dodd's persistence, the Labour government of 1964 agreed to the first national census of Gypsies in England and Wales. Questionnaires were administered by local officials and sometimes the police. The total count revealed about 15,000 individuals. Given that the survey was conducted often by persons responsible for dispersing Gypsies, it was not surprising that this was considered an under-count. The main findings were publicised in the 1966 Ministry circular which again encouraged official site provision. In the same year the Gypsy Council was founded. It affirmed 'the essential unity of travelling people, irrespective of group and origin', and their

right to 'self-determination ... their traditional mode of life ... and a legitimate need for camp sites' (Gypsy Council 1967).

The report based on the census, *Gypsies and other Travellers* (M.H.L.G. 1967), emphasised the Gypsies' absence of legal sites and public health facilities, and gave momentum to the second part of Lubbock's 1968 Caravan Sites Act which for the first time required local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies. In exchange, the local authorities would, after specified provision, obtain 'designation' which relieved the authority of any further provision and gave it new 'control powers' to ensure the eviction of any person 'being a Gypsy' stationing a caravan on unauthorised land. Although the Act was ostensibly that of a private member, the sections concerning Gypsies originated from the Labour government in exchange for free drafting (Adams *et al.* 1975:16-22). This new 'welfare' intervention marked a major shift in national policy towards Gypsies. Some of its implications and effects are explored in chapter 7.

Literature and social science

The literature on Gypsies in Britain⁴ in the twentieth century shows something of the earlier contrasting concerns; either to control or to exoticise Gypsies. Policy questions and the legal categories of the state were placed gradually in the setting of detailed (although not always well informed) official reports, for example, the Kent survey (Adams 1952); the Plowden Report (1967); the M.H.L.G. Report (1967); the report on Scottish Travellers (Gentleman and Swift 1971); and the Cripps Report (1976). Both the exotic and folklore tradition, as well as the controlling or reformist traditions, were affected by the growth of social science, especially sociology and to some extent social anthropology.

From a social science perspective, one of the most brilliant contributions to the study and history of Gypsies is that of T.W. Thompson, a member of the Gypsy Lore Society, whose articles appeared in its journal mainly in the 1920s. He made close contact with a number of Gypsy families over a period of time and painstakingly sifted parish records and other historical and contemporary sources to present a systematic and ethnographic approach to aspects of the English Gypsies' social organisation, beliefs and ritual. His references to Frazer, Rivers and Malinowski indicate a varied social anthropological influence (1913, 1922, 1926, 1930b). His articles have since been much plagiarised.

In addition to the literature by Gorgios, there are now a number of autobiographies and contributions from mainly literate Gypsies, some of whom have found a place as special individuals within the Gorgio world. The evangelist Gipsey Smith (1901), for example, gives a detailed account of his Gypsy upbringing and his later work among both

non-Gypsies and Gypsies. While keen to exploit and elaborate his Gypsy origins, he disassociates himself from them (1901:363). 'Gipsey' Smith was fully incorporated into the social reformist perspective of non-Gypsies found in the nineteenth century. Indeed, there are several other Gypsy autobiographical accounts of childhood in the travelling community which the authors have later left, e.g. Petulengro (1935), Wood (1973) and Whyte (1979). In some there are insights into the authors' dilemma as to whether to exoticise or denigrate Gypsy identity for the dominant Gorgio readership. All are informative documents; some more than others, and notably the accounts from Boswell (1970), and Connors (1973), which transcend the problems of authenticity. Dominic Reeve, who claims Gypsy descent though not upbringing, depicts the travelling life in narrative form, but is not explicitly autobiographical (1958, 1960). Although each detail is ethnographically accurate, the content is limited compared to Boswell and Connors.

Given the difficulties in gaining an inside view of the Travellers' way of life, it is not surprising that this is largely absent from most of the Gorgio literature, including much of that with some social science research pretensions. Some authors have synthesised and popularised the existing material, and supplemented this by a few descriptions of personal encounters (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973; Duff 1963). In the period immediately after the Second World War, a number of popular writers linked Gypsies with a 'vanishing' rural England. These writers, often with gentrified names (Vesey-Fitzgerald 1973; Croft-Cooke 1948; de Baracclai Levy 1958), and living in the home counties, described a few Gypsies they met on their country rambles. There is always the danger of generalising from a few incidents and conversations, especially when Gypsies must be adept at confusing strangers. Much of Sandford's collection records what Travellers say on first encounter (1973). Long-term acquaintance and day to day immersion in the group(s) are really the only ways of getting near an inner perspective of the Travellers. This will also help to make sense of their relationship with the dominant society.

Viewed only casually, Travellers may find themselves described in patronising ways even by well-meaning liberals. For instance it has seemed to be complimentary to place Gypsies in terms of a theory of social Darwinism. Thus Sandford claims: 'Their nomadic life-style goes back further than our settled one. They represent our remote past in human form' (1973:5). He implicitly draws upon an evolutionary typology which places nomads lower down a single ladder of progress. Nomads are seen sentimentally or negatively as 'hangovers' from some hypothetical linear development in which sedentary living is considered to be the single superior future.

One of the first social scientists to apply the social anthropologist's method of long-term participant observation among the Gypsies in the British Isles, and indeed in Europe, was Farnham Rehfisch, whose

study of the Scottish Tinkers (1958) remains largely unpublished. A portion appears in his 1975 collection *Gypsies, Tinkers and other Travellers*. Rehfisch drew attention to the Tinkers' criteria for membership, their contempt for wage-labour and their tradition of misleading outsiders (1958). Barth had given an imaginative account of the Tattares or Gypsies in Norway and of the functional adaptability of large sibling groups scattered over a wide area (1955). He discussed the question of recruitment and 'passing'. However, his description of the Travellers as a 'typical parasite group' or 'typical pariah section of the population' (1955:286) lacks any major consideration of the Travellers' economic contribution.

The work of social anthropologists who use a small sample to be studied in depth contrasts with the quantitative pretensions of surveys, including that of the 1965 government census. In the latter, the chances of gaining accurate quantitative information were slight. Moreover, the researchers writing up the report had to interpret the census returns largely without direct contact and acquaintance with the Travellers. Some of this difficulty was handled by discussions with a few non-Gypsies who knew Travellers. As with the earlier writings of Gypsiologists, generalisations are made about Gypsies on the basis of a few observations. In the case of the Ministry, the generalisations are stretched over England and Wales and given scientific status by appearing on pages decorated with numerical charts and tables (M.H.L.G. 1967). Nevertheless, this first census stands as an invaluable information source for the Travellers' geographical distribution, family size, locations, etc. The subsequent report on Travellers in Scotland is also an important reference book (Gentleman and Swift 1971).

A sociologist's perspective is provided by Acton (1974) in his study of activities and policies at government and national level in England. He moves from the 1880s through to the post-war developments and the formation of Gypsy pressure groups. An historical chronology of events is presented with the aid of considerable and careful library research, as well as the use of local government literature and the files of the Gypsy Council as major sources. There is an excellent classification and critique of the phantom of the 'true' Gypsy, showing how the labels 'didikois' and 'Tinker' were misused by the Gorgio authorities. Acton admits to some participant observation among Gypsies at grass root level, but states that his argument rests 'as much as possible on documentation rather than merely on personal observation' (1974:3). The latter has been used in his account of the Gypsy Council. This account comes over largely as the personal biography of its first secretary, a Gorgio, Grattan Puxon. It is unfortunate that the day by day descriptions of individuals and factions who are given status by the metropolis should masquerade as the research into the 'wider issues' which sociologists are keen to accuse anthropologists of neglecting.

