

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> London Metropolitan University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 22 SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
<b>Title of case study:</b> The definition, organisation and policing of 'gangs', 'organised crime groups' and 'terrorists'
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>

The criminology research team at the John Grieve Centre (JGC) provides a critical perspective on a series of social problems, evaluating our understanding of their definition and threat as well as providing novel empirical research into understanding their threat. Since 2008, the submitting team have made a significant contribution academically, with series of highly rated traditional academic publications and important empirical studies for a range of funders. Our key theme is the contextualising and redefining the key threats from 'gangs', 'organised crime', 'terrorists' in order to inform and challenge professionals involved in their policing. The second argument for the inclusion of 'gangs' through to 'organised crime' and 'terrorism' is justified by the way the identities of those involved can overlap and their offending careers can span all three types of crime.

Our key impacts are:

- **Young**, Hallsworth and **Silverstone** have provided a more accurate definition for policy makers and practitioners of the 'gang' and its link with organised crime for the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), 2009; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), 2010; the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) 2008.
- **Lambert's** twin research focus on (i) police/Muslim partnerships tackling al-Qaeda influence (as per the MPS Muslim Contact Unit which he co-founded) and (ii) police and community based responses to far right terrorism and political violence has been acknowledged by awards from the National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP) in 2011, the Muslim Association of Britain in 2012, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 2008, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) in 2008 and Islam Expo in 2008.
- **Silverstone** and **Ridley's** contribution to understanding new or unexplored aspects of organised crime and terrorism have been utilised by the wider law enforcement community, for example the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in 2008, Europol in 2012, the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) in 2009, and NATO in 2012.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b>
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**Contextualising and redefining the gang:** Since 2005, **Young** and **Silverstone** have been involved in individual and collaborative work exploring the risk posed by gangs and challenging how they are defined. Their work challenges the reification and exaggeration of the threat from the 'gang' and rather directs attention to a more fluid 'on road' subculture. **Silverstone** has researched the use of and availability of illegal firearms in LB Brent, and Hallsworth and **Young** wrote a report for the Metropolitan Police Service, which offered a novel way of defining the links between organised criminals and gang members. These projects have been followed up with further reports and policy papers for a range of funders including the Home Office (Hales, Lewis & **Silverstone**, 2005, reproduced in 2008), LB Brent (**Young** & Hallsworth, 2010), LB Enfield (Hallsworth & **Young**, 2009), Catch 22 (**Young, Fitzgibbon & Silverstone**, 2012) and the Runnymede Trust (Hallsworth & **Young**, 2012). The reports deployed a wide range of methodologies, but in particular are based on interviews with either convicted or active offenders. **Young's** ethnographic fieldwork with young women has led her to challenge the media fixation that girl gangs are proliferating by indicating instead a more nuanced understanding of young women's involvement in group offending. Her work on sexual abuse of young women also challenges the widespread assumption that sexual abuse of women in poor areas is driven forward by organised gangs. Other key findings have been to challenge the myth of the availability of good quality firearms to gang members.

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**Contextualising and reimaging organised crime in the UK:** Since 2007, **Silverstone** has been involved in researching the risks posed by emerging organised crime groups in the UK and challenging how they are defined. Research funded by the FCO into Vietnamese and Chinese organised crime were the first projects to map the influence of these emerging crime groups in the UK. The projects involved international research into the policing of the respective groups and has led to international sponsorship by the Canadian Department of Homeland Security and collaborative work with **Ridley** (for the Airey Neave Trust) exploring the links between terrorism and organised crime. Key findings have been to persuade policy makers to rethink the apparent levels of organisation within emerging organised crime threats and to reconfigure any threat as an asymmetrical one embedded in law abiding communities.

**Contextualising and redefining the threat from 'Islamist' groups in the UK:** **Lambert** and **Ridley** have been involved in several research projects reevaluating the scope and policing of the 'Islamist threat'. **Lambert** was engaged as a consultant on two projects from 2007, one ESRC funded, Cultures of Repression: the Legacy of Colonial Violence and State Repression in the Maghreb, and its Effect on North African Diasporas in Europe and the other AHRC funded, An Examination of Partnership Approaches to Challenging Religiously-Endorsed Violence involving Muslim Groups and Police. Whilst **Ridley** has had four successive funded projects from the Airey Neave Trust, combined, these projects advocate refocusing policing response to both the financing of terrorism and radicalisation. They challenge current strategies of policing, arguing that they are potentially counter-productive by alienating the community the police service is dependent on for information, whilst not adequately investigating the underlying financial aspects of 'terrorist' funding

