

Institution: University of South Wales		
Unit of Assessment: 20 Social Work and Social Policy		
Title of case study: Influencing national and international policy and practice in the investigation and prevention of homicide		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 to December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Fiona Brookman Dr Helen Jones	Professor of Criminology Research Fellow	Brookman (1999-present), Jones (2015-2021)
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 to 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Since 2000, Brookman has undertaken empirical and comparative research on homicide and its investigation. This has had direct impacts on policy and practice nationally and, increasingly, internationally. Since 2013, these include in the UK: improvements in quality and timeliness of data on the Homicide Index; input to government debates on knife crime and homicide reduction; influence on the Home Office Forensic Science Strategy, revisions to national CCTV strategies and training, and redirection of funds towards digital-forensic work; co-development with the Home Office of forensic science impact measures; and direct influence on investigative practice (e.g. via contributions to training and key practice guidelines such as the Murder Investigation Manual). Brookman's research has also impacted on policing in Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Trinidad and Tobago.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Investigating and preventing homicide is particularly challenging due to the growth in volume and complexity of digital data, weak collaboration between agencies, and rapid growth in certain types of homicide (e.g. knife and gang-related). In addition, the impact of forensic science on criminal justice outcomes is largely unknown. Brookman's research has sought to provide evidence-based solutions to these challenges:</p>		
2015-19 Homicide Investigation and Forensic Science (HIFS) Project		
<p>Brookman led the first British ethnographic study of the role of forensic sciences and technologies (FST) in the investigation of homicide (the HIFS project), funded by the Leverhulme Trust and supported by consultants Professors Robin Williams (Northumbria) and Jim Fraser (Strathclyde) and research fellow, Dr Helen Jones. Data collection in four police services¹ covered 44 investigations and included: 144 interviews with practitioners, analysis of numerous casefiles and 700 hours of observation of 11 'live' homicide investigations, from crime scene to court [see references A - C].</p>		
Gang-related homicide in Trinidad and Tobago		
<p>In 2019, Brookman (with Prof. Ed Maguire, Arizona State University) was commissioned by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to undertake a rapid evidence assessment of the nature and prevalence of gang-related homicide in Trinidad and Tobago and to assess measures to reduce it [D].</p>		
2011-14 Comparative studies of homicide investigation in Britain and USA		
<p>Brookman undertook ethnographic research into homicide investigation across five police areas in Great Britain and four in the USA, funded by a USW internal grant. 101 interviews were conducted with homicide investigators and over 700 hours of shadowing and observation undertaken, producing extensive field notes [E].</p>		
'Dying for Control: Men, Murder and Sub-lethal Violence in the UK'		
<p>Undertaken originally for her PhD (2000) and later published as a book [F], this was the first sizeable piece of academic research on homicide in the UK for two decades. It involved analysis</p>		

¹ All police services were granted anonymity, and we refer to them by their pseudonyms throughout this ICS.

of 3,474 homicide cases from the Home Office Homicide Index, 95 police murder files and 20 interviews with convicted male offenders.

Key findings relevant to impacts claimed

- Both the HIFS study and the USA-UK comparative research showed that dialogue is a key mechanism of sense-making during homicide investigation, but that some practices constrain effective dialogue between detectives, prosecutors, forensic scientists and other experts, with consequences for investigative outcomes [B, E].
- HIFS has provided new insights into how detectives, prosecutors and forensic scientists use FST to investigate cases and craft prosecution narratives. It has demonstrated the complexities of recovery, interpretation and 'packaging' of CCTV evidence and the recovery of digital data from mobile devices, how evidence can be 'lost' and how risky practices can undermine its reliability in court [A, B, C].
- Brookman's detailed case analyses have demonstrated the diversity of circumstances and motivations in homicide and how homicide preventive strategies must be tailored to the specific forms it takes [F, G].
- Public trust is essential to the successful prevention and investigation of homicide, and efforts are needed to improve police-community relations (especially with young people) in some communities [D, E, F].
- Policy transfer failure has hampered prior attempts to improve police investigative practice in Trinidad and Tobago. Avoiding such failures requires: sensitivity to local conditions and contingencies; awareness of the causes of prior policy transfer failure; studying unsolved and 'live' homicide investigations [D].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[A] Brookman, F., Jones, H., Williams, R. & Fraser, J. (2020) "Dead Reckoning: Unravelling How "Homicide" Cases Travel from Crime Scene to Court using Qualitative Research Methods". *Homicide Studies*, 24/3, 283–306.