Action felt that the 'great need was not for another detailed study of some small group of South Essex Gypsies' (1974:3), as if any such studies ever existed. When obliged to make observations concerning the Gypsies' local social organisation, recruitment, marriage patterns and economic activities, he has to depend heavily on published material, which in other contexts he recognises as inadequate. He is correct in insisting that 'a sociology of minorities must also be one of majorities' (1974:2), and his study is mainly about the powers and policies of the dominant Gorgio authorities through their own written sources. Action would also surely accept that there is a need for the voices of the minority at the grass roots to be transmitted through the printed word; if only initially via a Gorgio participant observer and mediator. There is of course a similar need for participant observation among the Gorgio authorities (Okely 1980).

There are examples elsewhere in Europe of studies of the Gorgio authorities' documents, which piece together the Gypsies' recent history. Kenrick and Puxon (1972) have investigated the Nazi policies which led to the extermination of over a quarter of a million Gypsies, and the outrageous legal loophole which enabled the German government to deny reparation to many of the survivors. A detailed study of Gypsies in German-occupied Netherlands has also, like those of Kenrick and Puxon (1972) and Puxon (1976), suggested that post-Nazi policy and legislation 'have not risen very much above the tenor of what the Germans imposed ... in their decree of 1944' (Sijes 1979:173). A brilliant study has been made by Guy of the shifts in the Communist government's policies and practices towards Gypsies in Czechoslovakia and the refusal to accord the Gypsies the rights of an ethnic minority (1975, 1978). Liégeois' work mainly in France ranges from the investigation of state policies (1978b) to Gypsy national leadership (1976), and the attitudes of social workers, local officials and the general public towards Gypsies (1977; *Études Tsiganes* 1980; see also Okely 1980). Beck and Gheorghe have embarked on a study of the history of the Gypsies in Rumania (1981).

The research by Adams *et al.* on Gypsies in England (1975) included participant observation with Gypsies, Gorgio officials and supporters at local level in two regions. There were interviews with every council providing a Gypsy site, studies of local authority policies and circumstances in three areas, and an account of the national political manoeuvres leading to the 1968 legislation.

From the mid 1970s there emerged a number of publications mainly by social anthropologists and based on long-term participant observation with Gypsies. Sutherland's monograph is on Gypsies in California (1975; for a review see Okely 1975g). Gropper (or Cotten) focuses on Gypsies in New York (1975); Sharon and George Gmelch have each completed studies among the Travellers in Eire (1975 and 1977). George Gmelch especially supports the theory that the 'rapid modern-

ization of rural Ireland resulted in the obsolescence of most of the Travellers' traditional skills and services' (1977:157). Gmelch considers that if Travellers were able to obtain wage-labour employment 'many of the problems which currently confront them would be eradicated or minimised' (1977:161). Studies of Gypsies elsewhere imply some scepticism of this type of analysis (Sutherland 1975, Gropper 1975, Okely 1975c and chapters 2 and 4 below).

Significant research based on long-term fieldwork has emerged from Scandinavia. Grönfors has published rare details of feuding patterns among Finnish Gypsies (1977). Kaminski combined his experience of Gypsies in Sweden, Poland, and Czechoslovakia to examine the ways in which they manipulate their ethnic and national identity (1980). A number of articles and papers provide further comparisons: Barnes on Irish Tinkers (1975), Liégeois (1971a) and San Roman (1975) on Gypsies in Spain, Rao on the Manus in Alsace (1975), Miller on the Rom in the U.S.A. (1975), Viljanen Saira on the cultural symbols of Gypsies in Finland (1978) and Reyniers and Gilain on Gypsies in Belgium (1979). The association, Les Amitiés Tsiganes de Toulouse, has produced a joint report for the European Commission on its action work among the Gypsies in the area (summarised in *Études Tsiganes* 1980 and Okely 1980). Detailed anthropological studies of Gypsies in Afghanistan and Egypt by Rao and Nabil Hanna respectively have not as yet been published.

Some common aspects emerge from many of these studies of Gypsies on several continents. Invariably the Travellers or Gypsies differentiate themselves from Gorgios, Gajés, payos, 'country people' or Flatties. Many are found to have pollution beliefs which express and strengthen this separation. There is usually an ideology and practice of self-employment and occupational flexibility. Many groups exploit geographical mobility, although not all could be labelled nomads. Indeed nomadism is officially banned in the Communist countries of eastern Europe. Perhaps one aspect common to all groups is that they have had to survive hostility and periods of persecution from the dominant society. They have also been the objects of fantasy and romance. The form which either persecution or exoticism takes changes with historical context.

The emergence of European Roma policy

Martin Kovats

Over the last decade the Roma¹ have become a subject attracting increasing political attention. The fundamental reason for this has been the effects of post-Communist 'transition' on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Balkans, where the vast majority of the continent's Roma live. The end of the Cold War has allowed for the combination of issues raised by the circumstances of Roma in former Eastern Europe with those affecting Gypsies, Sinti, Travellers, etc. in the West to promote the idea of a trans-European Roma/Gypsy diaspora. This synthesis mirrors the wider process of European integration and the difficulties experienced by Roma/Gypsies (in respect of policy) within (nation) states appear to support the existential claims of supra-national European institutions to provide a superior form of governance within the framework of creating a common European 'home'. However, the symbolic significance of the emerging pan-European Roma policy paradigm² should not distract attention from the practical challenges confronting European institutions. These include the effects of economic and political transition on the large and growing Roma populations in post-Communist states and their consequences for economic development, political stability and social cohesion in the region. The circumstances of CEE and Balkan Roma directly impact on Western states, most notably in the form of Roma asylum seekers/migrants, but also more broadly within the context of closer co-operation between the different parts of the Continent.

While the Roma issue is a new one at the European level, Roma policy has long antecedents at state (and local) level, especially in transition countries. Novelty means that it is too early to evaluate conclusively the effectiveness of deepening European institutional engagement with the subject. Nevertheless, given the extent of the challenges raised by the circumstances of Roma/Gypsy people, this paper seeks to provide an indication of the main trends in European activities, through examining the conceptual documents of European institutions that underpin their initiatives. This analysis reveals

potentially serious problems in how European institutions understand a subject area (Roma/Gypsy people and their circumstances) characterised by considerable diversity. It identifies a distinct tendency to cope with the plethora of data by presenting an increasingly inaccurate and homogenised picture of Roma/Gypsy people and their (policy-related) circumstances and to dislocate Roma/Gypsy issues from wider social, political, economic and cultural contexts.

The rapid pace of change and increase in attention by authorities claiming to support and protect Roma/Gypsy people and their culture and identity appears a progressive departure from the crude intervention or hostile neglect characteristic of national policies in recent decades. However, politics is about the pursuit of interests and any particular subject can be viewed by different political actors in a variety of incompatible, complementary or antagonistic ways. As a medium for bargaining (largely over resources and political attention), the outcome of any political process reflects the relative power of the contending interests (as well as unanticipated factors). This is particularly clear in respect of Communist policy towards Roma which sought assimilation through material equality, but which led to the unintended strengthening of Roma identity, while leaving Roma vulnerable to the economic and social restructuring of the post-Communist period. In itself, the 'Europeanisation' of Roma policy only raises the stakes, so the question of its quality is a matter of profound importance to all concerned.

To give some indication of the scale of this 'newly discovered', Europe-wide policy issue and in particular the differing situations in former Eastern and Western Europe, the table below gives estimates, published in 1995, of the Roma/Gypsy populations for selected European countries. It also shows the proportion these people form of the total population. However, it should be noted that these statistics are all calculated differently and that figures on Roma/Gypsies are notoriously subjective and unreliable. Nevertheless, these are the figures accepted by European institutions and on which their Roma-related activities are based.

