ABSTRACT

Scholars have identified associations between ethnicity and crime. The extent to which such correlations generalise to other national domiciles and the nuances of neighbourhood criminality is unclear. Drawing upon 67 interviews with practitioners and (ex)offenders involved in drug supply, and supplemented by data sets, the article tests the validity of the generalisation, by exploring a) whether ethnicity is perceived as advantageous in the movement of drugs, and b) how indigenous organised criminal gangs (OCGs) address the encroachment of foreign OCGs on their turf. Findings suggest 'official' suppositions aren't wholly supported by evidence gained from street actors connected with criminogenic environments.

INTRODUCTION

Discourses of derision

In the 1978 renowned science fiction horror film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* we learn that something evil has taken possession of a small town, emotional imposters are alien duplicates who replace humans. Film characters scream out "They're coming" to passing cars on the street. Treated as a metaphor this film is congruent with alien conspiracy theory, which argues foreign criminogenic immigrants are penetrating our culture, for the worse. This article presents the views of mainly working-class young people. These data give us the opportunity to determine whether we are dealing with fake news. Official law and order elites and mainstream media commentators have constructed an influential discourse of derision whose effects are essentially racist. These sources argue that important dimensions of the 'drug trade' are staffed exclusively by 'aliens' (immigrants) who exercise monopolistic reach: according to Deputy Chief Constable Tom Wood (2002), the threat of the Yardies has been contained, particularly as there is no large Afro-Caribbean community in Edinburgh where they can hide, claiming:

> "And because they are so flash with their jewellery and their cars, they quickly stand out. However, we can never become complacent as far as these groups are concerned, and to keep Edinburgh free requires constant vigilance" (Wood 2002).

With evocative headlines such as 'African gangsters armed with bayonets are flooding Scotland with deadly crack cocaine', claiming 'Immigrant thugs came to Scotland two years ago and have built £1 million a year drug empire' (Alexander 2014:1) carries a story of Somalian gangsters complicit in illegal drug supply. Police Scotland's deputy chief constable Iain Livingstone (2014) stated that almost one in 10 incidents involved immigrants, with the police force's dealings with people born outside Scotland had doubled to nine per cent. David Leask (2012) of The Herald shares that there are 25 foreign organised gangs operating in Scotland. According to the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) the Albanian organised crime gang poses the greatest threat, due to their links right at the heart of world trade routes for heroin, guns and women. In 2012, 25 of the 267 organised crime groups, citing Chinese Triad (responsible from cannabis to bootleg DVDs); Yardies from the Caribbean (supplying crack cocaine).

Detective Chief Superintendent Stephen Whitelock, of SCDEA, notes the emergence of a number of crime groups from other countries operating in Scotland: including gangs from

Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia – particularly Vietnam and China – as well as African countries:

> "We are aware of their presence here in Scotland and we will not be complacent. The Albanians are here now. Some of the individuals concerned are known to be capable of extreme violence. Albanian serious and organised crime groups have been known to be involved in prostitution, arms and drugs. They have been flagged up in our mapping exercise. We have a list of the top 20% most serious organised crime groups, each of which is in the ownership of one of the forces or the agency. The Albanians are on that list." (Leask 2012:2-3)

Likewise, Labour MSP Graeme Pearson, formerly director-general of the SCDEA, continues:

> "It has always been the case that foreign crime groups have had a foothold in Scotland; the Italians and West Africans up in Aberdeen and the Columbians in Edinburgh. I am not surprised my former colleagues at SCDEA have identified an Albanian group. Their presence in London and up through the Midlands is well-recognised. The Albanians are a bit of challenge because they have a military background in their homelands and their criminal elements have a very violent history. They are very difficult groups to penetrate." (Leask 2012:2-3)

The Scottish government (2016) *Scotland Serious Organised Crime Strategy* states that 84% of SOCGs are identified as British, but they fail to state if it is the nationality or ethnicity which is being referred to. Almost 6% are foreign nationals. 67% of SOCGs are involved in drug crime; cocaine is the most popular commodity, followed by heroin, cannabis, tranquilisers and amphetamine. 66% of SOCGs are involved in seemingly legitimate businesses. The most common business types are licensed premises, restaurants, building/construction companies, shops, garage repairs and vehicle maintenance, taxis and nail bars (p.3-4). Over 720 such businesses have been identified. The media has used news photographs to contribute to the construction of the asylum seeker and refugee as criminal and deviant (Banks, Wood, and Spencer 2011:308) by allowing the photographs to 'speak for themselves, providing readers with 'objective', visual answers to the scale of the asylum problem, questions of eligibility and the 'social cost' of asylum seekers to the UK, and being given priority to the indigenous population in the sharing of scarce resources. In 2018 Donald Trump asserted Britain is "losing" its culture as "migrant waves" arrive from the Middle East and Africa (Drake 2018). Hostile environment policies of the British conservative government are another representation of this moral panic, it recently surfaced in the treatment the Windrush cases (Gentlemen 2018).