### 3. References to the research

Research outputs for these projects include reports, journal articles and numerous national and international conference papers. A selection of key publications is listed here:

1. Hallsworth, S. & Young, T. (2008) 'Gang talk and gang talkers: A critique', *Crime, Media, Culture* 4(2): 175-195.
2. Hallsworth, S. & Silverstone, D. (2009) "That's life innit' A British perspective on guns, crime and social order", *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 9(3): 359-373.
3. Lambert, R. (2011) *Countering al-Qaida in London: Police and Muslims in Partnership*, London: Hurst.
4. Ridley, N. (2012) *Terrorist Financing* Edward Elgar Publications
5. Silverstone, D. & Savage, S. (2010) 'Farmers, factories and funds: Organised crime and illicit drugs cultivation within the British Vietnamese community', *Global Crime*.G 11(1): 16 – 33.
6. Young, T. (2009) 'Girls and Gangs: 'Shemale' Gangsters in the UK?' *Youth Justice* 9(3): 224-238.

### 4. Details of the impact

Projects led by Hallsworth and **Young** (2008), Hales, Lewis and **Silverstone** (2006) and Hallsworth and **Silverstone** (2009) have prompted practitioners and policy makers to reconsider their definition of the gang and to reevaluate how they access firearms. Hallsworth and **Young's** definition of gangs was accepted and utilised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and has influenced the definition adopted by the Centre for Social Justice. It is also being used by the government task force on gangs (convened in the wake of the urban disorder of 2011) to map gang activity across the UK, and to allocate funds in relation to the scale of the problem identified. Their framework for defining and distinguishing between gangs and other street based groups (e.g. peer and organised crime groups) continues to be the framework most widely used by practitioners across the UK, according to a recent report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. The impact of Hallsworth and **Young's** typology is wider reaching and users include; OFSTED, Home Office, the Welsh Parliament, Five borough Anti-Gang Alliance in London, Association of London Government, Birmingham Safer Partnership and the Metropolitan Police. Hales, Lewis and **Silverstone's** research on gun crime has also been influential within the NPIA (2006), The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (2008), Policy Exchange (2008) and the Australian Institute of Criminology (2012).

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*“One of the key recommendations from their report was the creation of a Parent Engagement Panel where parents work in the community to support other parents. Part of the training that they have been given is on gang awareness which assists parents in recognising signs and symptoms and how to access help regarding gangs in Enfield.”* (Scrutiny Improvement Officer, London Borough of Enfield - referring to Hallsworth and **Young**'s study in Enfield)

The work has also influenced policy and practice at a local level (see above and testimonial 4). Hallsworth and **Young** became academic advisers to Enfield council on their Public enquiry into life opportunities for young people. This project was initiated in the wake of gang violence that claimed the lives of six young men in the borough. This project won the Centre for Public Scrutiny national award for community engagement in 2009. More recently, Hallsworth and **Young** were invited in 2011 to sit as advisors on the Board of Catch 22's gang intervention program and Young has been invited to present her work at Scottish Serious Violence Prevention Conference. This In 2013 **Young** was invited by colleagues at Cambridge University to sit on the steering group committee for an ESRC funded project. **Young** also sits on the Advisory board of the Nia Project; a small charitable organisation that works with gang-involved young women.

**Silverstone**'s work on Vietnamese organised crime involved a series of presentations to National police conferences including the ACPO drug conference (2008) and has informed how cannabis 'factories' are effectively policed. This work has been used and commented favourably on by NPIA, ACPO, and the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and his work on Chinese organised crime has provided a basis for intercultural dialogue between Chinese and British academics sponsored by the Foreign Office. It has also improved the Serious Organised Crime Agency's understanding of the organisation of Chinese organised crime and people smuggling.

**Lambert**'s research has had a significant, positive impact in Muslim communities in the UK and in London in particular (see testimonials from the Muslim Safety Forum (MSF), the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and *Islamophobia Watch* (IW)). This positive impact is threefold: in respect of anti-Muslim hate crime; on the terrorist threat post 9/11 and 7/7; and on a partnership model of counter-terrorism policing.

The editor of *Islamophobia Watch* notes that his influential and respected website “features many references to [Lambert's] work, which has proved of great assistance to us in raising public awareness of Islamophobia”. He goes on to observe that “the recent spike in anti-Muslim hate crimes following the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich highlights [Lambert's] research findings concerning the extent to which widespread Islamophobia creates a false impression of Islam and Muslims in general being to blame for terrorist and violent extremist incidents and gives rise to this kind of backlash”. Moreover, Pitt points out that “the post-Woolwich backlash has also vindicated the emphasis [Lambert's] research has placed on the threat posed by the far right, an aspect of violent extremism that has unfortunately been underestimated both by state agencies and by the media”.