The Roma/Gypsy related activities of European institutions

Before 1990, European institutions had not been particularly involved with Roma and/or Gypsies. A number of questions were asked in the European Parliament during the 1970s, but in the following decade a process was begun that led to the commissioning of research into educational provision for Gypsy/Traveller children in member states of the European Community.³ The Council of Europe's activities were even more limited, focusing on resolutions encouraging the greater inclusion of Gypsies and nomads within mainstream administrative systems, especially education and social security.⁴

Figure 1. Estimated absolute and relative size of Roma/Gypsy populations - selected countries

Eastern Europe		Western Europe					
Country	Estimated Roma/Gypsy pop. (max.) ^a (million)	Total Pop ^b (million)	% of Total pop	Country/Region	Estimated Roma/Gypsy pop. (max.) ^a (million)	Total Pop ^b (million)	% of Total pop
Albania	100,000	3.5	2.9	Benelux ^c	55,000	26.5	0.2
Bulgaria	800,000	7.8	10.3	France	340,000	59.3	0.6
Czech Rep	300,000	10.3	2.9	Germany	130,000	82.8	0.2
Hungary	600,000	10.1	5.9	Greece	200,000	10.6	1.9
Slovakia	520,000	5.4	9.6	Scandinavia ^d	32,000	23.8	0.2
FR ^e	450,000	10.7	4.2	Spain	800,000	40.0	2.0
Romania	2,500,000	22.4	11.2	UK	120,000	59.5	0.2
Total	5,270,000	170.2	3.1	Total	1,670,000	302.5	0.6

Key:

- a In fact a band is given for the estimated Roma population for each country, e.g. Albania 90,000-100,000, etc. However, only the upper figure for each band is given in this table. Source: Lidgenis and Gheorghe (1995: 7).
- b Source: CIA Fact Book (2000).
- c Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg.
- d Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.
- e former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, later OSCE)⁵ did not engage with Gypsies as they were not perceived as representing a security issue.

European Union

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a dramatic and ongoing expansion in the Roma/Gypsy related activities of European institutions. As a forum for promoting the interests of member states, the European Union (EU) has been involved in addressing the issue of the growing number of Roma asylum seekers in Western European states. As well as continuing to support educational initiatives for Travellers, the process of European integration has meant that the EU has become involved in Roma-related initiatives in post-Communist countries, most notably through the PHARE programme and within accession negotiations with prospective new members.⁶

Council of Europe

In January 1993 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe accepted the report *On Gypsies in Europe* (Verspaget 1993) which led to the

passage of Resolution 1203 that declared Gypsies to be 'a true European minority'. A further report in 1995 (Verspaget 1995) prompted the establishment of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies which has produced reports and guidelines covering a variety of policy areas.⁷ The Group's pivotal role in the development of European Roma policy was demonstrated in 1999 when the EU adopted *Guiding principles for improving the situation of Roma*, drawn up by the Specialist Group (van der Stoep 2000: 7). Roma/Gypsy-related initiatives have also been taken by the Council's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, European Youth Centre and European Committee on Equality between Men and Women. The Council of Europe has also indirectly influenced the development of Roma policy through its initiatives in the field of minority and linguistic rights (Council of Europe 1998: 11-15).

OSCE

Within the OSCE, Roma/Gypsies are incorporated within the framework of the Human Dimension.⁸ Roma were explicitly included in the Paris Charter for a New Europe (Minority Rights Group 1995) and, since the creation of this post in 1993, the High Commissioner on National Minorities has produced two reports specifically on Roma in Europe. In 1995 the Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues was set up within the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and three years later in 1998 the Contact Point's mandate was extended to oversee, co-ordinate and advise on legislative and policy developments affecting Roma (and Sinti) both at the European and state levels.⁹

The conceptual framework underpinning the activities of the OSCE and the Council of Europe

Though new for European institutions, Roma/ Gypsies is not a new policy area but one that has presented challenges to governments of many different forms. These problems have consistently been found difficult to address effectively, often producing results considerably divergent from the stated policy aims. In order to assess the effectiveness of the remarkable quantitative expansion in Roma-related activities, it is also necessary to examine qualitative aspects of deepening European engagement with the issue. This paper analyses the contents of three main documents which outline how the OSCE and the Council of Europe perceive the European Roma policy paradigm. These are the two reports by the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), published in 1993 and 2000, and the 1995 report *On Gypsies in Europe*, written by Geraldine Verspaget for the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration and which led to the creation of the Specialist Group.

Understanding the issue

'Roma' is a broad concept covering a wide variety of different people (as indicated in endnote 1). While it is possible, for a variety of purposes, to consider all Roma people as essentially similar, this tendency has to be consciously resisted in relation to the practical impact of public policies on real people.¹⁰ Clearly many policy considerations must differ in respect of individuals and families from clan-based itinerant communities and those of people 'settled' in camps or other confined areas on the periphery of cities,¹¹ as well as in relation to large urban Roma populations¹² and those living in small rural communities.¹³ In general, Roma/Gypsies can be found in a range of social circumstances and at many points along a spectrum from close integration with, through to extreme isolation from, mainstream society. There is a great deal of difference in the lives of Roma people across the different regions of Europe, as well as between countries and even within countries. Contemporary diversity reflects the different historical experiences of Roma populations and of the environments in which they live.

One of the problems for those involved in trying to conceptualise the Roma is the lack of any single tangible thing that is common to all within the diaspora. The most commonly cited thread is the Sanskrit-based language *Romani* which linguists argue indicates a common origin of Romani people. Whatever the language does indicate, *Romani* today is spoken by only around 2.5 million of the putative 8-10 million-strong European Romani diaspora and 'there are between 50-100 dialects. Romani dialects are not mutually comprehensible except at very basic levels, such as words relating to food and family' (Kenrick 2000: 2). The limited range and fragmentation of *Romani* does not disprove the claim that contemporary Roma/Gypsies have a common (Indian) origin, but is an important factor to be considered by policy makers. This is especially the case in the field of education but, more broadly, in interpreting the relationship between Roma/Gypsy people and their home state and society.

The existence of extensive diversity is noted by both of the HCNM's Roma reports as well in Verspaget's 1995 document. However, noting the obvious is a long way from fully appreciating the entire range of differences within such an extensive group. Furthermore, it is only very recently that Roma people have contributed to the public discourse about themselves. It is this lack of public voice that has left a gulf allowing the extensive accumulation of negative stereotypes that have grown up around Roma/Gypsies. Extensive diversity among Roma combined with a lack of accountability for commentators means that just about any statement can be made about Roma which, though probably true for someone somewhere, must inevitably prove misleading unless placed in its proper context. European institutions face a considerable intellectual challenge and the extent to which the Council of

Europe and the OSCE have risen to this challenge is reflected in the three documents discussed below which, in effect, are the first to conceptualise the Roma as a pan-European policy area.

*First Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities
(van der Stoep 1993)*

While noting the 'centuries-long process' of migration that brought Roma 'to Byzantium approximately a thousand years ago' (1993: 3), the HCNM's 1993 report emphasises that today Roma 'comprise an extremely heterogeneous set of communities that are perhaps best understood in their own specific circumstances' (1993: 3) and whose relations with state and society 'have been complex and varied' (1993: 4). This characterisation of the objects of policy, Roma, reflects the explicit aim of the report to be 'thematic' rather than 'quantitative' and supports the assertion that 'the present day problems of the Roma [in transition countries] must be understood in the context of the overall situation of the region which can broadly be characterised in terms of major political and economic transformations' (1993: 5).

In placing the Roma issue firmly in the contemporary political context of transition, the report focuses on the most acute conditions within Europe where 'material hardship associated with economic recession ... as well as greater government austerity throughout the CSCE region, have hit the vast majority of the Roma particularly hard' (1993: 6). This allows for the wider appreciation of the political and economic forces conditioning contemporary events (and thus affecting any political engagement with the Roma issue). The emphasis on material hardship is also significant both in regard to the actual problems of widespread unemployment and poverty amongst Roma, as well as in recognising the relationship between low incomes and health, education and housing problems (policy areas). Identifying the political context and complexity of Roma as a subject, the report concludes that 'the problems of Roma generally require measures within each participating state to address the situation of Roma' and that policies should be based on 'objective analysis of community need', but should be sufficiently sensitive that 'intra-community tensions [Roma/non-Roma] are not exacerbated by (the appearance of) unfavourable treatment for one group over others' (1993: 12).