Mobility and migration

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2018) net migration of EU citizens to the UK was 244, 000, more arrived than departed, a trend that continues. Asylum was granted to 15,000 individuals in 2017 with 40% of them being below 18 years of age. The UN's definition of international migrant used by the ONS is a person who moves to another country from their usual residence for at least one year and lives there. Cumulatively migration, taking account of years preceding these ONS statistics, will have brought a range of social and economic effects. The ONS offers no estimates of illegal migration, Migration Watch UK provide estimates of this category and breakdown of EU and non-EU immigration.

From 1997-2015 there was a consistently significant rise in migration into the UK. In Table 1 Migration Watch UK breaks the 2017 period into categories that illustrate net migration of Non-EU persons exceeds EU.

Table 1: Latest Migration Statistics, Year Ending September 2017

Migration Watch UK estimates there might be one million illegal migrants in the UK ("Migration Watch UK 2018"). Our interest lies with typically polemic claims that migration in general introduces into society a 'dark side'. We examine whether ethnicity which is often conflated with migration contributes to criminality through organised criminal networks whose 'business' is drug supply. We challenge the propagandistic 'truths' that influential police authorities and political elites present to the public, often by implication, about immigrants, ethnicity and drug supply in Scotland, and draw attention to the processes of othering in doing so (Bauman 2005; Palmer and Pitts, 2007). We utilise Scotland as a case study drawing upon qualitative research data to interrogate these contentious matters. Ethnicity or ethnic identity is based upon an assumed common heritage indicated linguistically, culturally, religiously or through behavioural traits. It has become the politically correct term for the word "race" (Porta and Last 2018).

In recent decades, there has been the increased movement of people. Such movements have likewise often been thought of as helping to facilitate the movement of goods, given that established migrant networks can be used to then allow the flow of commodities to follow along the same lines. While this has had an impact upon the movement of goods within the legal market, it is equally thought to have had a significant impacted upon the movement of goods within the illegal market. Criminological literature since the 1970s/80s which explores the impact complex processes apropos globalisation has had upon the movement of drugs has tended to find such perspectives favourable in explaining the proliferation of increasingly violent gangs. Yet, while these perceptions are traditionally located within North American literature[1], such views have increasingly been found to carry favour in the European and in particular UK context in recent years (Densley 2012; Pitts 2008).

Academic criminologists have taken a more cautious emphasizing a need to explore further a) those roles ethnic organised crime groups play in drugs supply, b) the role ethnic networks play, more generally, in the transitional movement of drugs, and c) whether certain ethnicities can be associated with, and perhaps have monopolisation of, certain drug types. It has often fallen upon the police, and national crime agencies use of 'national crime assessment' reports to provide an evidence base. Yet such official data sets have their limitations, one being they tend to approach drug supply from the transnational perspective and focus on known active gangs/groups. This strategy neglects processes at the micro-sociological level connected with indigenous organised crime groups and their responses to incomers[2]. By using Scotland as a case study, where immigration has until recent years

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[1] For example, the movement of south American crack cocaine into the poor inner city urban communities of the US.
[2] With US literature drawing links between drugs supply and gang proliferation, and crime assent reports often allotting a somewhat monopolisation of certain drug markets to certain ethnic groups, it can be assumed that

been low in comparison to other areas of the UK, we aim to investigate perceptions of the impact of criminally intent immigrant incomers by local criminals, specifically those involved in organised crime.

Unnever (2018) notes immigration and crime are linked in the public imagination with immigration impacting the policies of European states and argues the Netherlands has grown into a culture of central control with criminals and immigrants categorised as "dangerous others". That government agencies do not collect data on ethnicity hampers research, but in his review discovers self-report and police data demonstrate that Moroccans and Turks commit more crime than native Dutch, at least until they reach their twenties. Antillean youth had higher drug related crimes connecting them with the cocaine trade in the Caribbean. That the Netherlands has the most anti-muslin sentiments suggests marginalisation and resentment inform these results causing potential bias in arrests and recording of offending.

Hurley et al. (2015) in a US study of ethnicity and crime perceptions found television news reports contained a disproportionate negative portrayal of Black Americans, especially males. They argue this contributed to widely held stereotypic perceptions of ethnic groups and impacted crime policies. Whites are more often portrayed as victims; greater guilt attributions were given to black suspects. They conclude the news does not present reality. Prison statistics provide the religious affiliations of prisoners and to that extent they offer a limited purchase upon the question of the existence of an association of ethnicity and crime and its relative magnitude within a prison demography.

Ex hypothesis, if ethnicity is a factor in crime and is growing we might expect to find this connection reflected incarceration statistics. The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) (2017) found that since 2004 Asian and mixed-ethnicity prison numbers, according to Ministry of Justice data, have nearly doubled in England and Wales. Some 26% or 22,432 are from a minority ethnic group whereas they are just 14% of the general population; 11% are black and 7% Asian, the black group in prison are 4 times higher than the 3% of the general population they represent. Since 2004 there are 80% more Asians in prison. Although these figures tell us nothing about immigration they do demonstrate the association of ethnic minorities with criminal convictions, of a serious type which are likely to include drug related offences.

