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## **LSE research on Restorative Justice addresses Home Office consultation document**

### **Some Restorative Justice practices are without theoretical approval**

Some Restorative Justice (RJ) programmes in England and Wales do not follow the theoretical principles and values of RJ's normative concept, shows new research by Theo Gavrielides of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

The report, "Restorative Justice: Are we there yet? Responding to the Home Office's consultation questions", follows the Home Office's consultation document on the Government's strategy on RJ, and will be released after the RJ Consortium (RJC) conference, which is held end of November in conjunction with the Home Office as part of their consultation process.

The research conveyed fears that if these issues are not addressed rapidly, RJ might soon develop to a concept that will have very little to do with its original normative values that characterise its essence and make it stand out from the rest of the criminal justice theories.

Theo Gavrielides, a Researcher based at the LSE, said: 'The lack of theoretical backup of RJ programmes is due to the discrepant way RJ's theory and practice developed, as well as the series of negative implications that this has had on the way it is understood and applied'.

The study was divided into two phases. The first included the analysis of 40 questionnaires that were sent to criminal justice practitioners and researchers from eight countries representing both models in which Western criminal procedures have been divided: UK, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa (Adversarial/Common Law) and Spain, Austria, Italy (Inquisitorial/Continental).

The results provided data that allowed the testing of the study's hypothesis, and indicated that the discrepancy has affected the way:

- RJ is understood and defined
- it is funded by governmental and other private funding bodies
- facilitators are trained
- programmes are put into practice and the effect that the process has on the restorative nature of their outcomes.

The second phase included interviews with some of the major stakeholders in RJ's development in England and Wales: the Home Office, the Youth Justice Board, Victim Support, Mediation UK, Thames Valley Police, the Justice Research Consortium, Connect, the RJC and Prison Reform Trust.

The study concludes by attempting suggestions in how to move RJ forward pointing out the importance of accommodating all the above organisations' needs without putting at stake RJ's original normative values and principles.

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The full report will appear in a forthcoming issue of “Criminal Law Forum”. For further information contact: Theo Gavrielides, LSE on 07720057750 or email [T.Gavrielides@lse.ac.uk](mailto:T.Gavrielides@lse.ac.uk)

Notes for editors:

The Home Office consultation document *Restorative Justice: the government's strategy*, was published 22 July 2003