*Second Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities
(van der Stoep 2000)*

The substantial second HCNM report with its 175 pages reflects the proliferation of data in the intervening period.¹⁴ It explores four themes: discrimination and racial violence, education, living conditions and political participation. Each is examined through a review of relevant international agreements and a variety of illustrative examples. In the foreword the HCNM notes that since the 1993 report the situation of many other groups had

improved in CEE 'but by contrast Roma and Sinti were generally left outside the scope and beyond the reach of progressive developments'. Yet in spite of this important observation, the 2000 report represents a profound change from 1993 in taking the discussion of Roma out of the wider political and economic context and increasingly defining the issue in 'cultural' terms as essentially one of discrimination (the attitude and behaviour of non-Roma to Roma).¹⁵

The disconnection from the wider transition context (which is hardly mentioned) combined with the non-systematic collection of examples from different countries means the report does not discriminate between situations of differing political importance (urgency). Unemployment amongst Roma, which by 2000 was becoming an acute crisis throughout the region with rates reported of 60, 70, 80 and 90 per cent,¹⁶ merits only six paragraphs. There it is noted that the gross disparities between Roma and average unemployment in many CEE states 'are not solely the function of discrimination, but ... [their] impact is substantial' (2000: 32).¹⁷

The reluctance to examine economic aspects of the Roma as a policy subject means that, not only does the report leave out any discussion of labour market developments or changes in welfare entitlements which have affected Roma populations in recent years, but it also fails to appreciate the fundamental interconnection between poverty and problems in other policy areas such as health, education and housing. Thus, although the report notes that 'the relationship between poverty and [ill] health is well established', its only recommendations are to counter discrimination and to conduct health surveys (2000: 116-27). In relation to education the report notes that some countries registered 'marked improvements in the attendance and achievements of Romani students' over substantial periods (2000: 65), but fails to point out that it was under Communist rule that those 'substantial gains' were achieved despite unreconstructed attitudes and largely due to material improvement in Roma incomes and living conditions.

One effect of this de-contextualisation of Roma is to encourage the wholly erroneous idea that 'industrialisation' is to blame for the extensive contemporary impoverishment of most Roma in CEE since it 'radically diminish[ed] their prospects for surviving through traditional trades that sustained Roma for centuries' (2000: 33). While such an idea might be of relevance to some Roma/Gypsy people, it fails to address the real causes of most Roma unemployment and undermines the chances of developing appropriate policies where there is evidently considerable need. Other policy areas including education, health, housing and policing are discussed in greater detail. Despite the wide range of examples given, the lack of analysis of what all these different data mean continually reinforces the simplistic assertion that the problem is fundamentally one of prejudice because 'discrimination is a defining feature of the Romani experience' (2000: 23). Though racist attitudes

are clearly a very important aspect of matters concerning Roma, their role needs to be understood *alongside* rather than instead of the many other important factors determining the situation of Roma people today.

The 1995 Report for the Council of Europe (Verspaget 1995)

The clearest example of the above noted tendency to simplify the conception both of who Roma/Gypsy people are and the nature of their circumstances is the tendentious 1995 report of Geraldine Verspaget for the Council of Europe's European Committee on Migration (CDMG).¹⁸ The report asserts that 'the people known as gypsies ... came from northern India seven centuries ago in a long march ... Their language is Romani' (1995: 1) and has more to do with a desire to homogenise Roma/Gypsies than with any known scholarship. Despite the claim that 'the history of the Gypsies is one of discrimination, exclusion and persecution' (1995: 1), the report goes on to explain that 'the foremost reason [for high Roma unemployment] is the result of changes ... in the last fifty years obliging Roma to abandon their traditional modes of subsistence', and that 'until the end of the Second World War Gypsies fulfilled a specific function in the rural world having a number of traditional jobs ... all of which were compatible with their nomadic lifestyle' (1995: 4).¹⁹

The report asserts that the differences between the Roma/Gypsies of Eastern and Western Europe are 'because of communism' (1995: 2), and specifically because of Roma policy during this period. What appeared 'gen- erous measures soon turned into a policy of forced assimilation of the Roma populations through banning nomadism in most countries of the region with the resulting destruction of traditional Roma society' (1995: 3).²⁰ The report is so confident in its homogenous and conservative conception of Roma that it even criticises television for creating 'an identity crisis and a profound sense of rootlessness', especially amongst young Roma (1995: 5). The essentialisa- tion of Roma is completed with the claim that 'in the Gypsy idea of society the individual exists and is defined only in relation to the group' (1995: 6) (something which, if true, would have alarming implications for the role of Roma politics in democratic societies).

The desire to simplify the diversity of the Roma/Gypsy diaspora draws attention to the related tendency to simplify the circumstances of Roma people in relation to policy. One example is the issue of Roma asylum seekers. Instead of this phenomenon being perceived as a symptom of significant structural problems that need to be addressed, the 1995 report argues that 'the increase in mobility since 1990 must not conjure up pictures of a "tidal wave" of Gypsies sweeping over the West, it is merely a return to the normal mobility of Gypsies' (1995: 13). Perceiving the asylum issue as essentially one of (Roma) culture undermines understanding of the actual causes of this ongoing movement of people, as well as the chances of developing effective

and necessary policies in response.²¹

Despite noting that 'the fate of Gypsies is usually decided at the local level' (1995: 7), the homogenous image presented in the report gives a false sense of comparison both of needs/circumstances and of political urgency. The report notes high rates of Roma unemployment in Romania, Bulgaria and Northern Ireland (i.e. Travellers) (1995: 4), though it is clear that the causes, consequences, challenges and political significance of situations involving hundreds of thousands of settled Roma in the difficult economic environment of Central and Eastern Europe are fundamentally different from those affecting a few hundred itinerants in a wealthy Western state.

Implementing Policy

The previous section noted the trend for European institutions' conception of Roma as a policy issue to downplay the broader social, economic and politi- cal contexts. It was also noted that this approach creates significant problems for policy makers in identifying needs, as well as the limitations on and opportunities for policy in any given situation. In particular, misunderstand- ing/misrepresenting the importance of economic factors has meant that Euro- pean institutions are not able to assess the full extent of their financial commitments in this area and have become largely dependent on two meth- ods for translating their will into practice: making recommendations and pro- moting Roma representation. The following sections examine the limitations of these two policy tools.

Recommendations

The HCNM's 2000 report concludes with forty-eight recommendations cov- ering each of its four themes. Just under half of these (twenty-two) advocate changes in law or practices to address discrimination and a further seventeen relate to Roma representation (almost half of which refer specifically to the work of the OSCE's Contact Point) (2000: 160-4). Only four recommenda- tions make any mention of the need to increase resources allocated to Roma- related initiatives. The 'Guiding Principles', produced by the Council of Europe's Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (adopted by the European Union in 1999) are even more extensive, covering a wide range of areas including the structure of government through to the 'international mobility of Roma in Europe'. Of the seventy-five recommendations, thirty deal specif- ically with anti-discrimination legislation and practice, eighteen with Roma participation and nine directly involve resource allocation. In contrast to the HCNM report, the 'Guiding Principles' contain sixteen recommendations under the heading 'Unemployment and Economic Problems Faced by Roma' which focus on training, the need for anti-discrimination legislation and to 'encourage' Roma recruitment in the public sector, as well as advocating

subsistence agricultural programmes and easier access to loans and micro-credit.