In terms of religion the PRT (2017) describes the Muslin prison population has more than doubled over the last 14 years: in 2002 there were 5,502 by 2016 there were 12,663. Most of imprisoned Muslins are Asian (40%) or black (29%). The theme of immigration and crime arises most obviously in relation to foreign nations in prison: the PRT defines the 'foreign national prisoner' as a diverse group including those coming to the UK as children with parents, second generation immigrants, asylum seekers, European nationals, or those entering the UK as students, visitors and workers. On March 2017 they totalled 9,791 prisoners. The extent of the immigration is reflected in this group originating from 169 countries, with 50% coming from only 9 countries, Poland, Ireland, Romania, Jamaica, Lithuania, Pakistan, India and Somalia. The extent of the perceived threat surrounding the 'foreign national' is suggested by 36,000 being removed from the UK since 2010. As a high proportion of this prisoner category committed non-violent offences it might be assumed a

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as globalisation increases so will the encroachment of ethnic organised crime groups upon drug turf held by indigenous populations.

significant number committed drug offences, the vast majority of the prison population including UK immigrants to it are men.

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) published its survey of ethnic minority and foreign national prisoners in 2014. One quarter these groups (26%) reported having used drugs in the 12 months prior to imprisonment compared with 62% of other prisoners in the 2013 SPS study, and in the 2014 survey fewer were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence compared with other prisoners (17% versus 39%). A total of 192 ethnic minority / foreign nations from 26 countries took part in the survey, most were males with an average age of 36. Many members of these groups had no previous experience of prison. Only 5% reported committing their offence in order to access illegal drugs. Based on these SPS prison statistics there is considerably less likelihood that these two groups of men played a significant role in drug dealing or trafficking.

To appreciate why perceptions and policies adumbrated at the start of our paper suggest the reality differs from what even official prison statistics convey about Scotland we need to explore the sociology of marginalisation which the political law and order narratives described earlier endorse and articulate. To clarify we argue drug supply is viewed as a consequence of globalisation with hordes of migrants bringing drugs in (Hobbs and Antonopoulos 2013). Law enforcement have adopted this analysis in their 'national crime assessments (von Lampe 2016). This is fuelled by immigration, Brexit and existing stereotypes, and the fact the ethnic communities in London and other big UK cities These destructive discourses overlook the fact that ethnic communities tend to be structurally disadvantaged thus they lack access to platforms or networks that they could use to challenge their humiliation and question the veracity of elite actors (Hallsworth and Brotherton 2011).

Constructing the 'alien'

The statistical evidenced reviewed does not endorse the political polemic, described in the paper's introduction. In this section we foreground the underlying processes that these alien conspiracy theorists develop. Their deficit discourse is aligned to the 'alien conspiracy theory' propositioned by Hobbs and Antonopoulos (2013). The 'theorists' include policy makers, politicians, criminal justice professionals and intelligence service staff. Each of these groups embrace the premise that foreigners are closely implicated in organised crime which is imported into the UK from abroad by criminally intend immigrant actors. Fear of the 'other' is used to positions minorities on the fringes as the 'outsiders' who are inevitably made scapegoats for other societal issues; in history the Nazi party was especially adept at othering the Jews and other 'undesirables' whose existence was perceived as threatening a eugenic programme. The Roma gypsies are an example of a scapegoated ethnicity in Greece on whom much crime is blamed.

Moncrieffe and Eyben (2013) argue policies use discursive frames that label to define and classify groups. Frames are 'a way of selecting, organising, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading and acting' as suggested by Schon and Rein (1994). Schon and Rein (1994) suggest 'not all frames and not all stories in which they are expressed are equally acceptable or compelling', concluding that a frame of critical policy analysis process be used to identify the underlying assumptions

of understanding of both the policy and how it positions the social actors. 'Othering' is seen as a process of differentiation and demarcation (Bauman 2005), and where Schwalbe et al. (2000) state that it is translated to subordination by applying differential moral codes to differing social categories. De Beauvoir (1949) discusses it through the lens of making ourselves and our experiences three dimensional through a focussed perspective whilst looking at the other as an object by dehumanising it, and stripping recognition of anything of positive or value, along with the refusal to admit value, or acknowledge their voice, knowledge or agency. A social distance is created between 'them' and 'us' (Schwalbe et al. 2000).

