More than a hundred countries around the world practice some form of restorative justice. But although the academic study and research of these practices have expanded exponentially, there remain significant gaps in international comparative studies, understanding of community praxis, and the ontological growth and development of the voices of visionaries and practitioners.

Using thirty five in-depth key informant interviews, along with surveys and document analysis, this doctoral research attempts to bridge these gaps. To do so, it examines the growth of restorative justice across three research sites: two in Canada (British Columbia and Nova Scotia), and Bangladesh.

A number of emergent themes are discussed in the paper, including the notion of community, debates over standards and standardization, and the role of government and non-governmental organisations. In Canada, the study finds that the local community’s involvement was of paramount importance to the growth of restorative justice. Tension nevertheless still prevails surrounding the role of government—should they be enablers, funders, implementers or guarantors of quality practice? In contrast, the growth of restorative justice in Bangladesh was catalysed by the ancient presence of salish culture, along with contemporary support from international NGOs working in tandem with the national government. By charting these contrasting developments, the study not only unveils internal contestations within the praxis of restorative justice, it also adds to the growing field of international comparative studies of restorative justice.