Such recommendations can provide a useful guide to national and local governments, and their endorsement by European institutions can help increase the authority of those wishing to develop and implement policies in accordance with them. However, they are also inevitably vague and thus require interpretation if they are to be applied in practice. This is an important consideration in respect of Roma policy and it is a weakness of the evolving activities of European institutions that they are not informed by the experiences of previous policy makers, in particular, Communist regimes. Despite the centralised structures of the one-party states, politburos were not able to realise their policies, largely due to the resistance of local authorities (a similar difficulty was also encountered by Maria-Theresa and Joseph II in the eighteenth century).²² The involvement of European institutions adds an additional (and more remote) level to the policy pyramid and so it is reasonable to question the extent to which they will be able to influence practice by ensuring consensus of interpretation at both the national and local levels.

Most of these recommendations are normative statements of the obvious and contribute nothing to intellectual debate²³ and some are even contradictory.²⁴ However, their fundamental weakness lies in the conception developed by European institutions (as a result of simplifying the Roma and their circumstances) that the issue is essentially a technical rather than a political one. While no national government wishes to have a 'Roma problem', the last ten years have shown that states are not clear as to how to address the actual conditions in their own countries.²⁵ Governments are compelled to work within significant political and financial constraints and the extent to which these impact on Roma policy has led to the extensive problems which exist today and that have inspired European institutions to get ever more deeply involved with the subject. Lack of clarity over precisely what role European institutions should and could play in respect of Roma policy means that current recommendations serve only to re-state existing ideas rather than addressing the political and financial obstacles to the development and implementation of effective policies within individual countries, where knowledge of local conditions is best.

Roma politics

The implicit solution to the problem of interpretation lies in the role of Roma representation within the policy process. In the HCNM's 1993 report Roma input was considered of practical importance as 'identifying and addressing their own needs is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of policies'. Furthermore, this input was firmly linked to economic improvement as 'with greater inputs in efforts to improve their material condition, Roma will also be better able to demonstrate their commitment to and participation in soci-

ety-at-large' (1993: 7). The 1995 Verspaget report examined the subject of Roma political activity in greater detail noting that Roma have 'been remote from decision-making processes, which is one of the reasons why many proposed solutions have been unsuitable' and that 'states have accepted that viable solutions need to be worked out with the Gypsies themselves' (1995: 7, 3). The report also touched upon the idea of Roma representation being an end in itself. The claim of 'national or ethnic minority' status was seen as compatible with integration, as an expression of 'their [Roma] standing as part of society' through asserting 'a distinctive culture worthy of respect'. By the time of the second HCNM report it had become an 'essential principle' that Roma be 'centrally involved in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes' (2000: 5-6). The section discussing 'Political Participation' began with the ambiguous assertion that 'Roma face special challenges in their efforts to participate in the fundamental promise of democracy - the right to self-government' (2000: 128).

The recognition that Roma policy cannot proceed without the agreement of the subjects of policy (Roma people) represents a fundamental historical change. The need to encourage Roma representation has been recognised at both European and state level, as well as in the work of NGOs. While the active participation of Roma people in the discussion, development and implementation of policy is both desirable and inevitable, it is also questionable whether it is wise for European institutions to promote an ethnicity-based politics.²⁶ Seeing Roma as representing a fundamentally technical (rather than a political) issue fosters the belief that the training and promotion of Roma representatives should provide 'responsible' partners for government and other institutions in the common task of resolving problems. In fact, Roma simply represent yet another lobby competing for attention and resources from authorities together with a wide variety of other (often more experienced, popular and better resourced) interests. The success of the relationship between Roma and authorities depends not on the ability of Roma themselves but on the wider political and economic environment.

The problem of the past was that policies were inappropriate and so did not achieve their aim (which has led to the difficulties which policy makers are confronted with today). This problem can still occur, even with Roma representation, if authorities are not able or willing to develop the programmes and initiatives that Roma need and want. The main innovation of Roma politics is that the policy must develop in public. How Roma politics evolves depends on the extent to which it is capable of securing benefits for its constituency and on how other political forces react to its demands. Therefore, rather than producing technocratic 'advisers', Roma representation actually creates an additional political condition requiring policy to be developed in accordance with actual needs (expressed in political demands). In other

words, Roma politics means the success or failure of European engagement must produce either positive or negative political consequences.

Given the diversity and distribution of the notional Roma/Gypsy diaspora, the conditions in which Roma/Gypsy people live and the novelty of Roma politics, it is not surprising that there is no reliable European-level representation of Roma/Gypsy people. The 'representation' of Roma within European institutions (such as in the Contact Point and the Specialist Group) is by appointment rather than election or delegation. The main contender to speak for Roma/Gypsy people at the international level is the International Romani Union (IRU). In July 2000 the IRU held its fifth World Congress in Prague (part-financed by the Czech Government and the OSCE), which illustrated the expansion of interest in Roma issues since its last congress in 1990.²⁷ Seeking to address its lack of representativeness, the IRU's new President, Dr Emil Šćuka, announced the creation of a Parliament, though no account was given about how an electorate could be identified or mobilised.²⁸

The difficulties confronting national Roma populations in creating an effective political lobby means that Roma politics itself is very unlikely to produce overwhelming political problems. The far more considerable threat to the peaceful development of policy lies in the potential opposition that might be generated towards perceived 'favouritism' towards Roma (as noted by the HCNM in his 1993 report, see above). The symbolic relationship between 'Roma' and 'Europe' cuts both ways. The activities of European institutions must fail to achieve their stated aims if they have the effect of allowing nationalist Eurosceptics to play the populist 'race card' by portraying 'Europe' as interfering with their country's national identity. The key to the success of the inevitable and deepening European institutional engagement with the Roma issues in CEE and the Balkans is to provide sufficient inducements to encourage domestic élites and public opinion to accept the wide variety of changes necessary to ensure equality of opportunity.

The future of European Roma policy

The problems identified above can only partly be accounted for by the inexperience of European institutions in dealing with the Roma issue. There is considerable historical and contemporary literature about Roma in many states that does not inform the knowledge base for policy at the European level. Through their burgeoning Roma-related activities European institutions are confronted with a (potentially) colossal volume of data. The conceptual documents of the OSCE and the Council of Europe display the tendency to simplify and generalise highly varied and complex issues. Rather than representing innovation, 'Europe' appears to be making the same mistake as previous policy makers who historically struggled to develop policies in accordance with the diversity and complexity of national Roma populations.

The de-contextualisation of Roma fosters the mistaken perception that the Roma issue represents a series of technical challenges that can be addressed by legal reform and the spread of good practice, rather than one requiring the substantial re-allocation of resources and considerable political sensitivity and skill. The choice facing European institutions is whether or not their expanding activities will be effective, based on full and accurate understanding of the subject.

To address the limitations on policy created by diversity and distance, consideration needs to be given to precisely what role European institutions can play within the Roma policy paradigm, especially their relationship with national governments and policy. It needs to be accepted that the Roma issue (including increased Roma political activity) is not going to disappear in the foreseeable future. The current period is very important not only because of the way the issue evolves in the future will be conditioned by steps taken now (particularly the framework constructed for policy and the identification of the aims of policy) but also because the Roma issue is increasingly part of important decisions, most notably, the enlargement of the European Union. As part of institutions without the budget or authority to promote policies toward Roma, based on ideas of social and economic development, it is reasonable to question whether bodies, such as the Specialist Group and Contact Point, attempting to address only part of the issue (such as legal reform), may actually prove dysfunctional. This is all the more likely if their initiatives are not supported by programmes designed to overcome wide-scale poverty that are sufficiently focused and of the required scale.