Banks et al. (2006) discusses how a glossary of racial difference in which the terms 'black' and 'criminal' have been conflated and argues visual descriptions of asylum seekers, often as 'shadowy creatures' with no specific embodiment, give the sense of being both unknown and 'unplaceable', thus to be seen as the opposite of the law abiding, and responsible, citizen. This is also evident in the reassignment of the of the Asian male who was previously labelled as a law-abiding citizen, and often a victim of racial hate crime, to complicity in criminality. People become positioned and fixed in the position of 'other' through power relations, those of greater social power define that 'other' (De Beauvoir 1949). 'Othering' legitimates inequality. Schwalbe et al. (2000) state that 'othering' then becomes 'a tool in a critical assessment of social and cultural power mechanisms and dynamics'. Said (1978) discusses the 'Other' being constructed as an exotic oriental, where the difference is built upon an imagined geography alien to Western culture.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Our broad research question is: what does illicit drug supply look like in Scotland? The narratives presented illuminate an idiomatic working-class Scots. This is the street level voice prevalent in disadvantaged Glaswegian neighbourhoods. Two phases of data collection at overlapping periods underpin the study. Data were collected between 2015 and 2017. This work was part of a larger qualitative exploration of gang organisation as a strategy for pursuing gang business in Scotland. The Glasgow conurbation has continued to display a historically embedded gang culture (Deuchar 2013; McLean 2018a; McLean 2018b). It retains a disproportional majority (70%) of the country's organised crime (OC), 65% of which entails drug supply (Scottish government 2015). Our sample is strategic: selection criteria were: (a) having had experience of group offending; (b) engagement in behaviour which Police Scotland categorised as serious and organised crime (Scottish Government 2015); and (c) be over 16 years of age.

Participants were initially accessed through outreach projects, whereby practitioners and outreach workers acted as gatekeepers. Gatekeepers were subsequently interviewed. 12 participants who met the set criteria were identified (Bhopal and Deuchar 2016). This approach yielded a sample size of 17 participants (n=5 practitioners, n=12 offenders). Then a snowball sampling technique was deployed, initial interviewees were asked to recommended participants meeting the sampling criteria. Becker (1963) suggests this is relevant where sampling frame is limited. This sampling technique yielded an additional 23 participants. In total 40 participants were interviewed (n=5 practitioners, n=35 offenders).

Data was also collected between 2014 and 2017 as part of the third author's qualitative exploration of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in Glasgow. Glasgow is one of the cities with the highest BME population in Scotland. Participant criteria were set as: BME young person, falling within the scope of the policy 'More Choices More Chances' and transitioning out of compulsory education; teachers and youth work practitioners responsible for the cohort of BME young people. Participants were accessed through gatekeepers who facilitated the access to schools, the teachers, youth workers and young people. This approach yielded a sample size of 27 participants in total (n=14 BME young people, n= 8 teachers, n=5 youth workers). This BME group is relevant to perspectives about ethnicity.

In-depth interviews were conducted with participants as part of the research methodology for both first and third author. Open-ended interviewing allowed the interviewees to convey, unrestricted, their distinct subjective experience of their role within gang organisation as a means for gang business. The interview extracts selected illustrate interviewees' personal construction of reality through their own voices. On average, interviews lasted about one hour. Ethical approval was granted by the researcher's home institution. Prior to interviews an information sheet outlining relevant information for informed consent was distributed and signed.

FINDINGS

Following the data analysis three general themes emerged which we use to present a narrative account of the results. The first thematic sub-heading is 'Drug Supply in Scotland', followed by the 'The Role of Ethnicity in Supply'. Lastly under the theme 'Dealing with foreign OCGs'. To secure confidentiality the participant's names are pseudonyms.

Street-level actors

While the illegal supply of drugs may be seen to be more 'business-like' in its 'methodology', nonetheless those involved in supply are by not representative of a coherent network nor does such a network exist on the street. Rather, given that each level of supply, and those involved, act on behalf of their own selfish pursuit overarching models misinform. While generic models are beneficial in assisting law enforcement, or for political purposes, such models may inadvertently prove to have 'net-widening' and 'mesh-thinning' dynamics (Ratcliffe 2008). Pearson and Hobbs (2001) emphasis recurring problem in designing criminological abstract models is that any lines of transaction, logistics, or aspects of distribution beyond the direct supply individual is hidden from them. Thus, much of the overall supply chain is left obscured and removed from the officially prescribed analysis. Pearson and Hobbs (2001) found that this was also true of the behaviour of law enforcement and customs officers. Ex-drug supplier Johnson typifies common assumptions about how drug supply works:

> 'Every cunt buys from [well known crime family often presented in media].' - Johnson

When asked by the Interviewer how he knows this to be true Johnson replied:

> 'Course they do, they are always in the papers.' - Johnson

Johnson's beliefs harbour similarities to Levitt and Dubner's (2006) notion of 'conventional wisdom'; information is assumed to be true when its plausibility has become conventional wisdom. Yet more the experienced dealer James, points to the practicalities involved in mid to high-level drug supply. In doing so James highlights the extent to which drug dealers deliberate in ways designed to concealing the criminal organisation of the direct drug supply chains:

> 'I couldn't tell you who the guy I work wi' (purchase drugs from) get[s] [drugs] from. To be honest I don't know and wouldn't want to know. He would tell me anyways…. Same as I wouldn't tell you who he is…. People like it [this] way [but], [because it] means that if anyone gets caught [by police] then they can't grass (turn informant) where they get it [and] where they guys get it…. [Even] that rich prick Munday[3] use to do that, and he did alright.... good way to [operate].' – James