[B] Jones, H., Brookman, F., Williams, R., & Fraser, J (2020) "We Need to Talk about Dialogue: Accomplishing Collaborative Sensemaking in Homicide Investigations", *The Police Journal*: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0032258X20970999>

[C] Brookman, F. and Jones, H. (2020) HIFS Project Research Insight 3: The Use of CCTV during Homicide Investigations: Contributions, Challenges and Risks. <https://criminology.research.southwales.ac.uk/cirn/journals-and-publications/>

[D] Clancy, A., Brookman, F., & Maguire, E. (2019) *Gang-Related Homicide & Police Corruption in Trinidad and Tobago: Rapid Evidence Assessment*. London: HMICFRS.

[E] Brookman, F., Maguire, E., & Maguire, M. (2019) "What Factors Influence Whether Homicide Cases are Solved? Insights from Qualitative Research with Detectives in Great Britain and the USA". *Homicide Studies*, 23/2, 145-174.

[F] Brookman, F. (2006) *Understanding Homicide*. London: Sage.

[G] Brookman, F., and Maguire, M. (2003) *Reducing Homicide: A Review of the Possibilities*. RDS Online Report 01/03. London: Home Office.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research described above has (i) assisted police, forensic scientists, digital forensic practitioners, and policy-makers in the investigation of homicides; (ii) advised the Home Office and key stakeholders in the design of strategies to reduce and prevent homicide; and (iii) influenced investigative policy and practice internationally.

(i) Impact on Homicide Investigation

Brookman's research [F] has increased practitioner awareness and understanding of how the specific circumstances of homicides impact upon opportunities for investigation. Her research is the only academic work referred to in the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) *Murder Investigation Manual*, the definitive guide which underpins the training and development of all UK

Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) and continues to be their key reference point. The manual reproduces her typology of homicides [1, pp.22-25].

Transforming Awareness and Understanding of FST in Homicide Investigation

In 2018-20, Brookman and Jones delivered presentations of HIFS research findings to over 300 practitioners and policy-makers involved in homicide investigation, forensic science and digital evidence. These included SIOs from all 44 British police forces at the national Homicide Working Group. As supported by Testimonial [2a], the presentations enhanced attendees' understanding of the effective use of FST, especially CCTV evidence, and of the inter- and intra-agency challenges it poses. As expanded upon below, this has informed strategy development and has led to adoption of more effective collaborative working practices.

Findings from HIFS have also been disseminated through networks of policy-makers and practitioners. In 2020, the CCTV paper [C] was shared widely within the police and government and commended by HMRC for highlighting the challenges and risks of using CCTV in major crime investigations [2b]. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner cited the paper in his online newsletter, sent to 645 subscribers in the surveillance camera industry [2c]. The College of Policing posted the paper on 'knowledge hubs', accessed online by all SIOs and strategic investigators in England and Wales [2d] and the Forensic Science Regulator has used, and shared, the CCTV paper [2e].

Improving Collaborative Working

Effecting organizational change in policing is notoriously difficult and slow. Nonetheless, Brookman and Jones' research [B, C] has helped improve practice in three of the four police services which took part in the research. This has led to more effective dialogue and early engagement between police, forensic scientists, digital experts and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). For example, 'Woodvale' Constabulary changed processes to ensure that forensic experts are involved in prosecution case conferences. This has created benefits by preventing unnecessary requests (and costs) for further forensic examinations. A working group has also been established to enable direct dialogue between Forensic Consultants and CPS Leads, enhancing prosecutors' understanding of strategic issues in forensic science and enabling police to better manage custody time limits [3a]. The Digital Forensic Technical Manager notes that "The research has helped the Forensic Video Laboratory to raise the priority given to CCTV and video evidence. To do this we have been reaching out to Murder Investigation Teams to bring about more collaboration with them at their point of need and to establish a wish list with which we can bid for better centralised resourcing to support their investigations" [3b].