National focus

A pre-condition for successful European engagement with the Roma (especially in the politically sensitive conditions of the CEE region and the Balkans) is accurate understanding of actual conditions as well as identification of the opportunities for and limitations on policy. These can vary extensively between even neighbouring states where different historical experiences have created different circumstances for Roma minorities. For example, in Hungary over three-quarters of Roma speak only Hungarian, whilst in Romania many different dialects of Romanian are spoken as a mother tongue, as well as mainstream languages (Romanian and Hungarian) and dialects of these (Beash). Different Roma populations have different experiences of settlement and industrialisation (rural Slovak Roma and urban Czech Roma, itinerant Roma of the former Yugoslavia and those with many years experience of being *gastarbeiter* abroad). The economic and social structures of countries differ meaning opportunities for policies vary, such as between areas of economic growth and decline. The political traditions and cultures of countries also vary and have a considerable impact on policy developments.

For example, Hungary is keen to promote minority rights as this helps its wider programme of re-uniting with Magyars abroad, whilst the Czech and Slovak Republics are new nation-states (for Czechs and Slovaks) created by separating from the other 'nation',²⁹ whilst the Romanian state prefers to play down ethnic difference due to fear of fragmentation.

The nature of political relationships also supports European Roma policy focusing on states. Each national government faces particular challenges and has to contend with the political and financial limitations on its activities specific to that state. Furthermore, significant European involvement can take place only through structures within individual countries and controlled by national politicians. This is recognised in the state-by-state approach of the EU in respect of Roma policy in candidate countries within accession negotiations. European activities need to recognise (in addition to meeting the needs and winning the approval of Roma people themselves) that their success depends largely on the degree to which they are supported by national and local élites (representing the wider society). This means they must be perceived (domestically) as according with the needs of the country rather than as a threat to the stability and coherence of society. While there is certainly a transnational dimension to Roma issues (such as linguistic and cultural Roma communities living across national borders)³⁰ these should not obscure the fact that integration (and thus the reduction of economic, social and political tensions) can only occur through the implementation of policies which enable Roma people to enjoy genuine equality of opportunity with their neighbours in their local home environment.

Resource allocation

The fundamental weakness of the evolving European conception of the Roma as a policy issue is the superficial diagnosis of the problem as being essentially 'cultural', a question of discrimination against Roma people. While it is true that post-Communist societies were isolated from the anti-racist discourse which emerged in Western Europe after World War Two, it is also true that this discourse has not resolved considerable social problems of Western Gypsies and Travellers.³¹ It also needs to be recognised that inclusive, anti-racist/equal opportunities policies were developed in the West at a time of economic expansion and sought to increase the productivity of immigrant labour by improving housing, health and educational opportunities and removing obstacles to promotion in the workplace.³² Roma policy is developing amidst fundamentally different conditions characterised by lack of demand for (un)der/skilled labour. Part of the problem is that anti-Roma racism is poorly understood and that the long and often difficult history of Roma means that prejudices are deeply rooted in mainstream cultures (both in the East and the West). Furthermore, many aspects of the current situa-

tion, such as high unemployment, welfare dependency, poor housing and health, etc. appear to be deepening antipathy towards Roma.

The promotion of anti-racism is very important but, to be successful, a variety of other policy tools need to be employed to achieve this goal. The fact that European institutions are getting ever more deeply involved with the Roma (in post-Communist states) demonstrates that national governments are not coping well with the multiplicity of challenges represented by the Roma issue. Governments are not able to make sufficient resources available to address needs (not just Roma impoverishment but reform of educational and legal systems, infrastructure development, etc.). Their activities can be characterised more as crisis management because it has proved politically impossible to allocate scarce public resources for Roma-related initiatives at the scale required. Fear of over-extending financial commitments means that expectations are kept low. However, the emergence of Roma politics (combined with, amongst other factors, political pressure from abroad) means that such an approach is unsustainable in the medium-term.

Clearly European institutions, especially the EU, have a crucial role to play in breaking the political impasse in individual states. Due to the need to maintain as wide a political and social consensus as possible during the difficult task of addressing Roma issues, it is unlikely that a political approach that seeks to support one faction amongst domestic élites over another can facilitate the successful implementation of policy.³³ Europe needs to overcome the widespread view that Roma represent a domestic political problem, and to win the support of élites and societies by making a Roma minority an asset to a country through making new resources available. If national politicians and interests felt less threatened that Roma policy would deprive them of resources, it would be politically easier for governments to win support for effective anti-discrimination legislation. Without establishing sufficient confidence that the Roma issue can be addressed to the benefit of society as a whole, it is unrealistic to expect politicians to take the risk of courting unpopularity (and to undermine their own bases of support) by challenging unopposed entrenched attitudes and demanding considerable reform in public services and administrative systems.

Unfortunately, the conception of the issue emerging at the European level not only fails to recognise the necessity of Europe playing such a role, but actually reduces awareness of the financial dimension to policy by failing to analyse the political context and downplaying the fundamental need to raise the incomes of Roma people. After a decade of work, neither the OSCE nor the Council of Europe have come up with any figures as to how much it would cost to achieve any particular policy aim, neither have they identified any mechanism by which states could negotiate over resources with European institutions.³⁴ This leaves European institutions without any idea of the scale of resources which are required and thus of the financial impact Roma policy

is likely to have on their own budgets (long-term planning is effectively precluded). Currently the PHARE programme is the main channel of resources between Europe and CEE states in respect of Roma. However, the sums transferred so far are very small (20m ECU (17mUSD) over six years) spread over half a dozen countries. Though no official estimates have been made, it is likely that the costs of significantly reducing CEE Roma poverty (thus enabling Roma people to make the same choices about their lives as other citizens) will amount to around 1-1.5bn ECU, spread over a number of years.³⁵ Though this represents a dramatic increase on current expenditure, the sum is equivalent to the budget of the PHARE programme for only one year. Money is not the solution to the Roma issue, but it is a pre-condition for effective policies. In addition to allocating resources, it is also vitally important that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that they are used effectively and take into account the need for transparency and accountability created by the emergence of Roma politics and the fact that Roma policy is a public issue.

Approaches to European Roma policy

The long-term challenges presented by the Roma issue and the ongoing process of European integration mean that deepening engagement of European institutions is inevitable and of increasing importance. A new area of 'European' policy and politics has been created. To ensure that European Roma policy is effective and successful it is necessary to establish the most appropriate structure for its development, which gives the greatest chances of maximising understanding of the issues involved and of adopting the best policy tools. The weaknesses of the present structure indicate how future policy can be better guided at a time when the Roma issue requires increasing political attention. As the circumstances of the vast majority of Roma in transition states continues to deteriorate, governments and societies (including Roma people) face a growing number of serious problems including migration/asylum, social division and political polarisation, strengthening (Euroseptic) nationalism, economic stagnation/underdevelopment, infrastructure decay and decline in public services. The experience of the last decade is that the economic and political costs of addressing these matters continues to rise the longer substantive, targeted intervention is delayed. Failure to tackle the root causes of the ongoing disintegration of Roma from mainstream economy and society means that national and international authorities face the mounting costs of managing its symptoms.

At present there are two distinct approaches towards Roma at the European level. On the one hand there are the institutions with a pan-European membership (Council of Europe, OSCE) within both of which are specific offices claiming a role in constructing a framework for policy encompassing

the whole Roma/Gypsy diaspora (Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues). The broad boundaries to their work mean there is a danger of resources being wasted through replication. However, the main problem is their inability to develop an objective overview of the subject. Indeed, when confronted with the growing volume of data about Roma, the later conceptual documents of these institutions demonstrate a pronounced tendency to ignore difficult issues and to develop an increasingly superficial and misleading picture of Roma and their circumstances. The result of this has been the promotion of a simplistic, ineffectual framework for policy and their failure to identify the political and financial obstacles to and implications of engagement with the issue. Without the introduction of proper methods of political and scholarly accountability, the enormous potential within the Roma issue means that these offices can, for a considerable time to come, continue to produce work which further misleads decision makers (and the wider public) and confuses what is already a complicated and contentious subject.