Ignorance protects street culture from rivals including the law. As James notes, lines of supply are typically obscured for purpose of ensuring their sustainability. This surreptitious practice of concealment is favoured in criminal networks (Katz 1988). Coomber and Moyle (2014) draws attention to hindering policing authorities gaining knowledge of drug supply chains. The ways in which drug value is officially measured is not necessarily reflective of its unofficial street value: McLean, Holligan, and McPhee (2018) note street value is interdependent the nature and organisation of the level of localised drug supply. The drug supplier Steve reinforces a conception of strategic complexity in the form of bravado and duplicity imbricating criminal networks:

> 'Moving [heroin] brought [good income]….[between] £10,000-£20,000 for each bulk shift[ed]…. Would give (sell) to people to [supply thereafter]…. [if] we earned £10,000 [though], It's no[t] as though you get that for yourself. [It] get[s] [divided] up [with group members]…. Am sure there are boys out there earning much more, but anyone we worked with never earned like the kind of money the papers tout…. You never know suppose, [because] people always talk shit about what they [earn]. If they have a good earner…. they keep it quiet so cunts don't muscle in. But see if they [claim] they bring in [particularly large sums] then they are probably talking pish…. wanting a rep.' – Steve

Success or status by relating it to money earned as opposed to quantity of drugs supplied, dealers obscure actual earnings – either for status enhancement or out of fear of victimization on the street. In the extract of Steve's voice social capital is portrayed as being very tenuous within this criminal community whose members are mutually suspicious of one another (Densley 2012). Therefore, in conceptualising the local drugs market it is essential to theorise supply processes within their contemporary regional and neighbourhood context. Relying upon imported conceptual models distorts the actual reality of this criminality. Yet, insights from two notorious drug ex-offenders, who worked their way from retail-level supply to its higher echelons, shed light on how connecting markets, international and national co-ordinate in dynamic ways to deliver drugs on the street where violence capital is one lever relied upon to manage actors and their behaviour in the street market:

> '[Those involved] in high end drug distribution basically control the market…. [lower dealers] work for them, [but] no[t] always directly. Most people don't even probably know they get [drugs] off them…. The guys running it basically can [be]cause they get a wee foothold, bring their family and closest mates in and start using violence to [control the market through

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[3] Mick Munday was a former, and very successful, drug trafficker who worked with Columbian cocaine suppliers in helping transport drugs from South America into the US.

access].... saying that but, violence only gets you so far.... Being involved in [OC] means they can turn to corrupt cops, [politicians and other official representatives]. If you cannot batter the competition out, then rule them out [with law].' – Dave

'It isn't like one guy [or group imports] all the drugs into Britain.... [The UK] is an island, drugs come in from everywhere mate. [Cocaine] comes from Columbia, mostly, but it's no[t] like only Columbians are doing that.... [Heroin] comes in from [Middle-East]. You go to Afghan and you can actually see the fields mate.... Really, loads a people from [various backgrounds] bring shit [into Britain]… just like if you've the opportunity, know…. Cannabis is different and gets grown in [homemade factories]…. Doesn't really matter what you are, more if you've the skills, know…. [in Scotland] there are main players that have their own avenues…. [who] act more [like a reputable firm] for [drugs to flow through].' - Stephan

Different types of drugs are associated with places whose human capital informs the drug deliver strategy. While each extract is drawn from individual experiences they give insights into how drug supply works in Scotland as a form of managed chaos. Dave and Stephan point out that while there are established supply routes and players opportunity and resources help to determining who else will become involved in drugs supply that occurs at a specific time and place. Dave points out that even members of the political establishment may become involved and use the law to their advantage. Stephan acknowledges that, unlike other criminal offences such as armed robbery, drug supply chains are akin very much operates like a business with international and national supply routes. These pathways to profitability are fluid, covert and forever watchful of unfriendly actors deemed a threat.

For Stephan, it is not only 'gangsters' who are involved in drug supply. Rather, the nature of how drug supply works means that people come from an assortment of backgrounds. In doing so, Stephan recognise that having skills, resources, and attributes plays a significantly more important than just a person's ethnicity. Pointing out that although cocaine comes from Columbia this by no means that 'Columbians' control the market. Instead those with the resources, skills, and attributes will exploit their own forms of capital to supply cocaine.

Ethnic diversity and drug trading

In the previous thematic narrative Stephan proposed that ethnicity plays a very limited role in drug supplying at street level despite immigration statistics suggesting a vulnerable 'workforce' is potentially available to help lubricate this trading. For example, being an illegal immigrant bars access to any state benefit support and often legal employment opportunities. Stephan argues that those who produce drugs and transport and supply drugs locally often happen to be of the same ethnicity due to their geographical proximity with those they work. Those of certain ethnicities do not appear to recruit others of a shared ethnicity. Instead decisive to the recruitment are material factors at the local level: where they live, work, and grew up. In fact, they happen to be disproportionately surrounded with others of a similar background, when supplying drugs (at the 'stage' relevant to them) they happen to do so with those familiar to them on these criteria. Yet how does this effect supply lines? It is often assumed that immigrant supply drugs (Hobbs and Antonopoulos 2013) and that in doing so they very often use well established migration into the UK routes. Pitts (2008) argues that crack cocaine is on the rise in London boroughs reflecting migrants from South America and the Caribbean using these migrant journey pathways to bring crack cocaine into the UK.