At Coalbrook, findings have been used to develop the role of Digital Media Advisors and enable early engagement with Digital Media Investigators (DMIs) in homicide investigations. They have also informed police business cases for investment in DMIs and Digital Forensics (DF) and Cyber Crime Units, increasing capacity and capability in Coalbrook [3c] and Bankside [3d]. The Digital Forensic Technical Manager at Bankside describes our evidence of the effectiveness of DF evidence as "gold dust". He took our research paper to every meeting with senior leadership teams and using our evidence secured an extra £20,000 investment in 2020 for new tools and training. He describes the training as "the only course that discusses the hardware and software architecture of Digital Video Recorders, where CCTV is stored. To say it was impactful would be an understatement... It will allow us to respond at pace at scenes and break passwords and gain access to devices that we would not have otherwise." [3d].

Impacting National Policy and Strategy Development in Digital Forensics

HIFS has also impacted policy at a national level, bringing new insights into the role of FST in homicide investigation, particularly digital evidence and CCTV [C]. Brookman and Jones have participated in several national advisory/research groups, including the Forensic Capability Network (FCN) Digital Forensic Research Working Group (DFRWG). Their research directly contributed to the development of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) definition of digital forensic science and the Digital Forensic Science Strategy (July 2020). The Project Evaluation Lead for Digital Forensics noted "It has been particularly helpful to have a criminological perspective to widen the view of DF research needs, which has historically been technology

focused. This has sparked multidisciplinary collaboration ... This will also aid the newly established FCN in planning its initial activity to drive innovation for digital forensic science” [4a].

In 2019, Brookman and Jones contributed to the national NPCC CCTV Specialist Capabilities Programme and were asked to complete bespoke analysis of HIFS data. Their evidence, the only available in the UK, is being used to inform the NPCC’s response to threats to the use of CCTV across England and Wales. As outlined by the CCTV National Capabilities Manager, “The UK police currently do not have any recent data to support benefits analysis work which is needed to create a business case to ask for future investment in new CCTV technology. As the UK currently has ageing CCTV technology between the police and local authorities this is becoming more and more urgent. The work that Brookman and Jones have recently completed... has provided impartial evidence that supports CCTV as not only a significant factor in police investigations but compares its use to other forensic sciences and technologies... This gives us the platform to request further funding to support the value model needed and invest in more specific academic research on CCTV use and value in policing and community safety” [4b]. Following publication of their CCTV paper [C] Brookman and Jones became invited members of the National CCTV working group, which drives strategies to improve the integrity and provenance of CCTV evidence and their research findings are informing its recommendations on the investigative use of CCTV [4b].

Brookman and Jones are collaborating closely with the Home Office Data and Identity Directorate to develop metrics of the impact of forensic science on criminal justice outcomes. They have analysed the unique HIFS dataset to explore the use of FSTs in identifying and implicating homicide suspects, tracing their impact from crime scene to court. The Project Lead has commented: “The study forms an important part of my assessment of the viability and efficacy of our proposed approach to measuring impact and Brookman and Jones have provided an essential contribution to that. The ultimate aim is to describe a pathway to have an ongoing assessment of forensic impact. This in turn would provide an evidence base to inform government and senior policing’s policy and investment decisions with regard to forensic science.” [4c]

Contributing to Police Training

The HIFS findings, in conjunction with Brookman’s previous research, have informed police training at local and national level. For example, Brookman and Jones delivered a training session in October 2020 to the National Crime Agency’s Major Crime Investigative Support team. The team of 20+ specialists includes national SIO advisers, geographic profilers and behavioural investigative advisers, who support and assist all UK police services with major crime investigations [5].