An alternative approach is that of the European Union which, especially in relation to the candidate countries with the most politically significant Roma populations, considers Roma policy on state-by-state basis.³⁶ Given the problems involved in analysing the considerable (and rapidly increasing) data in respect of Roma (necessary for identifying needs and factors conditioning policy options) the latter would appear to present a better framework for European policy makers. The EU approach is specifically linked to working through structures within individual states and so is more likely to identify the opportunities for and limitations on policy in specific countries, vital for ensuring the necessary local consensus required for any substantial initiative in countries with large Roma populations. The EU's engagement with the most politically significant aspect of the Roma issue (transition states) is sited within a wider political process (enlargement negotiations) and thus includes a substantial element of political accountability. Finally, the EU (through the PHARE programme and other budgets supporting initiatives in respect of Roma/Gypsies in member states) has the financial capacity to mobilise resources (as well as to develop effective methods of financial accountability) of sufficient scale to ensure that policy achieves its stated aims.

Conclusion

The long history of state-Roma relations throughout Europe indicates that the failure of European institutions to comprehend accurately the subject area is likely to lead to the development of ineffective policies. In addition, the scale of objective need, the symbolic importance of the subject and the acute political sensitivity (in many countries) of the Roma as a political question (including the emergence of Roma political activity) mean that policy

failure is likely to have profound political consequences for all involved. It is already possible to identify the limitations and contradictions of current European Roma policy. Based on the limited (and inaccurate) definition of the problem as fundamentally one of 'culture' (discrimination), European institutions promote the homogenisation of policies across countries based on the re-statement of existing (and ineffectual) practice, in the form of guidelines and recommendations which have no intrinsic authority. European Roma policy is also based on the promotion of Roma representation, but without the awareness that strengthened Roma political activity can only exacerbate the contradictions and limitations of inappropriate policy initiatives.

The growing tendency to view the Roma issue isolated from the wider political, economic, social and cultural context means that European institutions have failed to appreciate that the role of European policy in this area must be to overcome the political and financial obstacles to effective policies within national politics, especially in transition states. Instead of seeking to develop structures and programmes for the central administration of a national group spread across a large number of countries, European institutions need to appreciate their own limitations and to concentrate on contributing something new to break the political impasse on the subject manifest in many states. While political support is important, the need to establish and maintain consensus within states (initially amongst élites and, more generally, the wider public) limits the utility of punitive sanctions. Europe needs to raise expectations that serious problems can be addressed effectively and this requires making new resources available, as well as ensuring that these are used efficiently and with appropriate methods of public accountability. This can be done either through expanding the PHARE programme or by establishing a parallel initiative.

Only 'Europe' has the authority and the resources to provide the framework for addressing the multifarious policy problems affecting Roma/Gypsy people across the Continent. However, for Europe to play its role effectively its institutions need to be realistic about their own competence and recognise that the complexities involved require the channelling of policy initiatives through state-level structures. To be successful, European initiatives need to address the most fundamental and acute problem of widespread Roma poverty, especially amongst Roma formerly integrated within and subsequently discarded from the mainstream labour force. Raising the incomes of Roma people will reduce pressure on policy makers as Roma become better able to make the same choices as other citizens. Furthermore, by providing national governments with the resources to address problems of material hardship and infrastructure decline, Europe is far more likely to persuade local élites to support effective anti-discrimination measures and to reform administrative structures.

European institutions need to be guided by the awareness that the sensitivity of the Roma issue in many CEE and Balkan states means that their inevitably deeper engagement may backfire spectacularly if they fail to develop desired and appropriate policies based on a full understanding of local conditions. Conversely, the rewards for successful engagement are considerable in respect of facilitating social cohesion, economic development and democratic stabilisation. The Roma question (in a wide variety of different forms) has been confounding policy makers for centuries. European institutions have a truly historic role to play in finally overcoming one of bleaker aspects of European history. It would be more than a shame for them to fail to rise to the challenge.

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Notes

- 1 'Roma' is the term increasingly applied in academic and political discourse to a collection of communities that, both historically and today, have been known by a huge range of not necessarily exclusive names and which refer to a variety of different characteristics such as presumed origin (Gypsy), occupation (Lovari, Rudari), physical appearance (Kalo), lifestyle (travellers), culture (Romungre) or language (Beash). The word 'Roma' comes from the language *Romanes* and has been most commonly applied to populations from Eastern Europe where most *Romanes* speakers live. The current promotion of a pan-European (global) identity requires the establishment of a (single) inclusive term, though the persistence of names such as Cigany, Gypsy, Sinti etc. illustrates the incompleteness of this process. This paper examines the attempt by European institutions to construct a policy framework encompassing the whole of this notional Roma, Gypsy, Sinti (etc.) diaspora in Europe. It uses the term 'Roma/Gypsies' when referring to all the communities concerned and 'Roma' when discussing only those in post-Communist states, as well as to describe the broad approach of European institutions. This is the arbitrary choice of the author and, though possibly confusing, is done to allow the problem of nomenclature to illustrate Roma/Gypsy diversity which has fundamental implications for the emerging pan-European Roma policy paradigm. See, for example, Liégeois (1994: 36-8), Marushiakova and Popov (2001a), Gheorghe and Acton (1994/95), Mirga and Gheorghe (1997).
- 2 This paradigm was first formulated by Jean-Pierre Liégeois (Liégeois 1994).
- 3 In 1984 the European Parliament accepted the report *On the Situation of Gypsies in the Community*. The Resolution was passed within days of another, *On Education for Children whose Parents have no Fixed Abode*, on 16 March 1984. The two issues were immediately combined with the European Commission requesting an overview of school provision for Roma/Gypsy children in member states. This report, *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*, was completed in 1986 but extended in 1989 to take account of the new member states of Spain and Portugal. An immediate consequence of the report was Resolution 89/C 153/02 *On School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children* of the Council of (Education) Ministers). The Resolution noted low levels of school attendance (30-40 per cent) and very high rates of illiteracy (50-90 per cent) amongst Gypsies and Travellers in the Community and promoted a variety of initiatives to be taken by member states as well as committing Community-level institutions to support change through co-ordinating information and institutional activities. See, Liégeois (1998) and Vayassade, M.-C. (1984) *European Working Documents*, 1983: 4, Document 1-1544/83, PE 79.328/fin.
- 4 In 1969 the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly approved Recommendation 563 *On the Situation of Gypsies and other Travellers in Europe*. The concern of the Assembly was primarily directed at the issue of nomadism, in particular how to ensure that travelling people were not disadvantaged in their access to rights and services provided by mainstream institutions, especially education and social security. In 1975 Gypsies were specifically referred to in Committee of Ministers Resolution (75)13 *On the Social Situation of Nomads in Europe* but were not included, eight years later, in Recommendation R(83)1 *On Stateless Nomads and Nomads of Undetermined Nationality*. For fuller details, see Danbakli (1994: 101-7).