While all the participants referred to their nationality as either British or Scottish, perceiving themselves as being an indigenous population despite no all of them being white. Neither did everyone refer to their ethnicity as Caucasian. We endeavoured to explore whether ethnicity was advantageous to the drug supply trade. Ali explains:

> 'Were I grew up was like what some people might think of as an [Asian community].... But like all the boys I hung about with would say they were Scottish man. Might be a bit different now wi' some idiots thinking radicalism is cool or what have you.... Nah I wouldn't think I could [acquire or] sell Brown (heroin) better just cause [older family members originate from Middle-eastern country]. That's daft man. The guys I know selling H (heroin) big are actually all white man.' – Ali

Ali suggests that growing up in a community in the Glasgow conurbation predominantly a population with origins to middle-eastern countries which share proximity, by no means automatically means that he has an advantageous position in acquiring and dealing drugs commonly associated with those other countries. In fact, Ali points out that all those selling heroin in wholesaling and bulk are 'white' criminal trades. Yet Simon who, like Ali has older family members who originate from the same region, grew up on an estate which was predominantly white. Simon discusses the role ethnicity plays in drug supply as follows:

> 'Even though am [Asian] mate, I am no[t] really. In primary [school] people would say horrid shit, but see honest mate, it was [more often the parents and older siblings] of my school mates.... [and] no[t] them (school associates).... Am older now.... People don't even see my skin colour as different mate.... grew up [on Glasgow estate] so that were I say am from.... Uncle[4] can get [heroin], that's how I started [selling] it.... But he no buys from me and my [mates], cause we get it from [indigenous OCG], so like I am getting a better deal.' – Simon

Simon points out that growing up in a predominantly white community was at times difficult, largely through abuse at the hands of older generations. Yet, Simon recognises that his peers do not 'even see [his] skin colour'. While Simon initially purchased heroin from the Uncle who shares similar ethnic roots it did not connect with an established migrant route originating oversees. Given Simon and his friends progressed up the drug supply chain, he now supplies his uncle with heroin he purchases from an indigenous OCG. Based on his analysis while much of the heroin supply originates from certain regions, the lines of transport out of them are not characterized by ethnic identity. Rather than ethnicity and a putative ethnically definable network it is instead the skills and capital that matter to undertaking trading in illicit drugs. Ali though shed some light onto the process:

> 'It isn't like my dad's family back in [middle-eastern country] make heroin and send it over to me to sell man (laughs). That's fucked up, but no joke people actually think like that man... aye, fair enough man, H might come from there but its farmers that grow it for guys in charge. They move it on and get the big bucks in man.... They don't sell just to other [Asians]. Sell to whoever has the dough (money).... Money isn't raciest' – Ali

Reminiscent of Stephan's earlier statement, Ali recognises that certain drugs may originate from certain region which comprise of ethnic groups, yet this doesn't mean that those ethnic groups will only work with others of a similar ethnicity. Rather, drugs operate like a business and thus producers supply a product to anyone who has the resources to purchase the product on offer. In a similar manner, drug production and supply operate in a similar

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[4] The term Uncle here doesn't necessarily refer to a direct relation but can also be attributed to an Elder in the community who is respected.

manner as many legitimate businesses. Although products may be produced in one region, they are sold to whoever has the money and access to purchase the goods. As Ali suggested 'money isn't racist' and thus there is no preference as to the ethnicity of buyers. In summary drugs begin their journey towards the street with ethnic groups who happen to occupy a geographical place not a monopoly of the supply for a drug type nor the subsequent trading practices entailed in reaching consumers. Neither is it the case that, as Ali suggests, even during production that certain ethnicities work together for the benefit of the whole chain.

Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs)

UK media reports and UK national crime assessment experts promulgate the thesis that certain ethnic groups are associated with drugs types, including other crimes. For example, Moroccans are classified with the cannabis and heroin trades. Middle-Eastern ethnic groups are associated with heroin and opium. Traditionally Columbians, and Mexicans are associated with cocaine networks (National Crime Agency 2013) (NCA). While, Albanians are now affiliated with heroin as well as people trafficking. Yet, the previous sub-section argues these connections are tenuous contrary to the view of policing authorities. Globalisation, free market polices, cheap travel, and the polarization of economic capital are flourishing growing causing a fragmentation of drug markets. Nevertheless, a trend remains whereby official evidence-bases suggest that foreign OCGs are encroaching, and increasingly controlling the drugs market(s) and in doing so annexing existing turf away from indigenous OCGs (NCA 2013). This has resulted by implication in indigenous OCGs being pushed out 'the game' or marginalised (Harding 2014) by energetic organised crime groups. Yet, how much of this contemporaneous analysis is in fact true is doubtful. One way to test the hypothesis implied is by questioning those involved in illegal drugs markets and associated wider criminal networks, as we do throughout this narrative