The President of the Muslim Association of Britain says that [**Lambert's**] research “has helped to inform the debate about violent extremism; inform the debate about the war on terror and inform the debate about Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes” which “offers a model for a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling violent extremism; a model for tackling Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime; and a model for more effective and legitimate counter-terrorism policing”. This positive community impact is also endorsed by a trustee of the Muslim Safety Forum (MSF), who explains how **Lambert**'s research has enabled the MSF to put forward a strong case to ACPO for greater resources be devoted to the monitoring of anti-Muslim hate crimes.

**Ridley**'s work on terrorist financing has been reproduced in several trade journals (Janes Intelligence Review 2009; Australian Financial Markets Association 2008/2009) and he is a frequent speaker at the NATO Centre of Excellence: Defence Against Terrorism since 2008. His expertise has also been sought by other practitioners and has delivered seminars and training to the Rwandan National Police (2011/2012), Abu Dhabi Police Service (2010; 2013) and NATO (2012). The current (fourth) Airey Neave Trust project led by **Ridley**, has generated interest in that permanent staff of the European Parliament in Brussels and also the UK's All Parliamentary Committee investigating Cybercrime, have requested to be fully informed of the results to assist their investigations.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- The MPA's response to the London Safeguarding Children's Board's 'Safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence' draft consultation paper, (Report: 13, Date: 5 February 2009) explicitly 'welcomes' Hallsworth and **Young's** research profiling gangs and other groups for 'adding clarity' around definitions. This builds upon the earlier decision of the MPA in 2007 to accept the Hallsworth and **Young** model as the basis of its definition.  
<http://policeauthority.org/metropolitan/committees/sop/2009/090205/13/index.html>
- A Joint Thematic Review on *The Management of Gang Issues* published by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, HM Chief Inspector of Probation and HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary identified the Hallsworth and **Young** framework for defining and distinguishing between gangs and other criminal groups as the framework most used by practitioners in the UK today. [www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmiprobation/joint-thematic/Joint\\_gangs\\_thematic\\_2010-rps.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmiprobation/joint-thematic/Joint_gangs_thematic_2010-rps.pdf)
- The MPS *Gangs, Group Offending and Weapons: Serious Youth Violence Toolkit* (2008) cites Hallsworth and **Young** on gangs, and Hales, Lewis and **Silverstone's** on gun crime [www.met.police.uk/heart\\_programme/documents/serious\\_youth\\_violence\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.met.police.uk/heart_programme/documents/serious_youth_violence_toolkit.pdf)
- The Runnymede Trust cited **Young** and **Silverstone's** work extensively in a policy debate in two publications, *Urban Disorder & Gangs* (2011) and *Gangs Revisited* (2011)  
[www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/UrbanDisorderandGangs-2011.pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/UrbanDisorderandGangs-2011.pdf)  
[www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/.../GangsRevisited\(online\)-2011.pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/.../GangsRevisited(online)-2011.pdf)
- Hales, Lewis and **Silverstone's** work on the availability of illegal firearms has been cited in policy discussions, such as: Golding, B., & McClory, J. (2008) *Going Ballistic: Dealing with Guns, Gangs and Knives*, Policy Exchange; Squires, P., Grimshaw, R. & Solomon, E. (2008) 'Gun Crime'. *A Review of Evidence and Policy*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies; The Australian Institute of Criminology (2012) *Firearm Trafficking and Serious and Organised Crime Gangs*. [www.aic.gov.au/publications/current\\_series/rpp/100-120/rpp116.html](http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current_series/rpp/100-120/rpp116.html)
- **Silverstone's** work on Asian organised crime has impacted on policy documents and debates, for example in a document published by the European Parliament (2011) *Asian Organized Crime in the EU: Note*  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2011/453191/IPOL-LIBE\\_NT\(2011\)453191\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2011/453191/IPOL-LIBE_NT(2011)453191_EN.pdf)
- **Silverstone** and Savage's work on Vietnamese cannabis cultivation is cited by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA, 2009): <http://www.ihsti.com/lacors/upload/21727.pdf>

### Individuals

- President, Muslim Association of Britain (Lambert's work)
- Editor of *Islamophobia Watch* (Lambert's work)
- International Liaison Officer for China at the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) (Silverstone's work on Asian organised crime)