- 5 Renamed the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in January 1995.
- 6 European Commission (1999; for details on individual countries see, regular reports on progress towards accession by candidate countries (4 November 1998, 13 October 2000, 8 November 2000).
- 7 *Economic and Employment Problems faced by Roma Gypsies in Europe*, MG-S-ROM (99), 5 August 1999; Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states *On the Education of Roma/Gypsy children*, 3 February 2000; Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat on the *Problems facing Roma/Gypsies in the field of Housing*, MG-S-Roma (2000), 3 March 2000.
- 8 Roma were discussed in the Human Dimension meetings in Copenhagen (1990), Moscow (1991), Helsinki (1992), Warsaw (1994) and Vienna (1999).
- 9 Decision of the 1998 OSCE Oslo Ministerial Council on the *Enhancement of the OSCE's Operational Capabilities Regarding Roma and Sinti Issues*.
- 10 It is characteristic of the current state of knowledge about Roma/Gypsies that, despite the growing number of materials produced claiming to show that Roma/Gypsies represent a coherent ethnic identity and culture and/or suffer ubiquitous discrimination and marginalisation, no comprehensive sociological survey has been carried out to identify fundamental aspects of their living conditions. Only a few partial surveys have been carried out in individual countries such as in Hungary (Havas *et al.* 1995: 67–80) and in the Czech Republic (Czech Government 1997).
- 11 Itinerant communities (usually representing only a minority within national Roma/Gypsy populations) can be found in many countries including the UK and Ireland, in Scandinavia, as well as in parts of the former Soviet Union and in the former Yugoslavia. Especially in countries of southern Europe (Italy, Greece and Spain), many Roma/Gypsies live in large camps, shanty-towns or areas allocated for their settlement.
- 12 In addition to large historical urban communities (such as in Bulgaria or Macedonia), there are an increasing number of cities with large and growing Roma neighbourhoods such as the 8th District in Budapest.
- 13 Over half of Roma/Gypsies live in rural areas, often in places of limited economic development. Roma/Gypsies might live in or near to villages, be recent arrivals or long-term residents and there appears to be a growing tendency for the recreation of entirely isolated 'settlements' in some CEE states, reversing the progress made during the slum clearance programmes of the Communist period.
- 14 The 1990s saw a dramatic increase in data (in English) focusing on human rights' abuses against Roma people. The emerging literature produced by Roma people and organisations themselves has rarely influenced policy, even at the national level.
- 15 The Report begins: 'The extraordinary complexity of challenges confronting Romani communities is manifest, as the range of issues in this report attests. By equal measure, the rich diversity among Roma within the OSCE makes all but a few general conclusions inappropriate. One, however, is plainly warranted: *discrimination and exclusion are fundamental features of the Roma experience*' (van der Stoep 2000: 1, *my italics*).
- 16 See, for Czech Republic, Riean (1998: 5–45) and Muller (1995: 519); for Hungary, Office of the Prime Minister (1997: 27) and for Macedonia, Barany (1995: 519).
- 17 It is widely recognised that a large part of Roma unemployment is structural, caused by the lack of availability of suitable work (Szilagy and Heizer 1996: 14, Lemon 1996: 28–31).
- 18 Though not explicitly stated in 1995, Ms Verspagnet's ideological position was clearly expressed in her 1993 report, *On Gypsies in Europe*, which proposed 'to replace the socio-economic image of gypsies by a cultural definition' and which led to the declaration in

- Recommendation 1203 of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly that Gypsies represent a 'true European minority'. Following the 1995 report the Council of Europe set up the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies which, since its creation in 1996, has been chaired by Ms Verspagnet.
- 19 Many Roma communities have been settled for centuries, reflecting the considerable historical differences in patterns of social and economic development across Europe. By virtue of their greater numbers and local factors, Roma in CEE and the Balkans have historically played a larger (and more varied) role in the division of labour than the smaller number of persistently persecuted itinerants in many Western countries.
- 20 This is wholly erroneous and conflicts with all serious scholarship. Only a very small proportion of Roma were affected by the Communist bans on nomadism. Assimilation was explicitly linked to considerable activity designed to improve living conditions and employment opportunities for Roma people. In contrast, the post-Communist period is characterised by the promotion of Roma culture and identity and the dramatic decline in the living conditions and employment opportunities of Roma people. Contemporary policy makers need to strike a balance between these two extremes, but they can only do this if they are aware that the question exists.
- 21 See Matras (2000) and Guy (2000) for alternative views of Roma migration.
- 22 For the resistance to national plans at local level during the time of the Habsburgs, see Guy (1975a: 209–10 and 1975b) and for similar successful frustration of Communist plans by local authorities, see Guy (1975a: 219–20 and 1975b).
- 23 Example of recommendations include: 'Equal possibilities for Roma to participate in the political system ... should be encouraged'; 'Educational policies should incorporate measures for adult and vocational education'; 'In no case should new citizenship laws be drafted ... in such a way as to discriminate against legitimate claimants for citizenship'; 'Governments should take steps to ensure equal access of Roma to public health care', etc. (van der Stoep 2000).
- 24 For example: 'Governments must ensure that Roma are not victims of discrimination in respect of housing', yet 'governments should also endeavour to legalise the legal status of Roma who now live in circumstances of unsettled legality', i.e. authorities should allow Roma to continue to live in accommodation considered unacceptable for the rest of society.
- 25 As noted by the OSCE High Commissioner of National Minorities (van der Stoep 2000: Foreword) and by the growing number of national case studies of Roma policy e.g. Kovats (2001), Vaščka (1999), Crowe (1999), Marushiakova and Popov (2001b), PER (1992).
- 26 Questions of national identity vary throughout Europe and so ethnic politics is perceived differently across countries and regions. In CEE and the Balkans there is a strong affinity between national identity and political power resulting from the late creation (still ongoing) of numerous small states from within multinational empires (as distinct from expanded centralised states, such as France and the UK, or states constructed from the unification of smaller units, such as Germany and Italy).
- 27 For the fifth World Romani Congress, held in Prague 24–28 July 2000, see Acton and Klimová (2001); Connolly, K. (2000) 'Europe's Gypsies lobby for nation status', *The Guardian*, 28 July; Young, G. (2000) 'A nation is born', *The Guardian*, 31 July.
- 28 A problem of ethnifying political boundaries has been demonstrated in Hungary where, based on universal franchise, less than a quarter of voters for Gypsy Minority Self-Governments are themselves Roma (Kovats 1996: 42–58).
- 29 Appreciation of the wider (political/cultural) context to the Roma issue helps understand why the Czech Republic, generally considered the most liberal and economically successful of the post-Communist states, produced a citizenship law which was widely perceived as

labelling Roma as alien and where television channels have broadcast programmes encouraging Roma to migrate to other countries.

30 Another consideration is the effect the political conditions of one national Roma population may have on the politics of a Roma minority in another country, thus on the domestic politics of another state. Given the novelty of Roma politics this is not a serious prospect in the near future, but may prove a source of tension between states if a transnational Roma politics is promoted and developed, especially if it is isolated from mainstream national political forces.

31 The multiple and manifest problems in respect of the social status and living conditions of Gypsies, Travellers, etc. in the EU reflects decades of neglect. There is no tried-and-tested 'model' which can be adopted by candidate countries where many indicators for their Roma citizens are better.

32 These are the same as the motivations behind Communist integration/assimilation policy towards their large Roma minorities.

33 This does not mean that the statements and activities of racist politicians and parties should not be condemned, but that European institutions must seek to provide sufficient benefits to mainstream political forces to enable them to work together to marginalise extremists within their own countries.

34 In March 1999 (revised in August) the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies produced its report on Economic and Employment Problems Faced by Roma/Gypsies in Europe (MG-S-ROM (99)5 rev). The report contains no attempt to identify the costs of any particular initiative or of engagement in any policy area, neither does it call for cost assessments to be made.

35 The low costs in the countries and regions where most Roma live mean that targeted development can support many more people than in the West and would stimulate local and national economies. Resources could be transferred either by expanding the PHARE programme or through a separate initiative, a mini Marshall plan. This raises the important question about the ethics of channelling such investment upon an ethnic basis which this paper does not have space to discuss.

36 Recently the EU has moved towards the totalising approach adopted by the OSCE and the Council of Europe. In November 1999 the Commission adopted the 'Guiding principles for Roma policy in Candidate Countries' and in June 2000 the EU presidency organised a conference on Roma in Lisbon. This greater co-ordination of 'European' Roma policy illustrates the importance of ensuring that the policy paradigm is well understood (see Enlargement Strategy Paper - Regular Reports from the Commission on Progress towards Accession by each of the candidate countries, 8 November 2000).