> 'You hear of the Yardies, and the Albanians, know, and all them sorts in the papers don't you. I am no saying they don't exist or nothing. Only saying that I haven't personally dealt with them in my running's…. we use to go to Birmingham quoite a bit as well. Some of the guys would say they were Yardie but I don't think they were like just one group that ran shit. More like a term they use, know. Kind of like up here you might say am a Hun…. Don't mean you are in one [super group] called Huns (laughs).' – Robert

> 'Was an Albanian gang where we use to work out of… literally across the road. They owned a car washing business on the main road. They never bothered us and we never bothered them mate…. The newspapers done a report a couple of years back saying they were sex traffickers and that stuff know what I mean…. I don't know but.' – Dennis

Robert and Dennis highlight that they are aware of and very sceptical about official reports concerning encroaching foreign criminal gang's proliferation. Robert' attributes this to issues of tendencies to self-label presumably to project a fearsome reputation to manage a volatile code of the criminal street (Anderson 1999). In discussing 'the Yardies', Robert points out that that term often refers to a wider group of people, but it is not cohesive entity, contrary to assumption found in official crime reports (NCA 2013). McLean (2018a) points to a similar phenomenon about the terminology of the 'gang' discourse. Dennis, on the other hand, points out that having sold drugs in the same area, and near, to an Albanian crime group (identified by the media) he experienced no problems despite both operating close-by. The

activities both conducted did not appear to pose a threat to the trade of the neighbour. Paul, a practitioner on the streets tasked with supporting offenders involved in drugs supply, has observed that:

> 'Most of the guys are white…. A few aren't [but] I would say they have problems with each other. No, that I've noticed, no. Long as they speak the same language they get on, I think.' - Paul

A shared language unites them around an understanding of co-existence about drug supplying although how that developed and the factors ensuring its persistence are left unexplained. Pearson and Hobbs (2001) likewise found disputes are often avoided due to the provision of illicit drugs being a business with parallel to legitimate businesses whereby product quality, prices, value for money and brand reputation as a 'reputable firm' hold sway other strategies to exercise a market grip such as by deploying violence capital. Stephan endorses this theorisation of an underlying micro-sociology of street pragmatism:

> '[customers] are going to buy [drugs off] whoever has the best [quality and prices] aren't they? I mean if you were wanting to do your shopping, you're going to go to Aldi's instead of Morrisons eh. [They] both give you the same shite but Aldi's is cheaper…. See If the guys from Morrisons started threatening Aldi guys, or you, you are still going to go there (Aldi's) …. or you'd just go to Lidl's eh (laughs).' – Stephan

In discussion of infamous OCG's operating within the Glasgow conurbation, Moore, like Stephan, supports Paul's interpretation:

> 'You don't have mafia or that crap mate going on in Glasgow. The [OCGs] in [the higher echelons of criminal networks] would allow that mate. It doesn't matter if some Jamaican's have 100 kilos of gears or what have you, like everyone else to get to the customers and them retail dealers that can move your shit (sell it on), you need to go [via those indigenous OCGs] that know them all.'

Moore suggests the foreign OCG would have difficulty in 'muscling in' on existing drug markets within the urban areas described where it has also been discovered there are many social ties within common histories, in schools, areas and kinship networks. Further still Moore suggest that they would not look to' muscle in', but rather work in conjunction with indigenous groups in Scotland in order that they may progress their products safely and efficiently. Any effort made to eradicate indigenous OCGs would only prove counterproductive given that they possess a deep sense of rootedness to a home turf; that knowledge of regional and local markets interconnects with resources to purchase goods in bulk themselves, before selling them onto middle-men and retail-level dealers.

Likewise, their established knowledge of the local enables them to ease the transit of foreign actors through being a social mechanism for foreign OCGs to connecting with criminal networks contact with whom requires the support of local brokers. In summary, indigenous OCGs act very much like a reputable firm for other foreign OCGs to either sell directly to, or flow through, in supplying drugs to those at the lower end of the illicit market. Contrary to claims about foreign criminal actors being desirous to monopolise sections of the market misrepresents how like an onion this criminogenic enterprise is multi-layered and relies upon insider dealers who have the capacity to broker access. Diego Gambetta in his 2011 seminal study entitled; Codes *of the Underworld: How Criminals Communicate* demonstrates the fraught nature of social capital in the underworld. To foster ties with a view to joint enterprise crimes requires indicators of trustworthiness are required and yet are obviously very

problematical to commit to them. The insider Scot's local capital is the key mechanism that offers criminals who are unknown to an area the opportunity to begin to establish their trading practices. 'Aliens' are one of a number of a concatenation of actors associated with the trading of illegal drugs.