(ii) Impact on Policy and Practice for the Prevention of Homicide and Knife Crime

The Youth Select Committee recognised Brookman’s expertise and invited her to give evidence to their Inquiry on Knife Crime in 2019. This enabled her research to influence the debate on the structural and situational causes of homicide and violence and the importance of meaningful engagement with young people in the design and delivery of prevention programmes. Many aspects of her evidence are reflected in the final report now being considered by government [6, especially pp. 9, 19, 52-4, 60-1].

In 2019, Brookman participated in a Ministerial Roundtable on ‘best practice in law enforcement’ as part of the Prime Minister’s Serious Youth Violence Summit. Her recommendations were instrumental in changing policy and practice: for example, based on her evidence, a young person with experience of violence now sits on the National Security Implementation Group on Serious Violence. This has enhanced the group’s understanding of youth violence and how best to respond to it. Plans to engage with young people on other forums are underway [7a]. Her insights on the potential of the Home Office Homicide Index were discussed at the Prime Minister chaired Taskforce on Criminal Justice in 2020 and have led to new collaboration between Home Office statisticians and police to improve data quality and timeliness. For example, a new data capture interface is being developed for police forces to submit additional homicide data to the Home Office, which will enable more accurate determination of patterns and trends and inform more bespoke prevention measures [7a, 7b].

(iii) International Impacts

The impact of Brookman's research also extends beyond the UK. Her 2019 report [D] improved awareness of the characteristics and causes of gang-related homicide in Trinidad and Tobago, and of the limitations of importing violence reduction reforms from the developed world. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary drew on her recommendations in their inspection of police in the region and have embedded a British ex Assistant Chief Constable to work closely with Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) to develop changes to reduce gang homicide based on her analysis. Recommendations adopted include engaging across all levels of the police, analysing all unsolved homicides in the region, and coaching TTPS detectives on learning from unsolved cases [8].

Her research in the USA led to the inclusion of her recommendations for using new ways to evaluate investigative performance as a Directive in *10 Things Chiefs can do to Positively Impact Homicide* published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and, most recently, US National Public Safety Partnerships [9]. Brookman has provided research instruments and guidance to detectives at the Calgary Police Homicide Unit, Canada, who are exploring factors that influence homicide investigation outcomes [10a] and her research findings are informing decisions to introduce CCTV training to detectives in the Milan Homicide Squad, Italy [10b]. She was recently invited by the Dutch National Police to present her research findings to investigative psychologists, to assist them in their work with detectives to identify offenders in unsolved homicides [10c]. Finally, she founded and chairs the Criminal Investigation Research Network (CIRN) that brings together academics, practitioners and policy makers at the forefront of developing practice and strategy in relation to major crime investigation. CIRN has generated numerous successful international collaborations and continues to grow its membership. (<https://criminology.research.southwales.ac.uk/cirn/>).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1a] ACPO/NPCC Murder Investigation Manual. 3rd ed. College of Policing
<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/APPREF/murder-investigation-manual-redacted.pdf>. [1b]
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/homicide/>

[2a-2e] Emails from Criminal Justice practitioners and key stakeholders corroborating 'Transforming Awareness and Understanding of Forensic Science and Technology in Homicide Investigation' (for names and roles of sources, see attached file).

[3a-3d] Emails from police sources corroborating 'Improving Collaborative Practice'.

[4a-4c] Emails from key stakeholders corroborating 'Impacting National Policy and Strategy Development in Digital Forensics'.

[5] Letter from National SIO Adviser, National Crime Agency

[6] Brookman, F. (2019, Jul 01) Written Evidence Submitted to the Youth Select Committee Inquiry on Knife Crime: <https://www.byc.org.uk/uk/youth-select-committee>

[7a-7b] Emails from Home Office practitioners corroborating 'Impact on Policy and Practice for the Prevention of Homicide and Knife Crime'.

[8] Letter – Head of Analytics and Research Team, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

[9] International Association of Chiefs of Police (August 2013) *10 Things Chiefs Can Do to Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes*. Washington DC: IACP.
<https://www.nationalpublicsafetypartnership.org/clearinghouse/Resource/174>

[10a-10c] Letters corroborating 'International Impacts' (Canada, Italy, Denmark).