DISCUSSION

In this section we seek to extent our results about immigration, ethnicity, and the drugs trade to the context of the general phenomenon of perceived discrimination in the UK. Studies by Hurst, Frank, and Browning (2000), and Gormally and Deuchar (2012) explore attitudes towards police and their practices highlighting the over surveillance of young people from BME backgrounds, mention of practices of stop and search in the UK, or stop and frisk in the USA which have found the practice deployed disproportionately more towards stopping and searching BME young people. Palmer and Pitts (2006) discuss the concerns of BME people's experiences of unjust policing and involvement with the criminal justice system, where they felt they were dealt with differently and more harshly throughout the process from the police, to the courts. We construct this bias as being congruent with the results reported in this article: although there are 'alien' actors in the illegal drugs trade they do not represent the involvement or structuring imputed to them by the political and police commentators described in our introduction. The congruency lies with the othering of groups such as BME associated with their disproportionate subjection to intrusive search policies.

Loader (1996) suggests where young people perceive the police as legitimate they are more willing to co-operate. However, findings have consistently found that negative contact can damage views or reinforce negative pre-conceptions' (Baumeister et al. 2001:277), as illustrated in the quotations below extracted from Umair's interview data.

> 'I had one incident, last Christmas at the carnival. Me and my friends got stopped, cos we were a group and there were a lot of us…. it was just a one off…..' (Umair)

Umair spoke of an incident where he felt he was stopped and searched at the New Year Carnival because he was with a group of other young people, all young male Pakistanis. Although he says he felt 'kind of targeted' at the time, he went onto justify it as a solo incident. Although Umair passes this incident as a 'one off', Sharp and Atherton (2007), in their findings highlight the disproportionately higher targeting of the BME community and especially young people. Deuchar, Miller, and Barrow (2014) discuss Loader's (1996) argument that 'many young people have ambivalent and contradictory views about the police.' The discussion with the young people were they acknowledge the necessity of the police 'It's a good thing that the police are there' (Shiraz), to 'I find the police do a good job, but…' (Junaid), while expressing grievance towards practices, which they perceive as unfair and which attribute to them an 'alien' status.

Shiraz suggests the police 'are like racist', a view shared by Iftekhar and Ali. Shiraz recognises the importance of the police to protect civilians but objects to the constant searching of Asian boys as representing not legitimate policing, but intimidation and bullying:

> 'It's a good thing that the police are there, but some police are like racist to Asian groups of boys, searching boys for nothing. Just searching them for walking to football, walking to boxing. Walking to school, walking out of school, walking home. And it does get on my nerves a lot…It affects me a lot because it's like I know so many Christian boys that sell stuff

> …. I was walking with a white and a coloured skinned friend and 2 coppers pulled me up and told the white skinned person to go for some reason. I don't know why.'

Shiraz feels that the majority White young people population through their religion – Christianity, and white coloured skin to emphasise the reason for the policing bias he perceives by the police. Weitzer and Tuch (2005) have found through interventionist practices by police such as stop and search, police are perceived as targeting young people from non-white ethnic backgrounds. Deuchar et al. (2014) identify international research that highlights young men perceive themselves to be unfairly stopped by the police on the grounds of their ethnic membership. According to Deuchar et al. (2014) their judgement about police discrimination is compounded by the police officers not explaining the reason for street searches.

Shiraz shares that this difference in treatment from the dominant white young people population makes him feel unsure about his status and identity. Iftikar shares other stories of being stopped and searched with a group of his friends.

> '…they're full on racists because once we were running just for the fun of it, a few days before bonfire night, they probably thought we had fireworks, searched us, never took us in a corner. There and then- stopped all of us. There were quite a lot of our mums around there. Stopped us right in front of them. Proper started searching us and grabbed us and pushed us against the wall when searching us.'

He recounts how this humiliation was done in front of their mothers. Iftikar sees this treatment as 'racist' and being bullied by the police. There is an explicit questioning of the power relationship between the police and three young men (Shiraz, Iftikar, Ali) who feel this encroachment was intended to impose their subordinate 'place' in the societal order. Their emotions such as anger, frustration was expressed during their recounting of stories disenfranchised. Through the 'gaze' of the Alien conspiracy theory a ripple effect progressed from the criminality of the drug trade described earlier to these minority ethnic young people and their communities. It was, they reckoned, a price they had to pay to live in a discriminatory, post-colonial UK.

To summarize, the qualitative evidence presented in this article severely problematizes the thesis that certain ethnic groups are uniquely affiliated with one drug type over another, and the associated proposition they have an advantageous position in supplying drugs by virtue of the affordance of their ethnicity and what it connotes about possible ties to other countries where drug harvesting is widespread. Their participation remained marginal at most even in those cases participants acknowledged oversees family as being involved in crime or drug supply chains themselves. It would seem that while drugs may be imported more often than not from certain regions, i.e. heroin from Afghanistan, or cocaine from South America, this doesn't automatically give one individual advantage over another ethnic group simply because their ethnicity is historically in that region. Instead access to drug suppliers and supply routes relies upon membership of criminal networks. While having criminal family connections are advantageous these benefits involved just to a few members with more direct kinship ties. Thereafter relationships in general mattered to those involved in this criminal field, friendship, trust, and economic interests counted for more than mere ethnicity particularly important. In general terms our article deconstructs the argument that aliens have landed in the Scottish criminal drug market and succeeded in monopolising street deals and contractual relations with drug supply agents outside the UK territory.

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